



THE NUGGET

NEWSLETTER FOR THE ARMY PACIFIC REGION
PACIFIC REGION CIVILIAN PERSONNEL OPERATIONS CENTER,
FORT RICHARDSON, ALASKA

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Deverette Williams, Director Pacific
Region CPOC



October 5th was a significant day for many of us in the Department of the Army. Many organizations were realigned to new commands. This includes us in the Civilian Human Resources community. All of the employees of the Civilian Personnel Operations Center, the Alaska Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) the Hawaii CPAC, and the Japan CPAC became part of the Civilian Human Resources Agency (CHRA).

The new agency now integrations -

- ◆ Civilian Training, Education and Development System;
- ◆ Civilian Personnel Field Activity;
- ◆ CPACs;
- ◆ overseas CPOCs; and
- ◆ the Civilian Personnel Operations Center Management Agency.

CHRA is part of the Army leadership's vision to streamline headquarters, create more agile and responsive staffs, reduce layers of review and approval, focus on mission, and transform the Army. The establishment of the CHRA will enable the Army to enhance the quality of service provided to its Civilian employees and support the Army's vision for transformation.

Like many of the personnel to whom we provide support, we too are going through an adjustment period to resolve administrative processes, adjustments in manning and shifts in missions and functions. Yet, in the face of all these challenges, we will continue to provide the best possible services in the most timely manner possible.

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[THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN OPEN SEASON](#)

It is almost TSP Open Season again. During this open season your new elections will be effective between 14 December 2003 and 11 January 2004. The maximum limits on contributions are increasing during this open season to 14% for FERS employees and 9% for CSRS employees. The maximum contribution for the year 2004 is increasing to \$13,000.

During open season, you are permitted to process only one change to your TSP election. If you have created a transaction and you wish to change it, you must cancel it before it processes and create a new transaction. If your transaction has processed, you are not permitted to cancel it and create a new transaction. TSP contributions can be terminated at any time if you decide to stop contributing. For more information on the open season, visit the following websites:

<https://www.abc.army.mil> or www.tsp.gov

[FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFITS OPEN SEASON](#)

The 2004 FEHB Open Season will occur from 10 November through 8 December 2003. During this open season, you may change your FEHB coverage. The effective date for new elections will be 11 January 2004.

If you are not in a pay status on the effective date, your election will be processed after you have returned to pay status. Before making an election, take the time to verify the cost and coverage of the plan you are interested in. Employees with FEHB and a work schedule that is not full time, pay a higher amount of the employee premium because the government share of the premium is reduced based on the number of hours the employee works.

[TSP CATCH-UP CONTRIBUTIONS](#)

Thrift Savings Plan catch-up contributions for employees over 50. Effective pay period beginning September 7, 2003, Thrift Savings Plan participants age 50 and over during 2003 will be eligible to begin making a new type of tax-deferred contribution to the TSP. The maximum amount of regular contributions for 2003 is 13 percent of basic pay for FERS employees and 8 percent of basic pay for CSRS employees. Check with your agency for sign-up procedures. A copy of the sign-up form may be obtained from the TSP website,

www.tsp.gov/forms/oc03-03.pdf, or from your agency.

Annual aggregate limit processing. The annual aggregate limit is the maximum amount of specific earnings that an employee can be paid in a pay year. Currently the annual aggregate limit is applied to all civilian employees paid by the DFAS. The complete explanation with examples on annual aggregate limit processing can be found at the DCPS CSR website or you may contact your local CSR.

[TSP CATCH-UP CONTRIBUTION Q&A](#)

Q: What happens to TSP catch-up Elections when the employee goes on LWOP?

A: If the employee returns to duty in the same pay year, we will restart the contributions without any further actions from personnel. DCPS will systematically date-end the records effective the last day of the pay year. So, if the employee's LWOP should extend into a new pay year, then it would be necessary to flow an action to restart the deduction in the New Year

Q: Will TSP Catch-up be added to Appointment RPA Extra Information?

A: A minimal number of employees would be eligible for TSP catch-up at the time of appointment. In addition, TSP Election must be in place before TSP catch-up can be processed and TSP catch-up requires a separate PAY500 transaction.

Q: TSP Catch-up is missing from Payroll Regeneration process.

A: This indeed was an oversight that will be corrected with a new CRT as quickly as possible.

Q: TSP Catch-up is not being populated to the CSU.

A: A separate requirement document is being worked to modify the CSU to include TSP Catch-up.

[MY PAY](#)

The Pay Check is a new eNewsletter designed to pass along news of interest to Federal civilian employees paid by DFAS and useful information to our Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) in the field. We hope you find these articles helpful. We plan to publish this newsletter periodically. If you have questions about your pay, please contact your local CSR.

[FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNTS \(FSA\)](#)

Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA). The Office of Personnel Management has established two new FSA benefits: Health Care FSA (HCFSA) and Dependent Care FSA (DCFSA). HCFSA pays for the uncovered

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portions of qualified medical costs and DCFSA allow for payment of eligible expenses for dependent care.

DFAS myPAY CUSTOMERS CAUTIONED AGAINST 'LOOKALIKE' SITES.

ARLINGTON VA (Oct. 3) – The two million military and civilian users of myPay are being cautioned to use only the official myPay site (<https://mypay.dfas.mil>) when seeking to access pay account information.

"Personal information is valuable and should be safeguarded," said Claudia L. Bogard, director of Corporate Communications for the Defense Finance and Accounting Service. "Don't provide your personal information to any Web site unless you know it can be trusted."

Look-alike sites have recently frustrated myPay customers who have been confused by accidentally finding their way to a commercial site that is in no way affiliated with DFAS or the Department of Defense.

DFAS' myPay is a secure, DFAS-operated Web site that lets active duty, National Guard and Reserve military members, civilian employees, and military retirees and annuitants take charge of their pay accounts online. The DFAS myPay Web site is found at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/>

ARMY RESUME BUILDER (ARB)

Effective 11 November 2003, the "new and improved" ARB will be initiated. The ARB will continue to assist applicants in preparing their resume in a secure environment through the use of Userids/passwords. The new ARB will no longer provide system generated Userids/passwords. Internal applicants (applicants currently working for the Department of the Army) will be prompted to provide their AKO Userids/passwords when they log in to the new ARB while external applicants will be provided with a unique Userid/password. More information will follow from the HQDA staff regarding the procedures for how applicants will be able to retrieve their resumes from the current ARB. There will be no impact on the resumes currently in the Centralized Resumix database.

DE FACTO EMPLOYMENT

The Department of the Army and The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) have made a commitment to reduce and subsequently eliminate De Facto employment. De Facto employment is the

service of an individual who, although may be physically working in a position, is not legally appointed when an appointment was intended. Examples are when

- ◆ an employee is allowed to enter on duty prior to the effective date established by the CPOC;
- ◆ an employee is allowed to work beyond the expiration date of a limited appointment; or
- ◆ approval to extend or convert limited appointments are not made in a timely manner or without the approval of the CPOC.

When any of the above instances occur the individual will not receive benefits nor have deductions taken for the period worked. They will not accrue leave and the service is not creditable toward their Service Computation Date (SCD). This is a disservice to the individual as well as their dependents.

The Department of the Army, DFAS, and the Pacific Region CPOC and CPAC's ask that managers assist in reducing and subsequently eliminating De Facto employment.

SPLIT DISBURSEMENT PAY OPTION

Effective for travel beginning on or after September 19, 2003, DoD civilian employees traveling on TDY travel orders are required to complete Block 1 of the DD Form 1351-2 (travel voucher). This block addresses how the employee wishes to be paid (check or EFT). It also allows the employee to select the "Split Disbursement" option thereby sending a designated portion of the travel settlement directly to the Government Sponsored Charge Card. Travelers are encouraged to use split disbursement to the maximum extent possible. The traveler must designate a method of payment (either EFT or check or split disbursement). Due to travel payment system constraints, if the traveler elects the split disbursement option, the EFT block must be checked. There is no capability to send the traveler a check and the charge cards company a split disbursement. The travel office will disburse travel entitlements based on the information provided in Block 1.

If Block 1 is empty and the travel order states that the traveler is a charge card holder, the travel office is required to add the lodging receipts, rental car charges and any air fare claimed and send the proceeds directly to the charge card company as a split disbursement. This action is required by the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) memorandum dated April 23, 2003. To ensure that travel entitlements are disbursed

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according to the traveler's preferences, the traveler must complete Block 1 of the DD Form 1351-2.

HOW MANAGERS CAN MONITOR NTE DATES

We have recently noticed that sometimes extension actions for employee appointments do not arrive at the CPOC with enough lead time to allow us to process the action before the NTE date.

When the manager intends to extend the employee, but fails to enter the RPA in on time, then the employee drops out of the personnel system or is reverted back to their permanent position. This causes many problems for the employee and the manager because pay is affected and then the manager may have to re-announce the vacant position.

To monitor your employee's NTE dates you can enter the Civilian Servicing Unit (CSU) application through Army Regional Tools (ART). Once you have logged into ART, just follow these steps.

Step 1 – Select "Centralized Applications"; then "Central Site"; and finally "Central Site CSU". You will need to enter your userid and password.

Step 2 – Click OK.

Step 3 – Click on " Reports" listed at the bottom of your screen.

Step 4- Scroll down the alphabetized list until you see Suspense Action Report and highlight the name of the report

Step 5- At the bottom of that screen you will see "Items, Sort, Process, Exit". Click on "Item" and the screen will show you what type of items you will see for each employee, such as Servicing Office ID, Name, SSN, etc. Click OK before exiting.

Step 6- Select sort. If you would like to change the sequence on how you would like to view the item, insert the number in the column by placing a (1) for the first time and so forth.

Step 7- Now you are ready to process your report. Click on "Process". Another screen will appear so that you can enter the 'from' and 'to' dates that you would like to pull. Your report is running.

Step 8- Your report has finished running. Click on "Next", this will prompt the system to generate your first page. If you have several pages, at the pages, at the top of the screen you can click on "Next" to

view the next page. This report will enable you to see when your employee will end their appointments and other NTE dates on your employees.

REMINDER

When submitting a Request for Personnel Action (RPA) to extend an employee, please submit the RPA to the CPOC at least one month **Before the action becomes effective.**

RESTORATION OF ANNUAL LEAVE

The agency may restore annual leave that would be lost if the agency determines that an exigency (work situation requiring immediate action) of the service exists, if the employee is ill or if the agency makes an administrative error that causes the loss of annual leave otherwise accruable. Leave restoration in these instances is only possible if the leave was scheduled in advance. The leave must be scheduled and approved in writing before the start of the third pay period before the end of the leave year (30 November). In addition, employees at installations closing or realigning pursuant to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 will have excess leave restored whether or not such leave was scheduled. When DA closes BRAC designated bases, it is an exigency of the service permitting employees to carry over use-or-lose leave without meeting the criteria for restoration.

Employees must use their restored leave within two years after the end of the calendar year in which the leave is restored unless there is an extended exigency under OPM rules as defined in 5 CFR, Section 630.309.

FAREWELLS:

Frank M. Yencharis retired as the Alaska CPAC Chief, effective 1 November 2003. He was born in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, attended college at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York and earned a Bachelor's Degree in Economics from Wilkes College, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

Frank began his Federal career as a Personnel Intern at the Picatinny Arsenal, Dover, New Jersey in August of 1970. Since graduating the intern program, he has held the positions of Employee Development Specialist,

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Personnel Staffing Specialist, Personnel Management Specialist, Employee Relations Specialist, and Labor Relations Specialist. He served in these positions at Camp Zama, Japan; Manheim, Germany, Letterkenny Army Depot, Pennsylvania; and Kaiserslautern, Germany.

Frank accepted the position of Supervisory Employee Relations Specialist at Fort Richardson, Alaska, in February 1994. When Army regionalized its Civilian Personnel Offices, Frank was reassigned to the position of Personnel Officer with the Alaska Civilian Personnel Advisory Center, the position from which he ends his long and illustrious civil service career.

Jeanne T. Scharch has accepted a position with the Defense Contract Management Agency at Carson, California. Ms. Scharch came to the CPOC In October 2002 from her position as the Personnel Advisor, GS-14, for the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS), Europe. Her office in Wiesbaden, German, provided both staff and operations level support for DoDDS employees in 11 countries.

Ms. Scharch's Federal career began in 1971, as a GS-2 clerk at the Naval Station, Annapolis, Maryland. She progressed to the GS-12 level as a military personnel management specialist working in various positions at Naval Station, Anacostia, Maryland; Headquarters, Marine Corps and the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Washington, DC. Ms. Scharch made a lateral career move in 1991 to Personnel (civilian) Management Specialist working for the Office of Civilian Personnel Management, Northeast Region, Washington Detachment, where she conducted Personnel Management Evaluations and provided staff guidance to Navy civilian personnel offices in the metropolitan DC area. In 1993, she served as the senior Employee Development Specialist for the Navy Secretariat/ Headquarters Human Resources Office, Washington, DC. Ms. Scharch transferred to the Human Resources Office, Marine Corps Air Station, Iwakuni, Japan, as the Employee Relations and Employee Development Specialist in 1994. She was promoted to the Human Resources Officer position, GS-13, at that location in 1995. Ms. Scharch returned to the U.S. as a Personnel Management Specialist, GS-13, for the Office of the Deputy Secretary of the Navy (Civilian Personnel/EEO) where she prepared Deputy's responses to Congressional inquiries as well as served as the Department of Navy Federal Women's Program Manager. She began working for DoDDS as the Personnel Center Representative at the

Brussels, Belgium, Civilian Personnel Field Office in 1998.

Ms. Scharch earned her Bachelors Degree from the University of Maryland and is completing her MBA with Cameron University. She is a member of the Defense Leadership and Management Program (DLAMP) class of 2000. She has received many awards during her career. She is from the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Ms. Scharch became a Distinguished Toastmaster in 1991. She has been a host family and volunteer for the Youth for Understanding International Exchange Program.