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AFGE *Advocate*

January 2009
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President's Remarks

Hello Brothers & Sisters, and a Happy New Year. I hope that you all had a bountiful and blessed Holiday Season. We enter into 2009 with much reason for optimism and hope for better things (what's the old saying: "Prosperity is just around the corner?"). With the help of AFGE and many hours of making calls, knocking on doors and other positive efforts by our members, we made what should be some great selections with our elected officials. We look forward to our Annual Legislative visit to Washington DC in early February to meet with our old friends and greet our new ones, while we remind them of the fantastic job that we do as dedicated DoD employees.

As you are probably aware, we have been very busy in our effort to negotiate a much needed new Bargaining Unit Contract. I am very pleased to announce that so far we have managed to be very successful in reworking Articles doing away with obsolete references and issues, clarifying language and making things much easier to understand, and implementing some new changes which will prove very positive for our Bargaining Unit members. As we mentioned before our talks began, feel free to get us any ideas or suggestions you might have, or provide comments on any portion of the Contract. And remember, final ratification of our Completed Agreement must come from our Members. You will get ample time to review and comment on our proposal.

Meeting Notice



Our Next Scheduled General
Membership Meeting:

Wednesday

January 21, 2009

Detroit Arsenal
Building 230, Room 137W
4:00 p.m.

Remember also that this contract will ultimately benefit the entire Bargaining Unit, NOT just Union members. Make sure you mention this to those still-to-be non-believers sitting next to you. This wouldn't be a message from me without my reminding you that it is so very important that we recruit and sign up new members. We had a great 2008, recruiting 213 new, enthusiastic people to the fold....the best year numbers wise that we have ever had. Don't forget that we still offer our \$50/\$50 enticement (\$50 to any new member and \$50 to their recruiter).

In addition to our Contract, we have many things on the horizon for 2009. As always, we will be providing opportunities for College Scholarships, and we look forward to our yearly Detroit Metro Initiative where we have Union folks in from the District and National levels to give you a little different perspective of our great Organization. It's not too far down the road (think Summer!) when we'll be setting up our Union Tent at the Summer Outing. And we also plan on a fantastic Summer cookout for our Members, and will hopefully once again sponsor a bus trip to a Tiger baseball game!

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President's Remarks Continued

This year is also a National Election year for AFGE, as well as for our Local elected officers. So things will be truly hectic as the year unfolds. However, I will NEVER be too busy that my door will not be open to everyone. If I do not get back with you, please zip me off another message, and, as always, it remains a good idea to call the office (x46102) to make sure someone will be here before you make the trip over. I also invite you to stop in and meet our new Office Manager, Echo Hunt. Echo has been here since September and is a great addition to our Union.

Finally, I'd like to again thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your President. I am now entering my 9th year at the helm (although some days it seems like the 99th!), and I still consider it an honor and a privilege. We have accomplished much, weathered some huge storms, and made some fantastic strides forward...yet there remains much to be done. With the great Executive Board, Stewards, and a Membership I feel is second to none in our Federation, I have no doubt that we have nowhere to go but up! Take Care. In Solidarity,

Dan

2009 College Scholarships

Local 1658 is pleased to announce the 2009 College Merit Scholarship Program, administered through the Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund. FEEA is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporation, which provides educational benefits and emergency assistance exclusively to all civilian federal and postal employees and their dependent family members.

FEEA receives no government funding – virtually all of their operating revenue is derived from federal employee contributions specifically pledged to FEEA #11185 in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

Applications are now being accepted for the 2009 Scholarship Program. A total of **\$3000.00** is available this year for our Local's members, or their dependent family members (spouse/children). Individual award amounts will depend upon the number of applications received. Eligibility requirements and application procedures are detailed on the first page of the application form, which can be found on the FEEA website: www.feea.org



Scholarships Continued

Applications must be forwarded directly to FEEA, and must be postmarked by March 27, 2009. **Make sure to write “AFGE LOCAL 1658” in large letters on the top of the first page of the application form** so that FEEA knows you are applying specifically for our scholarship.



**Applications must be
postmarked by
March 27, 2009**

You must also send a copy of the COVER PAGE of the application package to the Union, hand-delivered or postmarked by March 27, 2009. We don't need a copy of the entire package, just the page with the applicant's name and sponsor information. Please drop it off at the Building 230 Union office, or mail to: AFGE Local 1658, ATTN: Scholarship Committee, c/o Detroit Arsenal, 6501 E. 11 Mile Road, Building 230, Room 136W, Mail Stop 423, Warren, MI 48397-5000. If you do not send a copy of the Cover Page to the office, the application WILL NOT be considered.

This is the 8th year for our Local 1658 College Merit Scholarship Program. For further information contact Mary Jo Winfield, AFGE Local 1658 Executive Vice President, extension 45295.



Public Service

Membership benefits in Local 1658 include free Notary Public Service! Notaries in Michigan can charge up to \$10.00 per transaction these days, so if you want to save some cash when you need something notarized, contact Mary Jo Winfield, x45295 or Jane Gabler, x47759.

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AFGE Cares Soldier Package Program

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From Mary Jo Winfield, Executive Vice President

Thanks to everyone for the generous support of our Care Package Program! We continue to send packages to deployed soldiers and civilians - we are now over the 200 packages sent mark! Your donations are what keeps the program going, so PLEASE keep bringing them in.

Items can be dropped off in the Building 230 Union office, Room 136W. The most requested items:

Beef Jerky, Beef Sticks, Gum, Hard Candy, Trail mix, individually wrapped snack items or breakfast bars, and powdered drink mix singles (especially the Gatorade brand!)

If you have a family member or friend overseas, send in their complete name and address, along with their expected date of return home, and we will mail them out a care package. Email information to afge1658@comcast.net

Below are a couple of THANK YOU! notes we have received.

From MAJ Jeff Palmer Email January 6, 2009: I would like to thank you for your generosity and support. It is very touching to see the overwhelming support from back home which is especially meaningful over the holidays. The beef jerky and trail mix did not last very long amongst my Marines. It is the little things that really make it more comfortable out here. Thank you. Semper Fidelis.

From TSgt Shawn Robert-Evora, excerpt from Email December 11, 2008: I would like to take a moment to thank those responsible for the generous care package I received in the mail yesterday. The beef jerky is awesome and I have shared it with my co-workers along with the chips and candy. I think mail call is one of the most important events to occur in an Airman's day while deployed far away from home- especially at this time of year. To know there are people back in American supporting the armed services with notes, cards, letters and packages is quite heartwarming. Altruism goes a long way and it is truly the best give each of us can give to our fellow man. I would like to wish all of you a very pleasant holiday season and good wishes for the coming year.

Veterans Health Care Eligibility

Excerpt from a VA Press Release dated January 6, 2009

“With the downturn in the economy, VA recognizes that many veterans will feel the effects,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. “Therefore it is important that eligible veterans learn of the many ways VA has to help them afford the health care they have earned.”

Veterans whose previous income was ruled too high for VA health care may be able to enter the VA systems based upon a hardship if their current year’s income is projected to fall below federal income thresholds due to a job loss, separation from service or some other financial setback. Veterans determined eligible due to hardship can avoid copays applied to higher-income veterans. Qualifying veterans may be eligible for enrollment and receive health care at no cost.

Also eligible for no-cost VA care are most veterans who recently returned from a combat zone. They are entitled to five years of free VA care. The five year “clock” begins with their discharge from the military, not their departure from the combat zone.

Contact information: 1-877-222-VETS or www.va.gov/healtheligibility

Detroit 2009 Pay Raise - 3.76%

The Detroit Area Federal Employee pay raise for 2009 has been announced as 3.76%, consisting of a 2.9% across the board raise and 0.86% locality pay raise. General Schedule (GS) employees automatically received this pay raise effective 4 January 2009. Employees paid under Demonstration Projects may or may not receive the entire raise, dependent upon various factors.



With all the different pay systems in place, it is extremely important that every employee understand how this annual raise is administered under their pay system and the role that individual performance appraisals play in it. If you are unsure, ask your supervisor, ask your Union representative, or ask a Personnel Specialist (or ask all three!). Knowing the process before you get your rating is crucial to timely resolution of any problems that arise.

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You Can Help a Veteran Get a Job!

By Michael Johnson, AFGE Local 1658 Veterans Representative

In my volunteer capacity working with Veterans, I have noticed an increasing number of Veterans, of all generations and eras, looking for good steady employment - any employment! Many are discouraged and disheartened with the daily cascade of bad news and economic data coming from the media. However, there is hope - Read on and please share this information with any Veterans you know.

Professional Jobs. For those who have professional training, degrees and a steady work history, there are many options available - the key in this era of computers and on-line job applications is in making yourself stand above the pack.

- Tip #1 - Network! Spend the money to join professional organizations where you can get out and meet people and show some skills to an audience who may have the power to make hiring decisions. Even employers who say they are not looking really are looking, because they see this period of history as a time to shore up their talent pool with some great talent to be ready when the economy bounces back.
- Tip #2 - Remember, every organization regardless of the economy has turnover; people retire, get sick, get fired, win the lotto - find those openings!
- Tip #3 - Continue to have your professional skills validated. It's like the 100 yard dash - the person who wins really beats the other person by only a hundredth of a second. You probably have something in your career that will give you an edge, take a second look at your career history. Or, take a seminar or workshop at one of the colleges of "Life Long Learning" at the 15 public universities in the State of Michigan.
- Tip #4 - If you are young and living in your parents' basement, you may consider an unpaid or low-paid internship.

Vocational Jobs. If you are a Veteran who is hard working but has a limited professional skill base, or you are looking for a career change, you may want to consider the Workforce Development Office at any one of the 28 Local Community Colleges in Michigan. Community colleges are a low cost option for the serious student who wants to get in and get out. Students can train for a vocation in as little as six months to two years and then enter the workforce and get a good job in the following: Food Service, Health Care, Skilled and Building Trades, or the Hospitality Industry. Talk to people, network, and visit a Veteran's Representative at a community college. If your Veteran's Educational Benefits are expired or used up, many community colleges have State and Federal Grant money available.



AFGE Local 1658

Detroit Arsenal
6501 E. 11 Mile Road
Building 230, Room 136W
Warren, MI 48397-5000
(586) 574-6102
www.afge1658.org



Roster of Union Representatives January 2009

Dan Martin, President.....	574-6102
Mary Jo Winfield, Executive Vice President.....	574-5295
Ed Klein, VP, Bldg 231.....	574-6807
Martin Robinson, VP, Bldg 231.....	574-5343
Paul Veselenak, VP, Bldg 230.....	574-7632
Deborah Durr, Steward, Bldg 230.....	574-4116
Wes Crickard, Steward, Bldg 230.....	574-7042
Vernessar Morris-Lee, VP, Bldg 229.....	574-7228
Karen Pate, Steward, Bldg 229.....	753-2766
Robert Graham, VP, Bldg 200, 201, 210, 212, 215, 252.....	574-8968/6175
Ron Grigsby, VP, Bldgs 203, 205, 219, 232, SANGB.....	574-5564/5295
Bruce Storace, Steward, Police.....	574-5564
Denise Woods, Steward, SANGB.....	307-2621
Darrell Ball, Steward, Lima Tank Plant.....	(419) 221-9543
Joe Manning, Steward, Commissary.....	307-4124
Fred Napier, Steward, Fire.....	574-6021
Louis Opalka, Senior Director of Labor Relations.....	574-5307
Jane Gabler, Women's/Fair Practices Coordinator.....	574-7759
Mike Johnson, Veterans Affairs.....	574-7518

Internal Union Officers:

MaryAnn Rheaume, Treasurer.....	574-7923
Mary Lee, Secretary.....	574-6706
LeeAnne Filary, Trustee.....	574-7407
Malcolm Simpson, Trustee.....	574-7935
Greg Donahoe, Trustee.....	574-6001
Echo Hunt, Office Manager.....	574-6102

REQUEST FOR PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS FOR LABOR ORGANIZATION DUES

Form 1187/Revised April 2004

Section 5525 of title 5 United States Code (Allotments and Assignments of Pay) permits Federal agencies to collect this information. This completed form is used to request that labor organization dues be deducted from your pay and to notify your labor organization of the deduction. Completing this form is voluntary, but it may not be processed if all requested information is not provided.

This record may be disclosed outside your agency to: 1) the Department of the Treasury to make proper financial adjustments; 2) a Congressional office if you make an inquiry to that office related to this record; 3) a court or an appropriate Government agency if the Government is party to a legal suit; 4) an appropriate law enforcement agency if we become aware of a legal violation; 5) an

organization which is a designated collection agent of a particular labor organization; and 6) other Federal agencies for management, statistical and other official functions (without your personal identification).

Executive Order 9397 allows Federal agencies to use the social security number (SSN) as an individual identifier to avoid confusion caused by employees with the same or similar names. Supplying your SSN is voluntary, but failure to provide it, when it is used as the employee identification number, may mean that payroll deductions cannot be processed.

Your agency shall provide an additional statement if it uses the information furnished on this form for purposes other than those mentioned above.

Please print in BLOCK UPPERCASE LETTERING using black ink.

1. LAST NAME FIRST M.I.

2. HOME ADDRESS APT. OR SUITE NO.

CITY STATE ZIP + FOUR

3. EMPLOYEE SSN 4. DATE OF BIRTH 5. HOME PHONE NUMBER:

6. NAME OF AGENCY

7. OFFICE PHONE NUMBER AND EXT. EMAIL:

ENTER YOUR EMAIL TO RECEIVE THE FREE AFGE ACTION NEWS

Section A—Authorization By Employee

I hereby authorize the agency named above to deduct from my pay each pay period, or the first full pay period of each month, the amount certified below as the regular dues of the (Name of Labor Organization and Local #):

L

and to remit such amount to that labor organization in accordance with its arrangements with my employing agency. I further authorize any change in the amount to be deducted which is certified by the below named labor organization as a uniform change in its dues structure.

I understand that this authorization, if for a biweekly deduction, will become effective the pay

period following its receipt in the payroll office of my employing agency. I further understand that Standard Form 1188, Cancellation of Payroll Deductions for Labor Organization Dues, is available from my employing agency, and that I may cancel this authorization by filing Standard Form 1188 or other written cancellation request with the payroll office of my employing agency. Such cancellation will not be effective, however, until the first full pay period which begins on or after the next established cancellation date of the calendar year after the cancellation is received in the payroll office.

Contributions or gifts (including dues) to the labor organization shown at the left are not tax deductible as charitable contributions. However, they may be tax deductible under other provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.

GENDER (OPT.) M F DATE SIGNATURE OF EMPLOYEE

MM/DD/YY

FOR COMPLETION BY AGENCY ONLY—The above named employee and labor organization meet the requirements for dues withholding. (Mark the appropriate box. If "YES" send this form to payroll. If "NO" return this form to the labor organization.) YES NO

Section B—For Use By Labor Organization

Name of Labor Organization (Indicate Local)

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO, LOCAL: I.D. CODE:

I hereby certify that the regular dues of this organization for the above named member are currently established at \$ _____ per biweekly pay period.

SIGNATURE AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL DATE COUNCIL #

MM/DD/YY C

REBATE RECEIPT

RECRUITER LAST NAME: FIRST M.I.

RECRUITER SSN: DATE

MM/DD/YY

Check here and complete if your address has changed: Street: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

