



National Association Support Employees (NASE)

Weekly Update

10-17/27-2011

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!

JOIN NASE TODAY

NASE members are FSA non-supervisory employees. NASE is a comfortable and supportive association. **WITH YOUR HELP;** NASE will improve your program handbook regulations, enrich FSA forms and enhance your work day and make it more efficient, along with improving customer service to our farmers and ranchers. NASE is here for you! Come join us...

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

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



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

Thoughts for the week:

Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."~Thomas Edison~

The first ingredient in conversation is truth: the next good sense; the third, good humor; and the fourth wit. Sir William Temple

Make work more fun:

Write a letter to the most famous person in your industry asking for one piece of advice.

Computer TIP:

How to quickly repair your Mobile Phone dropped in water?

Many of you get your mobile phone wet by one way or another. You worry as you mistakenly drop your mobile phone in water. It can also get wet if you are out in a heavy rain. However, there is no need to panic. It is possible to save your wet mobile phone by quickly repairing it. In order to save your mobile phone from water damage, you can consider these easy and simple solutions:

Act rapidly :

The first thing you have to do in order to save your wet mobile phone is to act rapidly. Quickly remove all the detachable parts as well as covers possible such as the back cover, battery, the SIM card, memory card etc. Next, take a piece of cloth or a tissue paper to wipe the excess water you are able to notice within the mobile phone. Make sure that you dry it completely. If you don't do this, the water inside the mobile phone will begin to evaporate and gather in places which will be difficult to reach.

This will save your wet mobile phone and it will start working if it was under water for just a little while.

Using a hairdryer :

Take a hairdryer and begin drying the mobile phone while giving more consideration to the place where the battery is located. The battery housing usually consists of tiny holes to let in air (so giving more space for water) inside the mobile phone.

Make sure that you are not holding the hairdryer very near to the mobile phone. Keeping it too close to the mobile phone may harm the electrical mechanism of the mobile phone. Keep on drying the mobile phone from a safe distance for about twenty to thirty minutes.

If solution number 1 and solution number 2 don't work, try solution number 3.

Drying for a long time:

Take off the covers as well as battery from the mobile phone. Put the phone in a dry as well as warm place to let the water inside the phone evaporate gradually from the little holes in the mobile phone.

USDAConnect:

Don't miss important information on the new NASE USDAConnect site:

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

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

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 than 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.

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.

[For Government employee discounts go to: GIMMEMYDISCOUNT www.govexec.com](http://www.govexec.com)

BUDGET:

GOP lawmakers press super committee to extend pay freeze, trim benefit

By FederalDaily Staff Oct 17, 2011

The super committee tasked with coming up with some \$1.2 trillion in savings to the federal budget over the next decade has heard again from House Republicans on how to come up with some of those massive savings: Cut outlays for federal employee pay and benefits.

Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, **sent a letter** to the super committee last week reiterating a call to cut the workforce by 10 percent by slashing hiring, and greatly reduce federal pensions by calculating Federal Employees Retirement System payouts based on a high-5 salary average, rather than the current high-3.

Other stark measures advocated in the letter include extending the current pay freeze through fiscal 2015, raising the employee contribution share to FERS to 6.2 percent, and eliminating FERS for all new employees in favor of a new defined-benefit plan.

“Taken together, the federal civilian workforce pay and retirement proposals ... would provide a minimum of \$375 billion in savings over ten years,” Issa claimed in the Oct. 14 letter. For more information go to: www.federaldaily.com

Lawmakers push extended pay freeze, increased pension contributions

By Emily Long elong@govexec.com October 14, 2011

Lawmakers in both the House and Senate are calling on the deficit-reduction super committee to make further cuts to federal pay and benefits.

Republican members of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee on Friday **sent a letter** asking the commission charged with reining in government spending to consider additional reductions in federal hiring, pay and retirement benefits. Lawmakers recommended cutting the workforce by 10 percent through attrition, hiring one new worker for every three who leave, extending the two-year civilian pay freeze for an additional three years and eliminating step increases. In addition, committee members are calling for reforms to the civilian pension system, including:

- Moving from a high-three to a high-five calculation.

- Raising the Federal Employees Retirement System contribution by 6.2 percent.
- Increasing the Civil Service Retirement System contribution from 7 percent to 10 percent beginning in 2013.
- Eliminating FERS for new hires, instead creating a defined contribution option to supplement the Thrift Savings Plan.
- Limiting the FERS minimum supplement to employees subject to mandatory retirement.

The proposals together would save \$375 billion over 10 years, Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif., wrote in the letter. A bipartisan group of senators also is calling on the super committee to cut back on federal compensation. In a [letter Friday](#), Sens. Joseph Lieberman, I-Conn., and Susan Collins, R-Maine, chairman and ranking member of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, wrote that federal employees must make sacrifices in order to get government spending under control. Proposals include extending the pay freeze for one additional year and increasing pension contributions by 1.2 percent. For the rest of the story go to www.govexec.com

Automatic Cuts Could Leave Deep Marks

If the congressional "super committee" charged with finding ways to reduce the federal deficit is unsuccessful, the automatic cuts that would then begin could severely squeeze agency accounts in the years to follow, according to a Congressional Budget Office analysis. It said that budget reductions by type of account could hit the 8-10 percent range below current long-range projections. While dollar reductions in agency spending authority don't translate directly into an equal effect on federal employment, such budgetary pressure almost certainly would have an impact on jobs, with hiring freezes and even layoffs a common response to such restrictions. CBO's report could add to the pressure to the committee to recommend savings—potentially through such steps as extending the federal salary schedule freeze beyond 2012, increasing employee contributions toward retirement and other ideas that have been on the table for many months—rather than declare an impasse and allow automatic cuts. November 23 is the deadline for the committee to report.

Differing Approaches Considered on Funding

The Senate could vote at any time on the annual key spending measure for federal employees, the financial services-general government bill, but ultimately the bill might become part of a larger package wrapping up most or all of the regular spending bills for the current budget year. A stopgap measure that keeps agency funding generally at fiscal 2011 levels expires November 18, just before the congressional "super committee" is due to report. With that committee's work likely to dominate Congress from then until the end of the year, there is pressure to wrap up fiscal 2012 budgets by the time the stopgap expires. Finalizing the 12 individual appropriations bills in that period could be a tall order since the House has passed just six and the Senate just one. One issue that often has caused delays on the general government bill, the size of the next year's federal pay raise, was settled nearly a year ago with enactment of the salary schedule freeze for 2011 and 2012.

Warning Sent on Furloughs

In what could be a harbinger of what is to come at many agencies, the chairman of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on the general government bill warned that agencies covered by the bill could be hard hit by its spending restrictions. Due to limits set by the debt ceiling law, available funding under that bill is below fiscal 2011 levels, at a time when many financial agencies meanwhile are trying to carry out new legal mandates. "Agencies and programs carried in this bill are facing real pain and potentially disruptive setbacks. Some agencies will be forced to furlough staff, reduce the number of grant recipients, defer needed projects that would improve efficiency and transparency, and relegate promising initiatives to the back burner," said Sen. Richard Durbin, D-Ill. Among the potential cuts is tax law enforcement by the IRS, said NTEU, which represents many agency employees.

Super committee meets Gang of Six

By Billy House *National Journal* October 19, 2011

Members of the bipartisan "Gang of Six" met behind closed doors on Wednesday with the super committee to explain their plan from earlier this year to cut about \$3.7 trillion from the nation's deficit over 10 years. Afterward, it remained unclear exactly how interested the 12 Republicans and Democrats on the new panel were in that earlier plan -- or specific elements of it -- as they continue to race against a Nov. 23 deadline to come up with their own strategy for at least \$1.2 trillion in savings.

Asked about the Gang of Six's tax recommendations, Rep. Jeb Hensarling, R-Texas, a member of the new panel, said, "I think it's a group of very serious members who understand the gravity of the situation. They will admit that there were a number of specifics that were left out of their plan."

The meeting at the Capitol was kept private, although as recently as last week others in Congress -- including House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. -- have been calling for any such discussion between the new and old deficit-reduction panels to be conducted in public. For the rest of the story go to www.govexec.com

Array of Potential Cuts Laid Out

Numerous recommendations for federal employee pay and benefits have been laid out for the congressional "super committee" working on deficit reduction, including extending the federal salary schedule freeze, raising employee contributions to retirement and others. The most severe recommendations came from Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif., the chair of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, which has primary control over federal employee programs. He recommended: extending the freeze through 2015; permanently eliminating within-grade raises; increasing FERS employee contributions by 6.2 percent of salary and CSRS contributions by 3 percent of salary; calculating future annuities on a high-five salary year base rather than high-three; cutting employment by 10 percent through a one-for-three hiring freeze; and replacing FERS with a new defined contribution program (although paying benefits under the current formula for time served by current FERS employees).

Democrats Seek No More Cuts

Democratic members of the committee meanwhile recommended that the congressional "super committee" not endorse any further cuts for federal employees "given the significant cuts already imposed on them." Their report to the special committee on deficit reduction stakes out a position against the numerous potential cuts to employment and benefits that are in circulation, including those suggested by the White House—including raising employee retirement contributions by 1.2 percent of salary and ending, for newly hired employees, the special retirement supplement for FERS employees who retire before age 62. Also, they oppose the White House's plan to create a civil service reform commission, calling that duplicative and unneeded. However, their report does back another administration idea, to cap compensation of contractor executives, while also backing the administration's call for more centralized purchasing of prescription drugs in the FEHB as a cost-saver.

Senate Side Would Split Difference

Meanwhile, a bipartisan letter from the counterpart Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs essentially suggested that the super committee essentially split the difference between. It recommended extending the salary schedule freeze by one year through 2013 and supporting the White House's proposed 1.2 percentage point increase in retirement contributions, while revisiting a change in law in 2009 that made unused sick leave creditable toward a FERS retirement benefit. It also raised no objection to switching to a high-5 base for future annuities, although adding that if that is done, the impact should be limited for those close to retirement. The letter meanwhile opposed setting limits on hiring or employment levels but favored centralized FEHB drug purchasing. It further recommended that the super committee adopt ideas in circulation to reduce injury compensation costs, such as switching beneficiaries to the generally less generous disability retirement system when it is clear they will never return to federal employment. Meanwhile, Sen. Daniel Akaka, D-Hawaii, chair of the Senate federal workforce subcommittee, broke with the committee leadership and opposed pay and benefit changes generally, while suggesting a new phased retirement arrangement in which individuals could work part-time and receive both salaries and annuities, prorated.



TECHNOLOGY:

Something wicked: The 10 scariest computer viruses of all time

By **John Breeden II** Oct 14, 2011

The dreary winter months are approaching, and little ghosts and goblins are starting to crawl from their haunts. With the spooky Halloween season about to get into full swing, we thought we might help get into the mood with a look at the 10 most frightening viruses of all time.

Hide your hard drives, lock up your files and make sure your AV shields are at maximum power as we enter...the dark realm of computer programs gone bad.

10. It Came From Above! OK, so the virus that showed up in ground systems connected with the U.S. fleet of combat drones probably isn't going to be much of a danger to anyone's PC. But we're talking scary, and it's the thought that counts: The thought of malicious code connected even with ground systems involved with so much destructive power is enough to put a little lump in the back of your throat. A typical virus might erase your e-mail. But if UAVs themselves ever got infected, they could put a hellfire missile up your tailpipe. For more information go to: www.gcn.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.

The application runs on iOS, Android, and BlackBerry smart phones and tablets. The Web version of the tool can be viewed with Google Chrome, Apple Safari, and other WebKit-based browsers. However, it doesn't work with Microsoft Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox. For more information go to: www.gcn.com

Cybersecurity could be a bright spot in otherwise flat IT budgets

BY ALIYA STERNSTEIN 10/18/2011

Cybersecurity spending is expected to accelerate during the next five years at the Defense Department and civilian agencies, despite overall flat information technology budgets, according to a new industry forecast.

The increasing severity of computer network breaches likely will influence funding levels, with Defensewide cyber spending starting at more than \$8 billion in fiscal 2012 and reaching more than \$13 billion by fiscal 2016 if the country suffers a cyberattack resembling what Defense Secretary Leon Panetta often refers to as the next Pearl Harbor. Officials from TechAmerica Foundation, a nonprofit research affiliate of the industry association TechAmerica, briefed reporters on Monday about the predictions.

"I think a lot of this is going to be needs driven," rather than fueled by cyber policy reforms pending in Congress, said Dan Heinemeier, TechAmerica's chief administrative officer.

In fiscal 2012, the Army and Air Force each are projected to spend \$1.1 billion on cybersecurity, the Marines and Navy likely will expend a combined \$900 million and the rest of the military services and agencies should disburse a total of \$5.1 billion, the forecast indicated. For more information go to www.nextgov.com

HR:

Workers' Compensation Woes

By Emily Long and Andrew Lapin

The government's program to support federal employees injured on the job hasn't changed in nearly four decades, and some say that workers' compensation benefits are due for an upgrade. But as reform proposals languish, the program continues to place an unnecessary burden on agencies.

Under the 1916 Federal Employees' Compensation Act, employees disabled as a result of an injury on the job can receive 66 2/3 percent -- or 75 percent for those with dependents -- of their basic salary tax-free, plus medical-related expenses. The 66 2/3 percent rate is comparable to most state systems, but many federal recipients, including those past retirement age, receive the 75 percent compensation rate.

Workers' compensation is particularly problematic at the U.S. Postal Service, the program's largest participant. A recent audit from the USPS inspector general found that the cash-strapped agency loses \$335 million annually due to program inefficiencies. For example, FECA beneficiaries are reimbursed for name-brand drugs and are not subject to time limits for collecting payouts. The Postal Service also is providing benefits for workers who have no intention of returning to their jobs -- more than 2,000 postal employees on the workers' compensation roll earlier this year were 70 years of age or older.

A number of proposals in the works would overhaul the program and save the government money, though the impact on beneficiaries is up for debate. For the rest of the story go to: www.govexec.com

Hatch Act Revisions Sought

The agency that enforces Hatch Act restrictions on political activities by federal employees has recommended a series of updates in the law, which last was revised in 1993. The Office of Special Counsel's proposal seeks to add penalties for violations that are less severe than the only two current alternatives, firing or a 30-day suspension, and would allow state and local government employees to run for partisan office even if they work in programs that receive funding from the federal government. OSC also is calling for a better definition of prohibited activities and for more clarity on when employees are considered on duty or off duty. It said that developments such as broader use of telework and portable electronic devices have blurred that distinction, which is important for many purposes under the law.

RETIREMENT:

Refreshing COLA

By Tammy Flanagan, [National Institute of Transition Planning](#)

By now, you may have read [the news](#) about the impending cost-of-living adjustment in federal retirement benefits that will be announced next week. This will be the first increase in two years for those under the Civil Service Retirement System and the Federal Employees Retirement System, along with Social Security recipients and military retirees. It looks like retirees will see an increase of more than 3 percent. (Salaries of federal employees are not affected by this COLA announcement -- they'll be under a pay freeze for the second year in a row.)

Cost-of-living adjustments for CSRS and FERS retirees are effective on Dec. 1 and will show up in the retirement payment on Jan. 1, 2012 (the December payment). For the rest of the story go to: www.govexec.com

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:

* **Relocate.** If you have lived and worked in a high-cost area, move somewhere with a lower cost-of-living (and lower taxes). You might live just as well on two-thirds or three-quarters of your prior income.

* **Delay Social Security.** Most people who are no longer working start at age 62. By waiting, perhaps as late as age 70, you may be able to double the size of each monthly check.

* **Pay down debt.** Going into retirement, you should be clear of your credit card debt, mortgage payments, etc. You'll have more to spend on other items. Plus, you'll have the option of selling a debt-free house and moving into a smaller place if you run short of cash.

Targeting Early Retirement

By Tammy Flanagan, [National Institute of Transition Planning](#)

Last week, Kellie Lunney wrote a [story](#) (story added below) on GovExec.com about a proposal by Rep. John Duncan, R-Tenn., to curtail early retirement in government.

"Working as a waiter or waitress is more physically demanding than most federal government positions for which we now grant early retirement," he said.

The article sparked a huge number of reader comments. I thought I might be able to shed a little light on how and why federal rules around retirement -- both early and regular -- came into being.

Let's start with a look at the evolution of the federal retirement system to see how far we've come -- and where we might be headed back. For the rest of the story go to www.govexec.com

Lawmaker urges end to early federal retirement

By Kellie Lunney klunney@govexec.com October 11, 2011

A House lawmaker is urging the joint committee on deficit reduction to put an end to early federal retirements to save money.

"There are many thousands of federal employees who are retiring in their 50s and even in their late 40s," Rep. John Duncan Jr., R-Tenn., said in a letter last week to members of the congressional super committee. "As much as American lifespans have increased, we simply cannot afford to allow people to draw federal pensions at such young ages."

Federal workers, including members of Congress and congressional employees, would not be able to receive their pensions until age 62 under Duncan's proposal. It would apply only to new hires or members; current federal employees would not be affected.

Duncan and others have put forth this idea before. In a [July speech](#) on the House floor, the Tennessee Republican called for revising the federal civilian and military retirement system. He singled out federal law enforcement officers in particular. "Almost no federal law enforcement today is physical in nature. Early retirement in most federal law enforcement can no longer be justified," he said. "Working as a waiter or waitress is more physically demanding than most federal government positions for which we now grant early retirement." For the rest of the story go to www.govexec.com

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/scbgbp to read fiscal year 2011 project summaries.

EPA amends SPCC Plan date

EPA

the U.S. EPA amended the date by which farms must prepare or amend and implement their Spill, Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plans, to May 10, 2013. If EPA receives no adverse comment, we will not take further action on this rule and the rule will become effective 20 days from the date of publication in the Federal Register.

The amendment does not remove the regulatory requirement for owners or operators of farms in operation before August 16, 2002, to maintain and continue implementing an SPCC Plan in accordance with the SPCC regulations then in effect. Such farms continue to be required to maintain plans during the interim until the applicable compliance date for amending and implementing the amended Plans. Finally, the amendment does not relieve farms from the liability of any oil spills that occur.

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.**