

NTEU73 Budget Cuts Are a Priority in Forced Chapter 73 “Ramp Down”

The Covington Service Center is not the only organization that will be ramped down in the coming three years. NTEU73 is facing a serious cut in membership and in funding.

While exact numbers are not known, it is very possible that the Chapter could lose about 800-900 members by the time it is finished. Accordingly, NTEU73 President Rick Riley has begun some belt tightening.

The latest budget (see page 4) reflects cuts in Labor Recognition, the NTEU73 picnic and Christmas party funding. But according to Mr. Riley, that does not necessarily mean that these events will be cut out.

“We do want to continue these events, but simply because of the funding issues, things may have to be done a bit differently,” said Mr. Riley.

As an example, the union has traditionally paid for all the food at Labor Recognition week. That budget has been cut dramatically, but to make up the difference, Steward Shannon Lovins has

been contacting area businesses to secure donations of soft drinks, hot dogs and even bananas.



National Executive Vice President Jim Bailey addresses NTEU73 stewards at local steward training about the ramp down and other issues.

“We are hoping to offset the costs of these events,” added Mr. Riley. “But I think people should keep in mind what our

main function is as a union and that is that we represent employees who have workplace issues.”

It is estimated that the union could lose as much as \$30,000 a year in local dues. When employees pay dues, only about \$1.50 per pay period stays in the local chapter, the rest going to NTEU National Office.

Another thing being considered is that members may have to pay a small amount for guests at the NTEU73 picnic. In the way, the expenditure will be subsidized.



National Executive Vice President Jim Bailey Visits NTEU73

For the second time in about a month a National NTEU73 Executive has visited Covington. First, National President Tony Reardon stopped by immediately following the announcement of closing the Submission Processing Center. Now, National Executive Vice President Jim Bailey has visited as well.

Mr. Bailey was in town to attend the local NTEU73 steward training. He discussed various issues, and of course the closing was at the top of the list. He said that Senator Mitch McConnell’s office is

very interested in helping. The National Union is trying to get funding in order to, at the least, bring other types of work to Covington in an effort to save jobs. Mr. Bailey also discussed the AMB Pilot for telework which is ongoing and AMB’s plans to put CRR’s on production.

“It is obviously important for us to stay in touch throughout this process with our National leaders,” said NTEU73 President Rick Riley. “Working with them, we continue to search every avenue for a solution to the shutdown problems.”

Inside this Issue

- ◆ From the Chapter President’s Desk..... 2
- ◆ Internal Hires Grieved.....3
- ◆ Good Manager.....3
- ◆ Chapter Meeting/ Budget.....4
- ◆ Steward Training.....5
- ◆ Awards Payouts.....5

NTEU Chapter 73

Fourth Street Office

Monday—Friday,
6 a.m. —1 a.m.
(859) 669-5370

Gateway Office Room 111

Monday—Friday,
6 a.m. —1 a.m.
(859) 669-5700

Industrial Road Retention Center

Monday—Friday,
8 a.m.—10 a.m.
(859) 594-6138

Facebook

Official NTEU Chapter 73
www.facebook.com/nteu73

Chapter Web Site nteu73.org

Twitter

www.twitter.com/nteu73

The Force

An NTEU73 Publication

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From the Desk of NTEU73 President Rick Riley

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

The proposed shutdown of Submission Processing brings new challenges every day. I want to stress, management has all intents and plans to shut it down. The impact is already being felt by the employees in SP. Morale, low as it was before the announcement, has gone off the bottom of the charts now. Some employees believe that this won't happen, or that management will take care of them. Let me make it clear, management is going to shut down and they will not take care of you. The impact to the Chapter is going to be tremendous. We will be losing about 40% of our membership, and thus, in dues. We realize that we have to address that issue now. I have proposed a very tight budget for next year, with a reduction in spending. This means no Christmas party this year. I've received so many complaints about the Memorial Day weekend Stricker's Grove picnic that we have decided to take steps there to stop the abuse by nonmembers attending. I've heard of nonmembers getting as many as 30 tickets from their friends who are members. So this coming year, we are changing the way we handle tickets.

Members will be free, children \$5 and adults \$10 dollars up to the first 5 guests: \$10 each for all after that. If it isn't worth \$5 to you to bring your kids, then it isn't



worth \$5 to the chapter is it? The Chapter will still be picking up most of the expense, but the admittance fees will help diminish the cost.

But the most important thing is helping the employees in Submission transition to the next step in their lives. Some will retire, some will look for another job inside or outside the IRS. I am committed to helping the members transition.

For those looking to retire, United Benefits will be here the week of November 15th and they have 2 certified retirement specialist now.. For those wishing to find another job in the IRS, the Chapter will be giving resume writing classes; also classes after work at the Kenton County library. Management has some responsibilities outlined in the contract in Article 19, but those don't start until the last year. I'm pushing for them to start now, but they are reluctant. After all, they have work to do for the next 3 years and that is a priority over the future of the employees. Take action now! We are working with the local colleges and the Kentucky Career Center.

Riley Meets With Covington City Manager

NTEU73 President Rick Riley recently met with Covington City Manager Larry Klein to see how the union and the city of Covington can work together to prevent the loss of some 1,800 jobs in Covington.

In the meeting that included NTEU Council Mike McAuley and NTEU73 Director of Communications Jeff Seibert, Mr. Klein said that Covington's goal is to both save the jobs and take over the land that will be vacated when the Submission Processing Center is gone.

“We are going to be working with Senator Mitch McConnell's office,” said Mr. Riley. “Mr. Klein has some good contacts in the Senator's office that should be a big help. We even talked a bit about finding other, less expensive real

estate. The land the center sits on is prime real estate and the city would like to put it to better use. But like us, they don't want to lose the workers. It's a huge tax base!”

Address Change?

If you have recently changed your address, please let the union know so you can continue to get information from NTEU. IRS does not share changes you made with them, so you must also tell us!

Please send any address changes to
Jeff Seibert / NTEU73 Membership:
jeffrey.w.seibert@irs.gov.

Melanie Stanfield is Good Manager of the Month

A petition of 91 employees in Receipt & Control nominated Melanie Stanfield as Good Manager of the Month, as that's impressive. So with that, Melanie HAD to be our Manager of the Month.

Melanie has shown true loyalty to her employees and virtually all of them had good things to say about her. When it became known that Submission Processing was closing, Melanie immediately called an all employee meeting to let everyone know. By doing this, she did not allow rumors to start.

She habitually puts an end to the rumor mill by researching and getting proper answers for employees whenever they are available.

When controversies on procedures occur, Melanie always is proactive in searching out the proper answers, whether it is researching the IRM or getting clarifications. In that way, she limits the errors in the department.

She also helped an employee who may have had a problem with bed-bugs. She helped her solve the problem by providing her with information, phone

numbers and employee resources while limiting the negative impact to the department by immediately contacting Facilities Management. She kept



Melanie Stanfield

everything on a need to know basis, thus saving the employee embarrassment and preventing a disorderly work environment.

This helped not only the affected employee but those in the surrounding area. It was a win for everybody!

Melanie is truly a manager's manager, always taking a leadership roll by helping to train new managers, yet remaining available and loyal to her team and, in fact, every employee.

Melanie is a great example of why NTEU73 does these Manager of the Month stories. We hope this shows that there are good managers out there and that the union and management are not always at odds. We also hope this encourages other managers to follow Melanie's example.

Congratulations Melanie! Your employees have loudly said that you deserve this month's honor!

If you would like to nominate a manager for the Good Manager of the Month, please contact Jeff Seibert at

jeffrey.W.Seibert@irs.gov.

IRS Says They Hire Internals: But Do They?

When Ivey McChesney met with groups of employees in the cafeteria of the Fourth Street Center, she said the IRS hires internally, that they like to hire internally because of the knowledge our employees have and that what they don't know, IRS will teach them because that's what IRS does. But the latest round of hiring, which occurred in June, flies in the face of that statement.

In June, Accounts Management hired a group of new seasonal Customer Service Representatives. They had 130 slots. According to records, 32 internal employees who applied for those slots actually hit the Best Qualified (BQ) List.

So how many internal employees were hired to fill the slots, helped by their internal knowledge? Exactly nine. Everyone else was brought in from outside. NTEU73 Steward Debbie Mullikin has filed a grievance over it for the union members on the list!

NTEU73 finds it hard to understand why 23 people who could have been selected were ignored. Especially in light of the Submission Processing people needing a place to go. These hirings did occur in June, supposedly before anyone knew of the closing. But this decision was months in the making. Someone knew. And most current internal employees were totally ignored. But why?

When asked about why only 9 internals were hired, Accounts Manager Director Karen Michaels told an NTEU73 representative that when management looked at the internal applications they were not as qualified as those they hired.

OK, so employees are valued for their internal knowledge or not? Which is it? It is difficult to believe externals would be better qualified than IRS internals.

"They could have hired all of the internal employees who hit the BQ list and still been able to hire almost a hundred more

from outside," said Ms. Mullikin. "The internals are already committed to the IRS as a career. We will likely lose half of the external hires as they find other jobs because they are hired as seasonal employees."

One employee spoke at a town hall meeting and said she had been a Data Transcriber for 28 years. Even though she has all fives on her evaluation, she has been unable to find another job internally because typically she does not qualify. Ms. McChesney seemed to understand and agree with her plight.

The NTEU73 grievance alleges that "management improperly considered external candidates concurrently with internal candidates in violation of Article 13 section 1B2. This was demonstrated by the offer of an external position to an employee at the same time as an internal position was offered."

Chapter Meeting Report

NTEU73 had its annual Business Meeting as a part of the quarterly chapter meeting on October 19 at the Radisson Hotel in

There was a lively discussion regarding some budget cuts. NTEU73 President Rick Riley updated



NTEU73 Officers at the Chapter Meeting: Secretary Julia Wiley, Vice President Karen Walsh, President Rick Riley and Treasurer Laura Mitchell.

Covington. A sparse turnout saw the unveiling of the Fiscal Year 2017 budget.

NTEU Chapter 73 Stewards

Day Shift:

4th Street - A. J. Allen, Brandy Belew, Tommie Braswell, Michelle Robinson-Cunningham, Ron Cunningham, Kristina Fryman-Henry, Leann Gosser, Nicole Guethlein, Brenda Herrin, Bryan Jackson, Will Kohler, Krystal Lear, Shannon Lovins, Laura Mitchell (Treasurer), Shawana Oliver, Lori Riedinger, Jeff Seibert.

GWC—Michael Bradford, Phillip Cargile, Steve Clark, Jamie Coffman, Tomeka Cottrell, Loretha Hudson, Bob Krekeler, Tanesha McCants, Tonya Morris, Debbie Mullikin, Chris Pierce, Rick Riley (President), John Selmeier, Melinda Smith, Debbie Steiner, Dennis Stone, Rebekah Taylor, Michele Townsend, Karen Walsh (Vice President-Chief Steward), Julia Wiley (Secretary).

IRRC - Florence - Sarah Corea, Brandon Mikusa.

Night Shift

4th Street— Jim Gregory, Stephanie Slayton, Deborah Stoffel.

GWC—Alison Bower, William Dreier, John Gilliam, Teri Hampton, Julie Orick.

members on various issues, the leading one being information about the closing of Submission Processing in Covington.

But it was the Chapter Budget that got the most attention, with members asking many questions.

Some budget items were cut or eliminated (see related story on, page 1) including the Labor Recognition event, the NTEU73 Picnic and the NTEU73 Christmas Party.

There were a lot of comments on the elimination of Labor Recognition, but since the meeting, it appears the union can get the food donated instead of using Chapter resources.

NTEU73 President Rick Riley is trying to get National President Tony Reardon to attend next year's event.

Laura Mitchell gave the treasurer's report. Apparently, there were some errors in the FY2017 budget given out at the meeting, and members can get the amended budget in any union office.

The union is in a good financial shape and the chapter even added to its surplus of funds. Currently the Chapter has \$175,035 of surplus. The annual audit is being prepared by a professional accountant, Melody Walsh (no relation to NTEU73 Vice President Karen Walsh), and should be completed by the next Chapter meeting, and could be done in as little as three weeks.

After the meeting, there was a legislative phone bank.

The next Chapter meeting will be held on January 18, 2017. The time and location will be announced.

FY 2017 NTEU73 Budget

(as passed by the Chapter Executive Board)

CHAPTER EXPENSES

Chapter Equipment Purchase	0
Arbitration	3,500
Chapter Meetings	500
Legislative Expenses	3,000
Legislative Conference	6,600
Labor Recognition	0
NTEU73 Picnic	12,000
Presidents Meeting	600
Promotional Items	2,000
Recruitment Payouts	0
Local Training	4,000
National Training	10,000
National Convention	5000
National Negotiations	0
Storage Rental	2,300
Holiday Party	3,000
Membership Raffle Prizes	400
Membership Refreshments (Meet & Greets)	4,000
Refreshments	500
Travel	2,000
Printing	1,500
Office Supplies Expense	4,000
Equipment Supplies	6,500
Utilities	3,500
Computer & Printer Operation	2,500
Professional Services	3,800
Election	7,000
Fidelity Bond	432

CHAPTER OPERATING INCOME

Member Dues	76,840
Picnic	8,000
Savings Bond	9,000

TOTAL INCOME 95,640

TOTAL CURRENT SURPLUS 175,035

(For more detailed information, contact the union office)

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

Visit nteu73.org

On Facebook: Official NTEU Chapter 73

Stewards Trained Locally to Enhance Quality of Service

Every year, NTEU73 conducts training locally for stewards in an effort to improve representation provided by the union. This year, the four day training was held at the Radisson Hotel in Covington.

Many guest instructors and dignitaries were in attendance, including NTEU National Executive Vice President Jim Bailey and Submission Processing Director Jim Rogers. Both gentlemen updated the stewards on the ramp down and consolidation of the Cincinnati Submission Processing Center.

About 35 stewards attended the training and those who did, thought it was very useful.

Among the guests also were Compliance Director Susan Quakenbush, Acting Director Kim Billups, representatives from TIGTA and from Labor Relations. The union also heard from United Benefits representatives and the Harris Law Firm which specializes in disability cases in this area.

Stewards heard these organizations perspectives. TIGTA explained how they operated and fielded questions as the did

chance to see how they work and hopefully, it will start to forge a relationship so that when the need arises, they will be able to work well together.

Of course, we have our way of doing things and interests of employees to look out for, but I think it helps."

Stewards were also instructed on recurring issues such as telework, leave issues and performance appraisals. They were taught how to grieve these and other issues.

Bryan Jackson gave a class on an "active shooter" and how to respond to that type of incident.

Attorneys from the NTEU Chicago Field Office Mike McAuley and Will Igoe also came down to help with the instruction.



NTEU Council Mike McAuley conducts part of the training which was held at the Radisson Hotel in Covington.

the representatives from Labor Relations.

"I think it is good to involve these folks in the training," said NTEU73 Vice President Karen Walsh, who helped organize the training along with Steward Debbie Mullikin. "It gives the stewards a

"All in all, I thought it was a very good training and stewards were given tons of information," said NTEU73 President Rick Riley. "We do this every year and I think the newer stewards, of which we have many, really benefited. And it is a very cost effective way to get them to become knowledgeable about the various issues."

The Harris Law firm put on a presentation about how employees can file for disability and what makes them qualify. They explained that if an employees has maxed out their FMLA leave and are continuing to miss work and pay, they very well may qualify for disability.

United Benefits owner Matt Whitten talked about retirement financial issues and explained the IRS retirement system to the stewards.

The directors all talked about their areas and answered questions of the stewards.

NTEU73 has approximately 40 stewards at the three sites; Gateway, Fourth Street and Florence. Some stewards will go to Las Vegas to attend National training in the spring, another annual event. This year, however, the number going will be cut, due to the coming decrease in the Chapter's income.

FY2016 Awards Payouts Announced

Information has been released by IRS about the upcoming awards payouts for Fiscal Year 2016 performance and bi-lingual awards as well as the effective date for Quality Step Increases (QSI's).

Performance awards will be paid on November 23, 2016 and bi-lingual awards will be paid on December 22, 2016.

The IRS explained that the awards must be paid at different times because of "the significant number of PAR actions that must be taken to effectuate the awards."

The IRS also advised NTEU that the QSI awards will become effective November 10, 2016.



The union is also awaiting word from the IRS on when it will provide to NTEU the NPAA awards data so they can upload that information to the NTEU website.

"I am pleased that the IRS is paying these

awards in the first quarter of FY 2017 and that many bargaining unit employees are being rewarded for their excellent work," commented NTEU73 National President Tony Reardon.



NTEU73 Steward Spotlight

Working Hard for NTEU73 Members!



Tommie Braswell

Tommie needs no introduction and is a ray of sunshine to folks in the Flat Top. Tommie has worked for the IRS for 34 years and for the union, off and on, for 15 years. She has also served in management. Tommie is also the new NTEU73 Consolidation Coordinator and will be working full time with NTEU73 President Rick Riley on the coming ramp down.

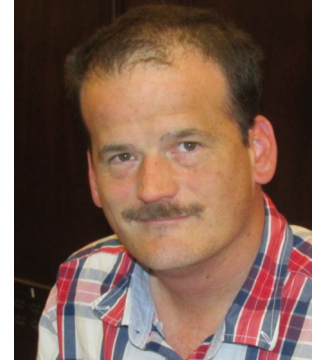
"I enjoy helping people.," says Tommie. "It is important that a steward knows the National Agreement."



Tonya Morris

Tonya works as a CSR in TEGE and has been steward for a little over a year. She has developed so quickly and is so reliable, she has been tapped to mentor newer stewards. She also helps to edit *The Force*.

"I became a steward because I saw the discord between management and employees early in my 12 years here," Tonya said. "I started to advocate for my fellow employees on my team and thought it might be best to join the union to continue doing that."



Brandon Mikusa

Brandon has been employed at the IRS for nine years. He is currently working in Florence Files.

Brandon is a relatively new steward, serving in that capacity for almost a year. NTEU73 is happy he has stepped up, because stewards in Florence are always at a premium.

"I wanted to be a steward so that the right information gets to the right person," Brandon said.

Brandon will be helping with the transition during the coming shutdown.

Virginia Watson Retires: She will be Missed!

NTEU73 has lost a valuable member of its team! Virginia Watson retired on October 28!

Virginia has worked in the Gateway union office since Rick Riley was elected President in April of 2015. She has served as the MEPS Coordinator and done various administrative tasks for the Chapter.

"Virginia has been a valuable member of my staff and I hate to see her go," said NTEU73 President Rick Riley. "She has been with me from the beginning and it is hard to see her go. It is going to be difficult filling her shoes. She has gained a lot of experience since coming into the office. That is hard to replace."

"I have known Virginia for the past 10 years," said NTEU73 Vice President Karen Walsh. "We worked together in AMRH as Tax Examiners. She was a leader in the team and she and I became

fast friends. When it came time to run for NTEU office, she was the first one I



Virginia Watson

thought to ask to join the team. She was a natural leader in the workplace and just as

I suspected, she immediately became an invaluable member of the office staff. Her departure is going to leave a huge hole in the NTEU office staff and for me personally as well."

"It has been a joy to work with her and it is going to be a loss," said Laura Mitchell, NTEU73 Treasurer, who worked with Virginia on various chapter projects. "I am really saddened about her leaving."

"Virginia will be missed so much that I may have to call her at home to get information that I need," said Julia Wiley, the Chapter Secretary who worked in the office with Virginia. "She also left with a wealth of technical information. She has tremendous patience and a great personality."

Virginia plans to move to Florida, probably in the Daytona area. Virginia is married to Kenny and has three daughters and nine grandchildren.

60 Second Updates

FEHBP Premium Announced

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) announced premium increases for the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program (FEHBP) plans will average 4.4 percent in 2017. However, employees and retirees will pay an average of 6.2 percent more while the government's share only increases by 3.7 percent. FEHBP covers approximately 8.2 million federal employees, retirees and eligible family members.

The rate increases for FEHBP are in line with industry averages, but the pay of federal workers is not.

Thinking of Retiring?

It's close to the end of the year which means many IRS employees are considering retirement.

While there's no one best date for everyone, many federal workers choose a



date at or near the end of the year. That makes sense from a financial viewpoint, especially if you want to maximize the lump-sum payment of your use-or-lose annual leave at retirement. Plus, the actual payment for your unused annual leave is likely to be made in the new year, when you could well be in a lower tax bracket.

But there are other considerations since the leave year ends at different dates each year. That brings into play different rules for those under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) and the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS).

Under FERS, you have to be off the rolls for an entire month to receive an annuity payment for that month. If you want your annuity to start in November, for example, you would have to be off your agency's rolls by Oct. 31. The actual payment likely wouldn't be made until December.

CSRS employees can work through the third day of the month and still receive a pro-rated annuity for that month. There are many other factors to consider, which is why NTEU recommends that you attend a pre-retirement counseling seminar at your agency. You should also plan to meet with your human resources office one year

before you plan to retire to review your personnel folder to make sure it is complete and accurate. No matter when you decide to retire, it's important to remember that you can stay an NTEU member. The union works aggressively on retiree issues, including protecting federal retirement programs and addressing rising health care and prescription drug costs. NTEU is also working to secure new benefits for retirees, like the ability to use pretax income to pay for health care premiums. Retiree members also get the full range of NTEU member benefits, including money-saving discounts, NTEU publications and member-only access to this site.

Zoo Festival of Lights Discounts!

NTEU members can get discounts to the Cincinnati Zoo's Festival of Lights! Members can go to cincinnatizoo.org/ holiday and enter the code PEACOCK and can purchase tickets for \$8. That is up to \$10 off the regular admission price! It's open 10am-9pm on Tuesday, 10am-10pm Fridays and Saturdays. The discount is good from November 19 through January 1, 2017.

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 **Debbie Mullikin**
- ◆ Chief of Staff **Steve Clark**
- ◆ Secretary **Julia Wiley**
- ◆ Stewards **Sarah Corea** and **Debbie Mullikin**
- ◆ Night Shift Chief Steward **Bill Drier**
- ◆ Night Shift Steward **Julie Orick**

Fourth Street Center (Flat-top):

- ◆ Stewards **Michelle Robinson**, **Tommie Braswell** and **Jim Gregory** (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.

Phillip Cargile won an EEO related grievance.

Sarah Corea has been appointed a full time steward and will work out of the Gateway Office.

LeAnn Gosser closed a reasonable accommodation issue.

Jim Gregory has solved a case informally regarding LWOP on an employees timesheet. He also helped with an employee transfer.

Nicole Guethlein worked a case involving leave issues for an employee, as well as providing information to an employees about jobs.

Laura Mitchell helped an employee with a reasonable accommodation request. She also closed a case regarding a departure evaluation.

Debbie Mullikin got 4 days of AWOL reversed and replaced with sick leave.

Will Kohler, **Tonya Morris** and **Chris Pierce** have stepped up to be mentors for the newer stewards at Fourth Street.
