



National Association Support Employees (NASE)

Weekly Update

10-10-2011

www.nasefsa.org



I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG, OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND TO THE REPUBLIC, FOR WHICH IT STANDS, ONE NATION UNDER GOD, INDIVISIBLE, WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL!

Thoughts for the week:

**“Imagination has brought mankind through the dark ages to its present state of civilization. Imagination led Columbus to discover America. Imagination led Franklin to discover electricity.”
L Frank Baum**

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.” Benjamin Franklin

Make work more fun:

Have a fifteen minute exercise break for the whole office.

Computer TIP:

How to apply animation on text or objects in Power Point 2010?

It is very easy to apply animation on text or object in Microsoft Power Point 2010. Animations are applied to emphasize certain things, other objective is to avoid boredom of audience and keep their interest intact through whole presentation. It also helps you to control flow of information, for example if you are explaining a certain point and you do not want your audience to get distract by next points then by help of animation you can stop next points.

You can apply animation on not only text but also on shapes, tables, pictures and other object. The visual effects that are included in Power Point 2010 are exits, entrance, changes in Font Sizes and Colours. You have the option to apply one or multiple animation on one object. Both methods are described below.

Four types of animation effects are available in PowerPoint 2010. For more information go to:
www.computerfreetips.com

USDAConnect:

NASE has an USDAConnect site in the making. Check it out after you log in and provide ideas to make the site better, provide a response to the Wikilinks and tell us about yourself.

https://connections.usda.gov/wikis/home?lang=en_US#/wiki/Wf88a6fad4a1a_4bf5_9c78_8fd47e121e61/person/9d24f6c0-3feb-102e-9dba-f5e6d78895c2/pages

Collaboration - Anytime, Anywhere, Anyone -*USDA Connect* is now accessible by all USDA employees and contractors. *USDA Connect* provides the Department with an enterprise Web 2.0 platform to support a broad range of capabilities for collaboration activities within and across agencies. Enterprise-wide collaboration leverages the Departments most important asset – the employees. Work is changing and business requires more complex interactions between employees to improve performance. Web 2.0 platforms enable and foster these complex interactions and allow employees to share knowledge accumulated and gained through experience that often isn't or can't be systematically replicated for reuse.

2012 Zone Meetings NASE/NACS/NACS RD/NASP **MORE INFORMATION TO COME**

Zone A Meeting
Denver, CO
March 1-3, 2012

Zone B Meeting – NASE A/B Business Meeting
Dallas-Fort Worth, TX
February 2-4, 2012

Zone C Meeting
Madison, WI
March 22-24, 2012

Zone D Meeting – NASE C/D Business Meeting
Hilton Hotel & Resorts Greenville, SC
February 16-18, 2012

2012 National Convention NASE/NACS/NACS-RD/NASP

Detroit, Michigan
Marriott—Detroit at the Renaissance Center
June 16-21, 2012

GIMMEMYDISCOUNT www.govexec.com

JM Marketing Coming to NASE

Trevor Gartner from JM Marketing has been working with NASE to put a plan together to fit NASE's needs. Some of the options include:

Long Term Health Care – Cancer – Dental – Accident – Vision – Lifelighting - Life Insurance

Click on this link to see the website Trevor set up for NACS www.nacsbenefits-direct.com

For anyone with insurance through JM Marketing already and entered through a NASCOE or NACS association and want to transfer it, contact Trevor first. Trevor's email address is tgartner@jminsuredirect.com.

If you have any comments about the coverage NASE should have, please contact our President, Susan Long.

What Does NASE Do? What can you do as a NASE member?

Promote the betterment of the Farm Service Agency

Help to Improve all FSA programs

Improve service to the public/our customers

Establish a cooperative relationship at all levels of FSA

Help establish policies that best serve the public interest in accomplishing the mission of USDA and FSA

Improve support staff effectiveness

Improve morale, esprit-de-corps, and efficiency

Promote self-motivation, self education, and career enhancement

Promote the social, economic, civic and personal welfare of support employees

Assist and be supportive of the mutual concerns of all other FSA employee associations

All FSA employees that are non-supervisory are eligible to be regular members. Supervisor's, NASE needs your support and you may join as a support member at a reduced cost, an inexpensive way to show your support for all FSA non-supervisory employees.

If your state is unorganized, your dues can be sent directly to our National Treasurer, Rhonda Hoffman.



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

2011-2012

I, _____ am applying for membership in the National Association of Support Employees and agree to abide by the Constitution and by-laws of the Association. My check for \$52.00 regular member or \$20.00 for supportive member is attached. I also agree that I will join my State Association at this time or when one is established.

Title: _____

Office Address: _____

Office Telephone: _____ e-mail: _____

Home Address: _____

Home Telephone: _____

Home e-mail: _____

Sponsor's Name: _____

(Please list the person who contacted you about becoming a member)
Check should be made payable to NASE
Please Mail Completed Form with \$52 or \$20 to:
"Open By Addressee Only"
Rhonda Hoffman
107 E Hwy 20, Suite C
O'Neill, NE 68763
allgolf@kmtel.net
402-336-3796, ext 118

Resolutions-ResolutionResolutions-Resolutions-Resolutions-Resolutions-Resolutions

It is that time again...time to start applying your creative writing skills. You have extraordinary ideas on ways to make your workday flow so much better then it flows now; share those ideas on the **NEW fillable** Resolution form. I listen to grumbling as I travel about on the SURE Program worksheets, NAP regulations, the Guaranteed computer applications, the DLS system, the eCORP software, outdated handbooks, etc.... You can make it better; all you have to do is write it down and send it in!!!

Where do you get the wonderful Resolution forms to write up your creative ideas? On the NASE website, of course. 😊

Do you know where to send your Resolution forms when you get them completed????? To your Zone Rep or Resolution Coordinator.

With NASE's Resolution Process, **all of YOUR ideas are given consideration**, first at the Zone Meetings, then on to the National Convention where resolutions are voted on by the full membership...those members are YOU. The successful resolutions from the National meeting are sent to the National Office, Farm Credit Applications Office, Finance Office and/or Kansas City for determining feasibility. In the Past, NASE has seen most resolutions put into permanent practice! We are all ordinary people with extraordinary ideas...share them.

BUDGET:



Contributions Idea Could Get Vote Soon

Congress may be heading for a vote soon on the idea of raising federal employee contributions to retirement, with Senate leaders saying they plan to call a vote this month on the White House's proposed jobs bill. The contributions idea was among the administration's recommendations to offset costs of the initiative. Under the White House plan, all employees would pay 1.2 percent of salary more, phased in through three equal annual increases starting in 2013. Employee organizations continue to lobby against the idea, but the White House's proposal increased the chances that an increase will pass Congress, much as its endorsement late last year of a two-year pay freeze paved the way for that to happen. With passage of a contributions increase by the Democratic-controlled Senate, passage by the Republican-controlled House would be even more likely, in one bill or another; prospects for the jobs bill in the House are doubtful. Several differing approaches still are possible, including adopting the White House's proposal unchanged as part of the Senate bill, increasing the required contribution above the 1.2 percent figure, or adopting no change in contributions while leaving the issue to the congressional super committee at work on deficit reduction.

Buyout Offers, Employment Cap on Table

In reaction to smaller budgets and in anticipation of still-tighter ones ahead, several agencies have announced buyout and/or early retirement offers in targeted areas. The largest is in the Air Force, which has made buyouts and early outs available to some 6,000 employees. Other recent offers include about 400 each at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and at the Library of Congress, and smaller numbers in components of GAO, NASA and the Army. SSA has cut back on overtime in and has warned of possible future furloughs, although it has not offered early outs or buyouts. Meanwhile, in something of a new twist on personnel ceilings that could be repeated in the budgets of other agencies, language in an authorization bill for DHS that has passed the Senate committee level would link non-emergency employment at the department to the national unemployment rate, capping employment at current levels until the rate falls below 8 percent.

TECHNOLOGY:

Government apps: Learning from industry

BY, JOSEPH MARKS 10/03/2011

A successful mobile app -- whether it aims to educate, aid or entertain -- has about 30 seconds to sell users on its utility and to make a solid case for why it should live on your phone rather than on a website or some other place, app designers and experts told *Nextgov*.

Making that sale, they said, calls for a simple design that doesn't crowd a 3.5-inch screen, a no-nonsense interface that is both more and less than a mobile website, and, most important, compelling content people will want to return to again and again.

Government agencies have had mixed success in the mobile app arena. We asked three private sector app developers to rate the overall effectiveness of a dozen federal agency apps, and developed this [interactive graphic](#) to describe their findings. Their ratings offer insight into what agencies are doing well and where they need to improve. For the rest of the story go to: www.nextgov.com

NOAA app delivers aerial, satellite imagery to mobile devices

By Henry Kenyon Oct 07, 2011

Emergency crews responding to major natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes now have access to a Web application that delivers aerial and satellite imagery of the area to their smart phones and tablet computers.

The prototype application was created by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Geodetic Survey. The publicly accessible application currently provides access to NOAA imagery taken during Hurricane Irene and the tornado that hit Joplin, Mo., on May 22.

NOAA collected some 1,500 images on the first day of Irene for storm damage assessments. For the rest of the story go to: www.gcn.com

Microsoft plans 8 fixes for October's Patch Tuesday

By Jabulani Leffall Oct 07, 2011

Microsoft will release eight patches, most having to do with remote code execution, in this month's Patch Tuesday release.

The company's **advanced notification** of the October monthly security bulletin addresses two "critical" and six "important" items covering a range of products including Microsoft .NET Windows, Internet Explorer, Forefront and Microsoft Host Integration Server.

Remote code execution dominates the risk profile for all but two of the items on the patch slate. The remaining two are denial-of-service and elevation-of-privilege considerations.

The first critical bulletin affects .NET and Silverlight. For the rest of the story go to: www.gcn.com

HR:

Honeymoon is short-lived for new feds

By Emily Long elong@govexec.com September 26, 2011

Federal agencies are going to have to work a little bit harder to keep employees excited and engaged beyond the first few years after they are hired -- what observers call the honeymoon period.

The nonprofit Partnership for Public Service this month [released a study](#) showing that 75.3 percent of new government workers under the age of 30 are happy with their jobs and agencies compared to just two-thirds of all federal employees. In addition, job satisfaction tends to decline as employee tenure increases -- workers under 30 with more than three years of federal service scored their satisfaction at just 68.7 percent, according to the report. "The bright side of things, and clearly there are some bright things, is those new and young employees are satisfied," said Tim McManus, vice president for education and outreach at the Partnership. "The caution [for agencies] is why

then after three years that the honeymoon period ends? Is it a slope or a cliff and why is that and how do we help to build that relationship so they have equal satisfaction?"

Effective agency leadership and employees' views of individual supervisors play a critical role in the satisfaction scores for emerging professionals, according to the Partnership report. Empowerment and the ability to take initiative on the job; pay; and training and development opportunities also are important to new employees. Retention is higher for satisfied workers than for those who are unhappy with their agencies or jobs, the study found. For the rest of the story check out: www.govexec.com

TSP Starts Autumn with Continued Fall

The stock oriented TSP funds in September continued a losing streak that is now five months long, with the small company S fund down 10.73 percent, the international stock I fund down 10.55 percent and the large company stock C fund down 7.03 percent for the month. For the past 12 months, the funds have posted returns of -1.62, -10.12 and +1.11 percent, respectively. The bond F fund gained 0.73 percent in September and the government securities G fund gained 0.16 percent, for 12-month gains of 5.34 and 2.58 percent, respectively. The September and 12-month returns for the lifecycle funds are: income, -1.51, +2.08; 2020, -4.73, +0.43; 2030, -5.92, -0.28; 2040, -8.49, -0.88. The 2050 fund, which launched at the end of January, lost 7.8 percent in September.

Special counsel recommends reforms to law covering improper political activities

By Kellie Lunney klunney@govexec.com October 6, 2011

Federal employees would not automatically lose their jobs for violating a law prohibiting certain political activities, under draft legislation that the Office of Special Counsel sent to Capitol Hill on Thursday.

OSC is recommending reforms to the 1939 Hatch Act, such as expanding the range of penalties under the law, including but not limited to removal. Currently, removal is the only penalty authorized for federal employees who violate the law. The Merit Systems Protection Board can determine after a hearing whether the violation warranted firing the employee. Under the draft bill, other penalties include a reduction in grade, debarment from federal employment for up to five years, suspension, reprimand, or a fine of up to \$1,000.

Removal from employment as the only recourse for dealing with Hatch Act violations can be unfair to workers and can hinder OSC's ability to enforce the law properly, Special Counsel Carolyn Lerner said Thursday during a briefing with reporters on the proposed reforms. For the rest of the story go to: www.govexec.com

3.8 Percent Average Health Insurance Increase in 2012

By Ralph Smith Friday, October 7, 2011

The new rates for health insurance are now out. (See the 2012 Health Insurance Premium calculator for the new rates for your health insurance plan.) The Office of Personnel Management has issued a press release celebrating the relatively small increase in premiums for 2012. The average premium for the 8 million people enrolled in the Federal Employees Health Benefits program (FEHBP) will increase by 3.8 percent for non-postal employees and all annuitants in 2012.

The average increase last year was about 7.3% so the smaller increase is good news of sorts. Health insurance costs nationwide are expected to increase about 5.4% in 2012 so the increase for the federal workforce is less than many Americans will be paying next year.

No mention was included in the press release of the continuing pay freeze for the federal workforce. While many current federal employees will receive a pay increase such as a within-grade increase or a promotion, for many the extra money they have to pay for the health insurance next year will just be an additional expense.

But, one bit of good news for federal retirees: It appears that there will be a cost of living adjustment in your retirement pay for 2012. We don't know the final amount of the increase but it appears that it will be in the area of 3.5% for many retirees. (See *First COLA in Three Years for Federal Retirees*)

The increase in health insurance rates will mean that, on average, those participating in the FEHB with self only coverage will pay \$2.32 more per bi-weekly pay period; those with family coverage will pay \$6.18 more.

RETIREMENT:

Complicating Factors

By Tammy Flanagan, [National Institute of Transition Planning](http://www.natinst.org)

What happens when you cross a Civil Service Retirement System retiree with one covered under CSRS Offset? You can get a very confusing situation if the CSRS Offset spouse dies first.

This is what happened to "Mr. Rogers" when his wife passed away several years ago. Mrs. Rogers retired under CSRS Offset. During her federal career, part of her time was under CSRS coverage that was exempt from Social Security and part was covered by both CSRS and Social Security. Mrs. Rogers was covered under CSRS Offset from 1987 until she retired in 2002 because she had a break in service of more than one year and was rehired after 1983. That meant her CSRS contributions were reduced by the Social Security tax. Normally, CSRS employees contribute 7 percent of basic pay biweekly to the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund. CSRS Offset employees have their retirement deductions reduced by the Old Age Survivor's and Disability Insurance tax. For the rest of the story go to: www.govexec.com

Planning to Retire – Your Agency's Role

Reg Jones

Once your personnel office has your retirement papers, it will review them to make sure you are eligible to retire on the date you set and carry your Federal Employees' Health Benefits (FEHB) and/or Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) coverage into retirement. If there are any problems, now is the time to resolve them. (Because there is no "five year" enrollment requirement in the long term care and dental/vision insurance programs, you almost certainly will be eligible to continue them; the exception would be losing eligibility under the latter program if you are taking deferred retirement.)

Assuming that there aren't any problems, your personnel office will generate a Certified Summary of Federal Service, which will list your federal civilian and military service. When you get your copy, check your federal work record for accuracy and make any needed changes. For the rest of the story go to: www.fedweek.com

The Young and the Riskless

If you're in your 20s or 30s, a couple decades from now you may well be reading articles similar to [this one](#) in the New York Times about the risks of experiencing poor or subpar investment returns in your late career years. Ideally, when you come across a quote like this one from William Bernstein, you'd smile with satisfaction:

"What the wise person does is save a large amount of money when they are young...And if they can do that, when they are older, they can cut back on their equity allocation. When you've won the game, you stop playing the game."

This implies that you not only will have saved, but that you'll have "invested" those savings in assets like stocks and bonds that have real growth potential.

But if you're like many young people, taking such "risk" may be unsettling. For the rest of the story check out: www.thedreambigsite.org

Retirement Realism

How much do you need to save for a comfortable retirement? The consulting firm Hewitt Associates calculates you should accumulate 11 times your end-of-career salary, in addition to Social Security and a pension. That is, if you retire at age 65 with a \$90,000 salary, you should have about \$1 million in savings if you want to maintain your lifestyle throughout retirement.

If you don't expect to meet that 11-times goal, here are some tactics to enable you to live well with a smaller next egg: For the rest of the story go to: www.fedweek.com

Lack Of Will-Power

Executing a well is vital to anyone's estate plan. If you die without a will, your assets will be distributed under your state's law. The possible consequences include:

* No tax planning. It's true that the federal estate tax exemption is now set at \$5 million, so most people won't owe

that tax. However, many states have much lower exemptions. With a will, you can do some planning to reduce state estate tax.

* No distribution planning. Your state's law might call for most or all of your assets to pass to your spouse. That could be the case even if you are estranged or in the middle of divorce negotiations. Your children, parents, siblings, and other loved ones might get little or nothing. For the rest of the story go to: www.fedweek.com

Government to unveil COLAs on Oct. 19

By Kellie Lunneyklunney@govexec.com October 3, 2011

Federal retirees will know on Oct. 19 the cost-of-living adjustment they will receive beginning in their January paychecks.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics will release the consumer price index figures for September at 8:30 a.m. on Oct. 19. The numbers are the final data point for determining the COLA. Based on the latest statistics, the COLA is expected to be about 3.6 percent. The CPI, a measure of the average change over time in the prices urban consumers pay for goods and services, rose 3.8 percent between August 2010 and August 2011, largely due to an increase in gasoline and food prices. COLAs are determined based on the CPI-W, a formula that takes into account increases in the CPI for urban wage earners and clerical workers.

AGRICULTURE:

Specialty crop block grants available through USDA

The USDA will be investing in 55 specialty crop block grants to help strengthen the market for specialty crops such as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture.

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program for fiscal year 2011 supports initiatives that:

- Increase nutritional knowledge and specialty crop consumption
- Improve efficiency within the distribution system and reduce costs
- Promote the development of good agricultural, handling and manufacturing practices while encouraging audit fund cost-sharing for small farmers, packers and processors
- Support research through standard and green initiatives
- Enhance food safety
- Develop new/improved seed varieties and specialty crops
- Control pests and diseases
- Create organic and sustainable production practices
- Establish local and regional fresh food systems
- Expand food access in underserved/food desert communities

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is administered by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). Visit www.ams.usda.gov/scbpg to read fiscal year 2011 project summaries.

MISCELLANEOUS:

2012 NACS/NASP/NASE DETROIT, MI Convention

Information will be conveyed as it comes in

God Bless America Lyrics by Irving Berlin



God bless America,
Land that I love,
Stand beside her and guide her
Thru the night with a light from above;

From the mountains, to the prairies,
To the oceans white with foam,
God bless America,
My home, sweet home.
God bless America,
My home, sweet home.