INTERAGENCY CONNECTION

215 Dean A. McGee, Suite 153, Oklahoma City, OK 73102 **http://www.oklahoma.feb.gov/** **(405) 231-4167**

Chair's Corner

We have an active Spring planned in the way of FEB activities!

Our **annual FEB Awards** nomination process is currently open. Reminder: the deadline for all nominations to be submitted to the FEB office is Friday, February 24, 2017. Be sure to submit your nominations by this date for your employees to be included in this year's recognition ceremony!

The Oklahoma FEB has again partnered with IRS Stakeholder Partnerships, Education and Communication (SPEC) to make **"MyFreeTaxes"** available for federal employees and their families in Oklahoma who made less than $64,000 in 2016 (individual or family). We also wish to extend this opportunity to contractors who work in federal space and their family members. This partnership provides free Federal AND State tax preparation and filing assistance for qualified individuals. It's easy, safe, secure and 100% free. An employee or family member can begin the process at: www.oklahoma.feb.gov/ MyFreeTaxes.htm; if familiar with the process by using it in past years, you can go directly to: www.myfreetaxes.com/OKFEB.

The registration for you to nominate employees to participate in our **2017 Leadership FEB** class is now on our website. This is our non-traditional, experiential leadership development program. The class will begin in late March and go through October; as in the past, there will be one forum each month consisting of one-day visits to various federal agencies in Oklahoma.

Our FEB will also host the traditional leadership training courses that address the various Executive Core Qualifications for the Federal sector. This **series of one-day training classes** will begin in May. Information will be posted on our website and in future newsletters as dates and instructors are confirmed.

Pre-retirement training days will be hosted in the August timeframe. This will be planned in the same model with which you've become familiar. One day will be for employees (and spouses) covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and one day for employees (and spouses) covered by the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS). FEB Staff are working with instructors and facilities now; once information is confirmed, the registration information will be posted on our website and provided in future editions of this newsletter.

In addition to the efforts outlined, we may also have opportunities for timely topic presentations and/or other specialized training. Information will be provided, if anything extra becomes available.

I appreciate your support of our FEB and look forward to an active 2017!

John B. Fox, Chairman

What Can Be Invested in the TSP

Not all types of federal compensation can be invested in the TSP. Instead, investments must come from "basic pay," which is defined as the amount of pay based on the rate fixed by law or administrative action for the position held by an employee and is the same as basic pay for federal civilian retirement purposes.

The following elements of pay are included in the determination of basic pay for TSP purposes:

- Locality-based comparability pay as authorized by 5 U.S.C. 5304
- Environmental and night differentials for wage employees (5 U.S.C. 4343(c)(4) and 4343(f))
- Premium pay for standby time under 5 U.S.C. 5545(c)(1)
- Premium pay for law enforcement officers (5 U.S.C. 5545(c)(2), i.e., admin uncontrollable overtime)
- Availability pay (LEAP) for criminal investigators as authorized by 5 U.S.C. 5545a
- Physicians' comparability allowance as authorized by 5 U.S.C. 5948
- Overtime compensation for customs officers as authorized by 5 U.S.C. 8331(3)(G)
- Additional compensation paid to employees serving in the Republic of Panama (22 U.S.C. 3657)

The following elements of pay and types of payments are not basic pay for TSP purposes:

- Other overtime pay
- Awards, bonuses, and allowances (includes danger pay)
- Foreign and domestic post differential for general schedule, and foreign post differential for wage employees
- Severance pay
- Retroactive pay granted to a retired or deceased employee pursuant to a wage survey
- Lump-sum payment for leave, and Voluntary separation incentive payment (buyout)
- Workers' compensation payments from the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs
- Sunday, holiday and military pay
- Supervisory differentials
- Night differentials for GS employees

Reprinted from http://www.fedweek.com/retirement-policy/can-invested-tsp/

Spotlighting Information in Public Service

Did you Know?

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is the principal natural science research and information agency of the Federal government. The USGS is organized into seven mission areas: Climate and Land Use Change, Core Science Systems, Ecosystems, Energy and Minerals, Environmental Health, Natural Hazards, and Water.

The USGS Oklahoma Water Science Center, part of the Water Mission Area, has collected and interpreted data about the distribution, availability, and quality of water in Oklahoma since 1898.

Measuring streamflow during a flood on the Illinois River.

The Center's missions are to collect high-quality hydrologic data and conduct scientifically sound hydrologic investigations. The data that center staff collect and interpretive reports that they publish are used to minimize loss of life and property; manage water and related resources, enhance and protect the quality of life, and contribute to sustainable economic and physical development.

The USGS Oklahoma Water Science Center has offices in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Woodward, with about 40 employees between those offices. Staff members in those offices include Hydrologists, Hydrologic Technicians, and supervisory and support personnel.

Center staff operate a network of 193 streamflow-gaging stations, 26 lake-level monitoring stations, 26 continuous water-quality monitoring stations, and 58 groundwater-level monitoring stations in Oklahoma. Data from those continuous monitoring stations can be accessed 24 hours per day via links on the Data Center section of the Center's webpage at http://ok.water.usgs.gov.

In addition to collecting continuous hydrologic data, Center staff periodically collect water-quality samples for analysis of a wide range of chemical and microbiological constituents, including organic compounds known as "emerging contaminants". Those water-quality data also can be downloaded from the Center's web page.

Data collected by Hydrologic Technicians and Hydrologists of the Center, in addition to being widely available to the public, are used to prepare interpretive reports about water resources. Topics of reports recently published by Center staff have included: (1) reevaluation of peak streamflows in the Oklahoma Panhandle to help guide infrastructure design, (2) simulations of regional aquifer systems to help the State and others manage and use water resources, (3) evaluation of effects of land-use changes on streamflows in the Cimarron River Basin, (4) analysis of the effects of dam breaches and extent of flood inundation that could be caused by such breaches for several Oklahoma cities, and (5) assessment of groundwater and surface-water quality in a Tribal Jurisdictional Area in central Oklahoma

Center staff attend and make presentations at numerous technical and public meetings and conferences each year. Center staff also conduct free hydrologic training classes for staffs of Native American Tribes in Oklahoma and surrounding states.

The Center's work funded in part by USGS appropriated funding and in part by reimbursable funding from almost 50 other Federal, State, Tribal, and local government agencies.

Oklahoma Water Science Center staff regularly collaborate with subject-matter experts from other USGS offices, agencies, and universities on a range of projects including regional aquifer assessments, rainfall-runoff relations, aquatic ecology, and ecological streamflows to bring the best multidisciplinary water science possible to evaluate Oklahoma's water resources and trends in those resources.

Why Do Remote Workers Leave More Often?

Considering the advantages, why do remote workers leave more often than traditional in-office team members?

With studies showing a sharp increase in employees working from home, you'd think remote workers would be more likely to view their jobs as "perks" and therefore, would be more likely to stay at organizations longer…*nope*.

While teleworkers often show higher levels of satisfaction with the work, they are more prone to accept competing job offers, calls from headhunters, and small raises in pay that wouldn't sway your more traditional employees.

But the reason isn't that they're *unhappy*…the reason is that they're *not engaged.*

So, all things being equal, *why do remote workers leave more often than those who come into the office?*

People still quit managers more often than they quit jobs or companies. People always have—and always will—stay with managers they like and trust, and leave managers they don't trust. While remote workers generally don't *hate* their bosses, they report having weaker personal relationships with their manager (and vice versa by the way). *Think about it: if you don't feel a strong personal connection, loyalty or comradeship with your manager, it really doesn't matter which manager you work for, does it?*

Remote work tends to become transactional. Recent studies show that people who don't work in an office tend to get more tasks completed. But tasks are often done in isolation from the rest of the team. If people who work in isolation are simply getting their work done, and not helping, contributing or building on the work of their teammates, the feeling of collaboration is lost.

We stay put when we're having fun, engage, and like and trust the people we work with. Social connections often keep us where we are. We have ties to the team we work with and company that employs us. There's history, personal relationships, (which may be even friendly!) and memories that go a long way, convincing us we're better off where we are than starting over somewhere else. If the relationships erode, or we feel like it doesn't matter who else is on the team because you never interact with them, there's less reason to stay.

The barriers to changing jobs are way lower. If I work from home, and I get a new job that lets me work from home, *what's really changed*? My commute (down the hall and turn left at the laundry room) remains the same. The type of work will be pretty much identical, and I will be on my own anyway. Why not leave the first time I get bored, or I can make a dollar or two more an hour?

So what should we be doing about this?

We know that people stay put when they respect and feel valued by the organization they work for. They still want promotions, developmental coaching, rewards and recognition. *How are you helping your team feel connected?*

They stay with managers they feel respect and value them. They need the same coaching, development (occasional hand-holding) and support they got when they worked in the office. *How are you doing there?*

They tend to hang in there when they like the people they work for and work with, and have fun and feel like they are really contributing to a real team, not just a group of individuals.

Remote teams can be strong, productive, and stay together a good long time, if we're aware of why people get restless.

www.remoteleadershipinstitute.com/communication/why-do-remote-workers-leave-more-often/

12 WAYS TO CONFRONT DOUBT WITH CERTAINTY

Ignorance never doubts. Times are always uncertain.

Uneasy leaders understand:

1. Decisions impact others.
2. Circumstances change.
3. Failure is possible.

Boldness without doubt is tragedy waiting to happen.

When stakes are high, explore your doubts. Courageous leaders ask, "What if I'm wrong?"

Burying doubt, when you feel uncertain, closes minds.

12 ways to confront doubt with certainty:

1. Go with your highest points of confidence, even if they're low. Accept that confidence is never high in turbulent times.
2. Focus on behaviors more than results. You can't predict results. You can control behaviors.
3. Make short-term decisions. If you have reasonable certainty that you're aren't doing harm, keep going.
4. Run a pilot program.
5. Seek advice from someone who has already done it.
6. Answer what-ifs, don't just explore them. "This is what we'll do if…."
7. Express doubts and concerns in private with your inner circle.
8. Explain how you're preparing in public.
9. Adopt a 'learn and grow' approach.
10. Be decisive – stay open.
    - We're taking action based on what we know.
    - If things change, we'll reconsider.
    - When we know more, we'll adjust.
11. Admit mistakes and press forward. Pretending you were right when you were wrong makes you look like a fool.
12. Make a list of everything that could go wrong. Write the likelihood that your concerns will happen. Expend energy on the big rocks.
    - Income will fall below expectation – 20%.
    - Personnel issues will get worse – 60%
    - You could lose your job – 5%

Things don't go from uncertain to certain. They go from uncertain to less uncertain.

Reprinted from LeadershipFreak blog: https://leadershipfreak.blog/2016/12/08/12-ways-to-confront-doubt-with-certainty/

Ask candidates with disabilities these key questions

Know what you can ask a disabled applicant without putting you on a collision course with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Including people with disabilities in your hiring efforts is a good idea, but you should know what you can ask a disabled applicant without putting you on a collision course with the Americans with Disabilities Act. These are some safe sample questions—provided they're asked under the right conditions:

• **"Do you need any special equipment or setting for the interview?"** This is the kind of question you should ask everyone. It indicates your willingness to accommodate individual needs, regardless of their cause. You might explain what the interview and hiring process will involve, such as a written test or demonstration of skills.

• **"Do you use any particular technology at work that helps you do your job?"** You're on safe ground under one of three conditions: 1) The candidate tells you up front about a disability that isn't obvious; 2) The candidate lets you know that he or she will need reasonable accommodation to do the work; or 3) Your own observations of an obvious disability lead you to reasonably believe an accommodation may be necessary. Just don't probe into the underlying cause of the disability. Stick to workplace issues.

• **"What accommodations have you needed in previous jobs?"** This question is generally permissible under the conditions listed above. Just be careful not to ask the question in such a way that you seem to be looking for information about an undisclosed or unapparent disability.

• **"Tell me an example of how you've used technology to perform your job duties."** Again, this query is safe in the three situations described above, as long as you're not trying to elicit information about a disability. Emphasize that you're only interested in job duties, not personal activities.

• **"Do you foresee any difficulties with transportation or scheduling?"** A better way to explore this issue is to discuss your attendance standards and ask whether the candidate can meet them—and to ask this of every candidate, regardless of disability issues.

—Adapted from the Workforce Online website

Reprinted from: https://www.managebetter.biz/Main/Articles/30934.aspx??utm_source=salesforce&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Ragan+Manage+Better+Insider+-+Final+-+July+19

FEB: While this article contains useful information and guidance; always check with your HR office regarding interview questions to ensure you are abiding by your Agency policies.

Federal Times Retirement Article (December 2016)

Under the Trump administration, change is inevitable. Some agencies will prosper while others my find themselves diminished or eliminated. The same goes for their employees.

If you suspect your agency will take a hit and you have the right combination of age and service, this may be a good time to retire. The end of 2016 leave year would be the best time to do it. That's especially true if you carried the maximum amount of annual leave into the current year and haven't used much of the time you've accumulated since then. Here's why.

When you retire, all of those hours of unused annual leave will be paid to you in a lump sum, which will be calculated as if you had remained on the job until that leave ran out. Assuming there's a pay increase in January, all the hours that fall after its effective date of Jan 8, 2017, will be paid to you at the higher hourly rate.

Another incentive to retire at the end of the year is that you'll be paying less in taxes than before you retired. Here's why. First, your income will not only be reduced but you may also fall into a lower tax bracket. Second, a portion of your annuity will be tax free because it's a return of the money you contributed to the retirement fund while you were working, money on which you've already paid taxes.

If you decide to retire, it's important to pick the right date because the rules are different for CSRS and FERS. If you are a FERS employee, you must retire no later than the last day of a month to be on the annuity roll in the following month. If you are a CSRS employee, you may retire up to the third day of a month and be on the annuity roll in the same month. However, your annuity payment will be reduced by $1/30^{th}$ for every one of those three days that you aren't on the annuity roll.

Here's what could happen if you pick the wrong date. If you are a FERS employee who retires Jan. 1 instead of Dec. 31, you won't go on the annuity roll until Feb. 1 and won't receive your first annuity payment until March 1. Similarly, if you are a CSRS employee who retires Jan 4 instead of Jan 3, you'll be faced with the same delay in receiving your first annuity payment.

Here's something else to consider: If you are a CSRS employee who is debating whether to retire Dec. 31 or wait until Jan 3, you'll have to weigh the value of three extra days at full pay versus a $1/10^{th}$ reduction in your January annuity payment.

You also need to be aware that you'll only get credit for annual and sick leave earned during a pay period if you retire at the end of that pay period. You won't get any credit for those hours if you retire before that pay period ends. This rule will affect anyone who retires either on the last day of December or no later than Jan 3. That's because the last pay period in December ends Dec. 24. And the last pay period in 2016 ends on Jan. 7, 2017, too late for you to be on the annuity roll in January.

While a new administration may increase your desire to retire, make sure to consider other factors before you make up your mind to leave.

Article written by Reg Jones who was the head of retirement and insurance planning at the Office of Personnel Management, published in the Federal Times, December 2016 edition.

HOW TO RISE ABOVE SQUEAKY-WHEEL LEADERSHIP AND ENERGIZE TOP PERFORMANCE

Squeaky-wheel leaders spend too much time focused on broken stuff.

The seduction of squeaky-wheel leadership makes confused leaders feel important. But, ultimately it means:

1. Failure outshines progress.
2. Poor performers take priority over top.
3. Environments migrate toward low energy and disengagement.

Today's HR challenge is retaining and maximizing top performers while developing the middle.

Compassion versus a kick in the pants:

#1. Lean toward compassion, when top performers fall short. *Typically, they kick themselves in the pants already.* A kind word from you is gold when top performers feel disappointed in themselves.

#2. Avoid contradicting top performer's self-condemnation. It falls on deaf ears. Agree with them instead. You're right. You did fall short.

Compassion is turning toward the future with renewed focus and energy, not shielding people from reality.

'Woe is me' never produces forward movement.

#3. Enable forward-facing reflection.

- Express confidence. If history tells me anything, you'll rise to the challenge next time.
- Focus on development. What are you learning?
- How does this disappointment enhance your capacity and expand your ability?

#4. Pull with.

The magic words of servant-leadership are, "How can I help?".

#5. Provide bodacious challenge. Don't shy away from laying down new challenges after disappointing performance.

Raise the bar, don't lower it. Top performers relish a chance to prove themselves. After all, if you learn from failure, you reach higher next time.

New challenges, after disappointing performance, let top performers know you still believe in them.

https://leadershipfreak.wordpress.com/2016/11/28/how-to-rise-above-squeaky-wheel-leadership-and-energize-top-performance/

THE 5 MOST PAINFUL LEADERS TO BE AROUND

Some leaders are painful to be around. To be honest, sometimes you and I are the pain.

We've all been the leader others complain about.

The 5 most painful leaders to be around:

1. Nit-pickers. You're a bad case of heartburn when you belittle the 80% that's good with the 20% that's bad. (Enjoy the 80%. Improve the 20%.)
2. Ball-droppers. You're a toothache when you don't follow-through and follow-up.
3. Drama-makers. You're an empty glass in the desert when everything's a crisis.
4. Down-in-the-mouthers. You're a stone in a shoe when you always need a pick-me-up from your team.
5. Hand-wringers. You're an energy suck when all you see is what could go wrong.

Don't expect success if you're a constant pain.

5 surprising ways to advance your success with others:

#1. Care deeply about relationships. (It's not just results.)

The most important relationships are with people who depend on you.

If you care about your future, care about relationships with coworkers, supervisors, and direct reports. The people closest to you are most relevant to job satisfaction, opportunity, and advancement.

#2. Invite and act on feedback.

1. I'm working on connecting with the team. (Context enhances feedback.)
2. What do you see me doing that strengthens connections?
3. What do you see me doing that weakens connection?
4. What suggestions do you have? (Seeking input elevates the status of giver and receiver.)
5. Would you tell me when I do something that works? Doesn't work?

#3. Advance the agenda of others, without sacrificing your own.

1. What challenges are you facing?
2. What's important about this?
3. What crossroads are you facing?
4. How can I help?

Those who add value are always welcomed.

#4. Understand the difference between advising and advocating.

Advisers aren't attached to advice. Freedom goes down as advocating goes up.

#5. Say what others fear saying.

1. Point out inconsistencies.
2. Describe negative patterns.
3. Challenge and confront in private.

https://leadershipfreak.wordpress.com/2016/11/29/the-5-most-painful-leaders-to-be-around/

UPCOMING EVENTS
February 2017

Feb 1, 2017	**Agency Visits: OKC**
Feb 2, 2017	**Agency Visits-Enid**
Feb 3, 2017	**Training for NPS**
Feb 6-7, 2017	**FEMA L-548 COOP Program Mgr**
Feb 8-10, 2017	**FEMA L-550 COOP Planners Course**
Feb 13-17, 2017 All Day	**FEB Executive Director Conference** San Antonio, TX
Feb 24, 2017	**Deadline for Award Nominations** POC: FEB, 405-231-4167

INSPIRATION CORNER

High expectations are the key to everything. –Sam Walton

Passion begins on the inside of a person or an organization and then works its way out. –Bob Moawad

It isn't common ground that bonds people together, it's higher ground. –Tom Brown

There will always be a conflict between "good and "good enough." –Henry Martyn Leland

Every moment spent planning saves three or four in execution. –Crawford H. Greenewalt

Aim so high you'll never be bored. –Linda Gibbons

We must not allow other people's limited perceptions to define us. –Virginia Satir

It's important that people should know what you stand for. It is equally important that they know what you won't stand for. –Mary Waldrin

Your Federal Executive Board

"Federal Executive Boards (FEBs) are generally responsible for improving coordination among federal activities and programs in…areas outside of Washington, D.C…FEBs support and promote national initiatives of the President and the administration and respond to the local needs of the federal agencies and the community." (GAO-04-384)

We applaud the efforts of the Oklahoma FEB Executive Policy Council members who ensure information is provided to direct our activities and efforts:

- Jeffrey Allen, Executive Director, Air Force Sustainment Center
- David Andra, Meteorologist-in-Charge, National Weather Service Forecast Office, Norman
- David Engel, Chief Administrative Judge, Social Security Administration, Tulsa
- Julie Gosdin, District Director, US Postal Service, Oklahoma City
- Dottie Overal, Director, Small Business Administration
- Betty Tippeconnie, Superintendent, BIA-Concho Agency
- Ken Valentine, Special Agent in Charge, US Secret Service

This newsletter is published monthly as a cost-effective tool for communicating events and issues of importance to the federal community in Oklahoma. If you have news of interest, please email to LeAnnJenkins@gsa.gov no later than the 15th of each month.

Officers

Chair: **John Fox**
Warden
Federal Transfer Center
Oklahoma City

Vice-Chair: **Michelle Coppedge**
Director
FAA Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center

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Army Fires Center of Excellence
Fort Sill

Staff

Director: LeAnn Jenkins
Assistant: Lisa Smith-Longman

2017 Public Service Recognition Week
Employee of the Year Awards Banquet

Event information:
Date: Monday, May 1, 2017
Time: 11:30am-1:00pm
Location: Remington Park
One Remington Place, Oklahoma City, OK 73111

Location: . If you are traveling on I-35, exit west on NE 50th (also known as Remington Place). If you are traveling on I-44, exit south on M.L. King Boulevard. (specific directions can be obtained from www.mapquest.com or www.google.com/maps). Enter the door marked CASINO; walk straight back, just left of the escalators to our event.

Valet parking will be available for our Awards Program

If you require special dietary accommodation, please contact the FEB Office, 405-231-4167.

Nominees should arrive no later than 11:00 a.m. for pre-brief.

Name:______________________________ Agency: _____________________________

Address: ___________________________ Phone: _____________________________

Cost: $25.00 per person

Payment must be made in advance

[ ] Cash [ ] Check [ ] Credit Card
Phone #:

If you wish to utilize a credit card for payment, please provide the contact number for the credit card information.

Luncheon Tickets will be mailed to the address listed above for all pre-paid registrations with sufficient time to receive before the luncheon. This allows expedited entry into the event, without checking in at the registration table.

Please mail with payment to: Oklahoma Federal Executive Board 215 Dean A. McGee, Ste 153 Oklahoma City, OK 73102	Fax to: 405-231-4165	Email to: LeAnn.Jenkins@gsa.gov or Lisa.Smith-Longman@gsa.gov

Make checks payable to: Oklahoma Federal Executive Board

Cancellation Policy: Understanding that unforeseen circumstances may preclude an individual from attending, refunds and cancellations will be permitted through April 21, 2017. However, after that date, registrations must be honored by the individual or agency involved. If you are unable to attend, substitute attendees are authorized and encouraged!

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
			1 Agency Visits: OKC	**2** Agency Visits: Enid	**3**	**4**
5	**6** FEMA L-548 COOP Program Mgr Class	**7**	**8** FEMA L-550 COOP Planners Course	**9**	**10**	**11**
12	**13** FEB Executive Director Conf	**14**	**15** CFC Training on changes	**16**	**17**	**18**
19	**20** President's Day	**21**	**22**	**23**	**24** Deadline for FEB Award Nominations	**25**
26	**27**	**28**		February 2017		

OKLAHOMA FEDERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD
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