**The Fort Sill Tribune, January 21, 2021**

**Vaccinations explained at Tuesday town hall**

By Tribune staff

The Fort Sill Facebook live town hall scheduled for Jan. 19 focused on the COVID-19 vaccination program. Post leaders provided detailed information about the vaccine, safety and efficacy of the vaccine, and answered questions from people who are undecided about getting the vaccine to make informed decisions by talking with vaccine providers.

Fort Sill is following the DoD prioritization for distribution of the vaccine, Gallagher said. The first tier of vaccine distribution includes military and Department of Defense civilians who are essential to mission. There will be a rolling system here as we continue to move and fill in the gaps of the people who are underserved about getting the vaccine to make informed decisions by talking with vaccine providers.

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The first broad group of employees to get the vaccine will be critical national capabilities and other essential workforces. It includes those who work in the missions for our national defense and other missions.

Story, photo By Marie Pihual

The motto of the lab union is “Mission first.” If Fort Sill federal civilian employees believe their ability to do their job is being hindered, they can help from the National Federation of Federal Employees Local 1 at its new location in Building 2870 Craig Road.

“Management doesn’t have to do anything they shouldn’t have done, or an employee doesn’t have to do anything they should have done, they can contact their grievance, and say, ‘Grievance,’” said John Roche, NFTEF 273 chief steward.

Roche said most grievances come from misunderstandings, and in the form of a supervisor giving an employee with an employee with too much severity.

The union has a collective bargaining unit with Fort Sill stating what they have and what the defense was committed to the employee, they must receive the lowest level of form punishment for something.

“We are all humans so we do make mistakes,” he said.

He gave an example of a civilian worker who has been laid off and employed for 10 years, receiving high evaluations, and who later was picked for great job performance.

All of a sudden a trainer made a comment about it. He was looking to do a 14-day suspension, and he told him he had to go from zero to 100. That just isn’t right,” said Roche.

If a grievance is not settled and has to go to mediation, or arbitration, that can be handled by the union only if the employee is a dues-paying union member.

Union dues are $29 per year.

“The problem is if you have a job, and you do not have insurance, if you have a vehicle, you have insurance on your vehicle, but why don’t you have an insurance on your job.”

“How are you going to keep living in that house without a job? How are you going to keep making payments on a house if you’re out of work?”

“The one thing you’re overlooking is a disability that’s preventing the one that’s buying all of these things,” said Roche.

He said in his time as steward, there have been instances where employees had letters of termination from their positions and medicare and Machinist Union.

IOM covers employees who build things for the military. Roche said you need the strength in numbers, and should have a bar-certified attorney if you have a grievance.

There are other perks of being a union member, such as health care insurance which will cover employees if they do get sick or get injured on the job or outside of the job.

They also offer dental and vision programs as well as life insurance.

“Not many people realize, as you get older, if you have health issues, and your benefits go down, with our insurance, it’s going to be expensive, and sometimes you’ll get locked.”

“I’ve never changed,” said Roche.

Another added perk, is the opportunity to have a bar online degree for free for the union member and their family.

Roche added that the NFTEF 273 has 7,000 members on post.

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For more info and feature items, contact the Tribune, 652 Hamilton Ave., Room 201, Sheridan Hall, Lawton, Okla. 73503, or 580-442-5150. E-mail is jsbalk@blackwell.com. For other information is close of business Thursday before the following Thursday’s issue.

Published by Publisher Commanding General H.B. Johnson, Mrs. Mary Jo Johnson

Federal labor office moves to Craig Road

The National Federation of Federal Employees Local 273 is now in Building 2870 Craig Road here.

But, he said once an employee, even if they have an agreement with a person, they cannot switch to the union for that particular grievance.

Roche said it is as easy as giving them a call and finding out the best for them.

There are also Weingarten rights and even if an employee is hurt on the job or off the job, they cannot be fired and their benefits go down. Weingarten rights are free for the union member and they believe they need union representation.

“If a supervisor calls you into the office and you’ve had a disagreement, you’ve been kind of messed up and here’s your writer. You can say, I’m in,” Roche.

The National Federation of Federal Employees Local 273 is now in Building 2870 Craig Road here.

Some viewers had issues with the site and they eventually closed for recreational fishing for the foreseeable future due to a pandemic precaution.

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