

Debbie Mullikin is Elected New National NTEU Vice President

Debbie Mullikin was elected National Vice President at the NTEU National Convention in Hollywood, Florida.

Ms. Mullikin, a long time steward for NTEU73 replaces Pat Breitenstein who did not run for re-election.

National Vice President is not to be confused with National Executive Vice President, which is the office immediately beneath National President. National Vice Presidents are elected from each NTEU district and serve on the Executive Board for the national union. Ms. Mullikin has been elected to serve a two year term.



Riley Hears Employee Concerns at Department Lunch & Learns

NTEU73 President Rick Riley has initiated a program in which he will be meeting with groups of employees from different areas around the service center. He has already met with employees from Receipt & Control, Accounting, DPO and Florence Files. The union provided lunch for employees who attended and Mr. Riley plans to do at least four meetings per month over the next year.

"I think these meetings were very successful," said Mr. Riley. "They really give me an opportunity to find out what is going on out there and also gives us a chance to

inform the employees about what we are doing on their behalf."

Invitations were sent out to members and non-members alike. Mr. Riley said he

wants to hear from all employees to learn their concerns.

"Too many times employees are not heard by their union officials and I want to change that,"

Continued Mr. Riley. "We are going to try to eventually see everybody, but if you want

your area moved up on the list, just let us know."

Already the union is addressing several things that came up in the meetings, including a possible higher graded duties



NTEU73 President Rick Riley and VP Karen Walsh meet with employees at the Florence Files building.

Chapter Supports New NTEU President Tony Reardon at National Convention

Tony Reardon is now the new National President of NTEU, being elected at the NTEU National Convention in Hollywood, Florida. Mr. Reardon was supported by NTEU73 delegates at the convention, obtaining all of the Chapter votes and 89% of the total votes. Per the Chapter bylaws, the President and Vice President of the Chapter are delegates, splitting the Chapters' votes between them.

"I have been in contact with Tony several times during the past few months and am glad he was elected. I think he will do a

fantastic job," said NTEU73 President Rick Riley. "Everyone will miss Colleen and Tony has big shoes to fill, but he has been Colleen's right hand man for the past several years and I am sure he will be able to handle the responsibility well."

Mr. Riley was, of course, referring to former NTEU President Colleen Kelley who retired, opening the spot for Mr. Reardon.

NTEU elects a President at the National Convention every four years. Ms. Kelley had been elected four times to serve four year terms.

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NTEU Chapter 73

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From the Desk of NTEU73 President Rick Riley

**“As always, At Your Service”
— Rick Riley**

What does Labor Day mean to you? For many it marks the last weekend of the summer, a last chance to use the pool, have a cookout, or maybe a family reunion. Of course, we all know it is a Federal Holiday and most of us will be home with our families. This year, Labor Day takes on a special meaning to me as President of Chapter 73.

I just returned from the National Convention for NTEU where I represented our Chapter as a delegate, as did Karen. We witnessed and participated in history and that made me reflect on our own history and our Chapter.

For the first time ever, a sitting President of NTEU and two previous presidents were in attendance. Tony Reardon was installed as President by outgoing President, Colleen Kelley. Bob Tobias, the President of NTEU prior to Colleen was also there.

This year is the 75th anniversary of NTEU. When you consider how far this union has come, the rights it has earned for federal employees, the benefits it has fought for and obtained for our members, the leadership in influencing Congress

that our Union has provided, it is truly amazing. NTEU is on the frontlines fighting for us day in and day out.



Colleen Kelley will be missed, not only by us, but several of those on the other side of the table and in Congress. I am sad to see her go, she was a lioness protecting her members, and people listened when she roared.

At the same time, I was happy for her, she has more than earned her retirement. NTEU sent Colleen off in fine fashion with an evening of tributes. I was very proud to be there to see all this history made.

Karen and I also got to congratulate the incoming President and Vice President. Tony Reardon and Jim Bailey will do a great job. They both are coming to visit Chapter 73 in the future and soon.

So while you celebrate Labor Day with your family and friends, think of NTEU for a moment and be grateful for all they have done for all of us. NTEU has the best contracts in the federal government. That didn't just happen by accident! Have a wonderful Labor Day everyone!

Florence Union Office Is Now Staffed

The office at the Florence Facility is now being staffed every day from 7am-9am. With stewards also on call.

Different stewards will be making sure Florence employees have somewhere to go with their problems or concerns. On Mondays, Jan Colwell will be there. Tuesdays and Thursdays are covered by Sarah Correa and Wednesdays and Fridays also by Jan Colwell.

“As is always the case, off-site locations feel like they are left out and I am trying hard to correct that,” said NTEU73 Rick Riley. “If it becomes apparent that more time is needed I will certainly make sure the office is open more. We have lost a few stewards in Florence, but have added a couple. I am committed to making sure

employees there get the same quality representation that employees enjoy in Covington.”

In addition to the office hours, employees can contact a steward at any time if they have an urgent need. If you prefer, you can also call the union office at 5370 and a steward will be assigned to your case.

Currently there are two Florence stewards: Jan Colwell and Sarah Correa. If you are interested in becoming an NTEU steward, send an email to Vice President/Chief Steward Karen Walsh and tell her of your interest. NTEU73 would like to have stewards in every area of the Service Center.

NTEU73 Needs Volunteers for Legislative Committee

With election time fast approaching, NTEU73 is gearing up its legislative program in an attempt to influence elected officials and Congress in regard to federal employee issues. NTEU takes a leading roll nationally in lobbying Congress and attempting to elect officials who are friendly to the federal workforce.

NTEU73 Legislative Coordinator Debbie Mullikin is asking for volunteers to serve on the local committee.

"We do a lot of different things," Ms. Mullikin said. "Everything from letter writing campaigns, meeting with Congressional members in person to educating the members about which candidates are receptive to our issues."

NTEU73 has been nationally recognized for excellence in lobbying activities and it is a tradition that the chapter is committed to repeating.

"Lately many in Congress have been seemingly opposed to federal employees," continued Ms. Mullikin. "We are constantly under attack on a whole range of issues, not the least of which is our pay, retirement, medical insurance...you name it! I have never seen it like it has been over the last several years. It just seems like many in Congress see no value in the federal workforce. Don't they realize that if we did not do the work, they would have to get someone else to do it? If we are given the proper tools, we can do the job as well as anyone."

"I am looking for volunteers to help with our efforts. All of this work has to be done on your own time and not here at work. But it is vitally important to let Congress know about our issues and educate them about what we do for the country."

NTEU has a national political action

committee (PAC) called TEPAC.

Members can donate money to TEPAC and that money is used to lobby Congress and promote candidates that are friendly to federal workers.

"There are a lot of lobbyists with a lot of money and most are not working for us," explained Ms. Mullikin. "TEPAC helps to level the playing field but much more needs to be done. We need some folks to step up and help. There is a lot to do and the more people who can help, the more we can accomplish."

If you would like to volunteer for the NTEU73 Legislative Committee please email Debbie Mullikin at djm17@nteu73.org. Please include your home email address and/or your home or cell number so that you can be contacted. Or call the union office at 5700 to volunteer.

NTEU Chapter 73 Stewards

Day Shift:

4th Street - A.J. Allen, Dorothy Barry -Elliot, Tommie Braswell, Ron Cunningham, Nicole Guethlein, Brenda Herrin, William Kohler, Lynn Krueger, Daniel McNamara, Laura Mitchell (**Treasurer**), Michelle Robinson, Jeff Seibert

GWC—Pat Breitenstein, Steve Clark, Tomeka Cottrell, Liz Herald, Marlo Hodge-Hummond, Loretha Hudson, Vicki King, Jessica Jacobs, Bob Krekeler, Staci Lee, Tonya Morris, Debbie Mullikin, Chris Pierce, Rick Riley (**President**), John Selmeier, Melinda Smith, Michele Townsend, Karen Walsh (**Vice President-Chief Steward**), Virginia Watson, Julia Wiley (**Secretary**)

IRRC - Florence - Jan Colwell, Sarah Corea.

Swing Shift:

4th Street—Julie Orick, Beverly Johnson, Stephanie Slayton, Crystal Taylor, Torika Thompson

GWC—William Dreier, Ron DuMoulin, Jim Gregory, Terri Hampton, Cheryl Meadows, Karen Payne, Robert Starks,

New NTEU73.org Website Up and Running

A newly designed Chapter website has been unveiled and it looks great!

Bryan Jackson, the webmaster, has completely revamped the old site. While it is not complete, it soon will be.

"We have been working on it for a while," said Mr. Jackson. "We will be adding more and more information and features as time goes on. We want the site to be user friendly and contains all the information that our members need in a one-stop-shop."

"I saw it and was very impressed," said Jeff Seibert, NTEU73 Director of Communications. "I knew Bryan would do a fantastic job and I was certainly not disappointed. The website really needed to be improved"

Mr. Seibert says that the goal of the Chapter is to once again be first in the national competition for the website and the newsletter.

"Every NTEU National Convention, there is an award given for the best website and newsletter in the country. We won both

awards when the convention was in Honolulu and we intend to do it again." It is a challenge Bryan Jackson readily accepts.



NTEU73 Web Master
Bryan Jackson

"I think when you win an award like that it just shows that the Chapter is serious about communicating with its members," added Mr. Jackson.

"The commitment to Communication is something that has been missing in the this Chapter," Added Mr. Seibert. "We are committed to putting out quality products on the web and in paper formats."

In addition to the website, **The Force** has been redesigned with a greater emphasis on local issues and news. Also, new Force Alerts are published periodically for issues that are time sensitive.

"All of the issues of **The Force** will eventually be on the website as well as all Force Alerts," said Mr. Seibert. "We will also have research areas, photos, announcements and other features."

"When you check it out, keep in mind it is a work under construction, added Mr. Seibert. But we plan on winning that award at the convention in Puerto Rico."

NTEU73 Partners With Old West Fest for Fun

Step back into the days of the old west: cowboys, gunfights, saloons. Old West Fest happens every year in Brown County, Ohio. It is similar to the Renaissance Festival, but much more interactive for the kids. And of course, the venue is much different.

"There is so much for the kids to do it is mind boggling," says Rick Riley, who even before he was elected as President of NTEU73, has been involved in making Old West a reality. So when Rick had an opportunity to get NTEU73 members a discount for the event, he jumped at the chance.

"We have a weekend where NTEU members can get in at a discount," said Mr. Riley. "It's really a lot of fun for the entire family and I am glad that NTEU73 can have small part in it this year."

"There are shooting demonstrations and even a gun fight," Mr. Riley said. "If you are lucky, you might even get to see me get shot!"

Mr. Riley has been performing at Old West Fest for several years. The festival

has grown each year he has been involved.

"I am hoping for a big crowd this year. It really is a lot of fun. We throw kids in jail and everything. They love it. Kids really do have a great time."

It is obvious that Rick Riley enjoys it just

Mr. Riley said that the guy who owns the property where the festival is held even built a replica of Dodge City.

"It really is like stepping back into the past," especially the way it has been built up over the past few years. And it seems to get even bigger every year!"

"The one thing that may put a damper on the festivities is Mr. Riley's ability to participate this year."

"Well, I have a broken foot and it will probably not be healed by then," he said. "It is really disappointing to me not to be able to do what I normally can! But there is always next year!"

This year, members can go either on Saturday or Sunday, October 10-11. The NTEU rates are only \$7.75 for adults and \$3.75 for kids if tickets are purchased online. Go to www.oldwestfest.com

and use the promo code NTEU. Just take Rt. 32 from Eastgate east about 20 miles into Brown County. Right before you get to Mt. Orab, just turn right on Eastwood Road, appropriately enough. That's where you will find Old West Fest!



NTEU73 President Rick Riley (kneeling) participates in a "gun fight" at a past Old West Fest.

as much.

The kids really like talking to "Captain Rip" (his alias), He said. "We all have a blast with them. Every year, I really do hate to see it all end. But I know it will be back next year!"

When it's happening now.... NTEU73 ALERTS



NTEU73 keeps members informed with chapter news as well as national news.

Visit nteu73.org.

**On Facebook:
Official NTEU
Chapter 73**

Electing a National President: An Inside View

Thomascina Braswell, or Tommie as she known by all, was appointed to the National Election Committee at the recent NTEU National Convention in Florida. She was involved in counting the votes and organizing the election process that elected Tony Reardon as the new national NTEU president.

"I had never done anything like that before and it was very exciting and a new experience for me and I got to learn about how a national election works," said Ms. Braswell. "I got to meet a lot of interesting people and we got a lot of kudos from the National President. The Nominations Committee even got a standing ovation for the work we did. One night I worked until 10:45!"

It was the first time Tommie had ever attended an NTEU National Convention



Tommie Braswell

and she is hoping to attend the next one. She was nominated by NTEU73 President Rick Riley and was chosen by National President Colleen Kelley to serve on the committee. It was not the

first time NTEU73 has had members serve on that committee.

"I think the whole convention was run very well by everyone involved," Ms. Braswell added. "It was just like watching CNN with all the delegates and all the people I met were really, really nice."

"The guy who ran the committee was excellent and the training was very good!" she added. "I was able to go out of the training and immediately do everything I needed to do."

"They told me that they were very appreciative about how hard I worked and they even told me that they hoped to see me again in two years at the next one," she beamed. "Over all it was a great experience. It was a lot of work but it was fun!"

Many people know Tommie as the office manager of the forth street union office.

"We are very proud of the job Tommie did," said Rick Riley. "Her hard work and dedication made the chapter look very good! I appreciate all that Tommie does! Anyone who has had dealings with her in the Fourth Street office knows how dedicated and hard working Tommie is. That is why I nominated her for the National Convention committee and was very happy when Colleen selected her. She represented that Chapter well!"

The next National Convention will be in 2017 in Puerto Rico.



**For more information,
contact the NTEU Office
(859) 669-5700**

Receive Home E-Mails From Your NTEU73!

NTEU73 sends out regular e-mails to your home address upon request! You will receive local updates, electronic copies of all issues of *The Force*, Force Alerts, events and more! Just contact any union office and we will add you to the list. It's that simple!

Retirement Seminars Are a MUST for All Employees

Many IRS employees have been taking advantage of the retirement seminars that are periodically being sponsored by United Benefits. Most of the time, employees that are nearing retirement are the bulk of those attending. But these meetings are important for ALL IRS employees to attend, no matter the age.

Paul and Roxy Thornton from United Benefits put on an information and very entertaining presentation that is vital for employees to know. They explain what happens when you retire, how you are paid, and options to optimize your benefits and retirement income.

Everyone in the IRS should know this information. For the younger employees, it demonstrates how important it is to start now with your retirement savings and how to take full advantage of the Thrift Savings plan.

In a recent presentation, Roxy Thornton told of an employee who began saving 15% of his salary in the thrift saving plan when he started at the IRS when he was 18. He is now only 47 years old and has already accumulated over \$750,000 for his retirement.

The best time to start saving for your

retirement is immediately. It is easy to put it off but don't. And the younger you are when you begin, the more it will accumulate over the years. And there will never be a time when you retire when you will think to yourself, "I wish had not saved so much."

United Benefits offer a variety of financial products to help you plan for your future, including life insurance and annuities that can help maximize your retirement income. But what they offer most is information. And this information is vital. And it's free.

After they have the meetings (which IRS gives time for employees to attend) you can set up personal appointments with them so that they can look at your personal situation and offer solutions. This service is free to members. Many have already taken advantage of what they offer.

"We have had some great meetings out here," Paul Thornton said while he was waiting for a flight to take him to his home in Chattanooga. "Some of the retirement age people have told me it is the best class they have ever had, even better than the IRS class. They tell me that they wish there had been a class like this when they

were younger because it shows the importance of saving."

Paul and Roxy, a married couple, have recently become IRS certified retirement specialists. They can discuss not only retirement benefits, but can even help with the retirement paperwork.

"We have been doing this for six or seven years and it has been a blessing," said Paul. "We just keep learning more and more about it. The process of learning never ends."

"We just love helping people!" Roxy added. "That is what is so great about this job! It is very rewarding and we have a lot of fun with the folks. We get to know people who are now friends! It is very rewarding."

And it is obvious that Paul and Roxy love what they are doing.

The next retirement seminars are set up for November. Employees are given time to attend. They are generally an hour long and are not only informative but also entertaining. Also, after attending the class, employees can set up one-on-one appointments to discuss personal situations. If you have not already, make plans to attend the next one!

Labor Recognition Week to be Celebrated with Cookouts

The annual Labor Recognition Week will be celebrated on September 22 and 23rd here at the Cincinnati Service Center. NTEU73 will again be cooking out for members both in Covington and in Florence. All employees are given an hour of time to attend the festivities.

NTEU73 has been having the annual cookout for years. In the past there have even been Bengals in attendance including Louis Breeden and Ickey Woods.

Employees can use the time in conjunction with their lunch, for a total time of an hour and a half.

Hot dogs and hamburgers will be served along with chips and drinks. There will be information about the union and there will also be a legislative booth where members can sign petitions to their local Congressmen about federal employee's issues.

The first cookout will be at the Florence facility on September 22, from 11:00am-2pm. It will be held in the parking lot of the facility.

The next day, September 23, it will be held, as usual, in the flat top parking lot between the Service Center and the Gateway Center, near the Northern Kentucky Convention Center. The times are 11am-2pm for day shift and 7-11pm for night shift.

There will be many vendors on hand to talk to employees about benefits, including United Benefits, Costco, Fifth Third Bank, Enterprise, US Bank, Liberty Mutual, Dr. Lamont Smith (chiropractor), CINFED and AAA.

All employees are urged to attend this event as we celebrate the accomplishments over the years of unions in general and NTEU in particular!

NTEU73 Members Selected for Teams

The Following employees have been selected by former President Colleen Kelley to serve on the SB/SE Teams as subject matter experts:

Innocent Spouse Team

Deobrah L. Smith
Catherin A Dunhoft
Joy S Taylor
Stacy Rust

Collection IRM Team

Michelle V. Ryan
Beverly Johnson

Employee Feedback Team

Marlo Hodge-Hummond
Stephen A Clark
Tomeka Cottrell

Congratulations to all!

NTEU73 Stewards Working for the Members

Your NTEU Stewards work for you, and are available if not in person, by phone or email. There are multiple stewards located in most Cincinnati IRS Center location. Here is a list of stewards manning the current NTEU73 offices:

Gateway:

- ◆ Chapter President **Rick Riley**
- ◆ Vice President/Chief Steward **Karen Walsh**
- ◆ National Vice President **Pat Breitenstein**
- ◆ Chief of Staff **Steve Clark**
- ◆ Secretary **Julia Wiley**
- ◆ Stewards **Virginia Watson** and **Debbie Mullikin**

Fourth Street Center (Flat-top):

- ◆ Stewards **Michelle Robinson**, **Tommie Braswell** and **Bev Johnson** (Night Shift).
- ◆ Treasurer **Laura Mitchell**
- ◆ Director of Communications **Jeff Seibert**

If you have any issues or concerns, call an NTEU73 office at 859-669-5700 or 859-669-5370.

Since **Rick Riley** took office in April, the union has handled 245 cases for the employees. Two hundred situations were handled informally with the managers. Forty-five grievances have been filed, many were closed favorably, some are still pending.

Here are just a few of the local items stewards have recently resolved:

Will Kohler got an employee priority consideration on the next job opportunity, was able to get an employee moved back to a desk where she gets proper support and got AWOL hours reduced that were charged to an employee!

Ron DuMoulin got an employee's evaluation raised to a 4.6!

Stacy Rust was able to get an employee thirty minutes of overtime pay!

Robert Starks got an employee's evaluation raised!

Bill Dreier got a letter removed from an employee's file!

Daniel McNamara got an employee's evaluation raised from 3.4 to 4.0! He also got two employees perm positions, helped several more with FMLA issues and removed AWOL for three employees.

Michelle Robinson helped an employee receive her higher graded duties pay, helped another employee receive time off under LWOP instead of AWOL and got an employee moved to another area! She also worked with Chief Steward Karen Walsh to have an employee's termination letter changed to a resignation.

60 Second Updates

An arbitrator has awarded three grievants the maximum allowable Employee Suggestion Program (ESP) award, \$50,000, for their suggestion that the IRS initially determined did not qualify for an award. Big win for National NTEU!

NTEU is soliciting for qualified bargaining unit employees to serve as subject matter experts regarding content development for select new series 592 CareerConnector questions.

NTEU and the IRS have reached an agreement settling the ULP charge NTEU filed over the agency's unilateral implementation of the Paperless



"Collection Dues Process" Pilot in the Office of Appeals.

The Senate Finance Committee issued a bipartisan report summarizing the committee's findings of its investigation into the IRS's handling of certain tax-exempt status applications. It found that IRS front line employees were not responsible for the recent TEGE debacle involving applications from T-Party organizations. They had been blamed by upper IRS management for the problems.

Data Breach Update: In the courts, NTEU continues to pursue its lawsuit to provide lifetime credit monitoring and identity theft protection for members and to prevent such attacks in the future.

Key Congressional Bills to Watch!

2015 House (H. Con. Res. 32, Price-GA) and Senate (S. Con. Res. 11, Enzi-WY) passed budgets-disproportionately target federal employee benefit programs, resulting in significantly higher retirement and health care employee contributions;

including requiring current employees to contribute approximately 6% more of salaries toward retirement, reducing the value of the TSP's G fund, and eliminating the FERS Supplement NTEU OPPOSES!

H.R. 1230 (Rep. Westerman-AR)-reduces federal pensions by basing annuity calculations on high-5 versus the current high-3 formula. NTEU OPPOSES!

H.R. 785 (Rep. Edwards-MD)-rolls back the increased employee retirement contributions for federal workers hired since 2013. NTEU SUPPORTS!

H.R. 138 (Rep. Issa-CA)-opens up the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program to individuals outside the federal community. NTEU OPPOSES!

Call or write to your Congressman today! Protect your health and retirement benefits!
