

NTEU National President Tony Reardon Visits: Updates Employees on the Shutdown

NTEU National President Tony Reardon visited the Fourth Street Building on February 1 and used the opportunity to inform employees about the latest on the Submission Processing consolidation, which includes the closing of the Fourth Street building.

The National President is coming to the Cincinnati Service Center for the second time since the announcement of the Submission Processing consolidation. Mr. Reardon had stopped by the morning after the announcement to meet with local NTEU leaders. He had told leaders that the shutdown came as a complete surprise and that NTEU would use all its resources to make sure as few employees were harmed as possible.

As *The Force* goes to press, the IRS meetings with the National President have not yet been held. There will be more information in the coming days on Facebook (Official NTEU

Chapter 73), the NTEU73.org web site and in the March issue of *The Force*. NTEU National will be negotiating with

their work and moving whole groups of employees out of Submission Processing and reassigning them to other divisions.

These negotiations have not yet begun and Mr. Reardon will update employees on their status during his visit. He will also answer questions and take comments from employees.

"It is not every day that the NTEU National President comes visit the members so we are all really looking forward to this," said NTEU73 President Rick Riley. "I am sure he will have a lot of interesting things to say and be able to share the latest, up to the minute information that he has available."



NTEU National President Tony Reardon will talk with employees during his visit, February 1.

IRS over impact and implementation of the closure. Many things will be discussed including allowing employees to follow



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White House Issues Federal Hiring Freeze

President Trump signed a memorandum implementing an immediate hiring freeze on all executive branch agencies, unless they meet a specialized exception. The freeze exempts military personnel and provides agencies with the ability to continue to fill vacant civilian positions that have "national security or public safety responsibilities."

"A hiring freeze will be harmful and counterproductive, increasing backlogs, decreasing service quality and causing more frustration for Americans seeking

help from their government," said National President Tony Reardon.

NTEU strongly opposes this hiring freeze. It will increase workloads on already overburdened federal employees. As the Government Accountability Office previously reported, hiring freezes are inefficient and have no money-saving effect.

That was the message in a letter sent to President-elect Trump by more than 100 members of Congress, urging him not to take this step.

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

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From the Desk of the President

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

The only constant thing in life is change itself. We all are going thru a change right now, be it here at work, or at home. Change is hard to accept for many people and they struggle with it. The Cincinnati Service Center is changing in many ways. Submission Processing is being consolidated, so there are 1,800 employees whose life is changing in ways they did not choose. So how do we look at this, is it gloom and doom, or is there an opportunity here for many employees? Many employees will choose to retire. They have earned that retirement and they are ready to move on to the next chapter in their life. A chapter where there will be no alarm clock every morning, a day without fighting traffic, a day that they plan for their selves. For some of these members, it will be the first time since grade school they taste the freedom. One of my friends told me “I highly recommend retirement! I haven’t looked back and I’m enjoying my life!”

He made that transition easily. Imagine change like this, we’ve all seen that trapeze act at the circus. The performer

leaves a safe place to get on a swinging trapeze, then they have to let go and leap for the other trapeze.

For that one brief second they are in midair, with nothing to hang onto, but reaching for their future. Then, they grab that trapeze and swing to the other platform. For many of us, that is what we are facing.

Every year, about 10% of our workforce retires. For some units, there is no replacement coming, so the work is distributed among the remaining employees. This gets to be depressing for those employees. The work never gets any easier, just more of it.

Our country has a new President, and like Tommie Braswell told me this morning, “We are going to be alright. Every time there is a new leader, they come in with their ideas on how to change things and improve things. It takes a while for them to learn that some of those ideas don’t work how things really work and what needs to be done to get the job done.”

We currently face a temporary hiring freeze that keeps the agency from

(Continued, pg. 7...Riley)



FREE Employee Tax Assistance is here!!!



(Volunteer Income Tax Assistance)

For appointment call: 859-669-4211

**Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays
Monday, January 23, 2017 – Thursday, April 13, 2017
2:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
4th Street: Room 39**

If an interpreter is needed, please see your manager.

Social Security CARDS are required for everyone listed on the return!!

Events Planned for Employees at IRS

NTEU73 will be having a series of events in order to make the transition of the closing more palatable for employees.

Stewards Tommie Braswell and Tanesha McCants have been working to organize events that will help employees be prepared for a search for employment inside and outside the IRS.

Among the events being planned are as follows:

Fifth/Third Bank will be conducting a job fair in the coming weeks for employees in the Fourth Street Center who may be displaced due to the Submission Processing Consolidation. Fifth/Third will be hiring a number of people and is willing to recruit from here at the IRS.

Cincinnati State will be coming to put a presentation about continuing education with their program. Gateway was here in January and described classes that employees can take which are very

affordable and which can be done online. Cincinnati State will be giving their presentation soon.

Cinfed will be offering some classes on Financial Planning for employees.



United Benefits has been setting up regularly in the cafeteria to help employees with their retirement, among other things. Roxie and Paul Thornton and Jim and Karen Ragan have been busy helping people through the retirement

process. Many people will be retiring prior to the closing of Submission Processing.

Will Kohler and Tanesha McCants will be offering one-on-one help with navigating through the USA Jobs site. This will inform employees about how to search and put in for government jobs, both in the IRS and at other agencies.

Finally, the Brighten Center is applying for a grant on behalf of IRS workers in order to provide classes on such things as Microsoft skills, resume writing and other programs to help employees be better prepared to apply for outside jobs if the need arises.

“We have been working hard to get these programs and make them available,” said Tommie Braswell, who is coordinating the effort for NTEU73. “We are hoping that a lot of employees take advantage of these opportunities. We are doing everything we can to make sure people get these advantages.”

NTEU73 Opens Yet Another Area to Telework

RICS-IVO, located on the third floor, Gateway West is now beginning to work telework from home, thanks to NTEU73 efforts. Debbie Mullikin, Jeff Seibert and Attorney Will Igoe were all involved in getting this telework for the employees.

One of those who helped bring about the change, Deanna Jurczak, is happy to be working from home. Her story is compelling.

“On January 19, 2016 submitted my application for telework,” Ms. Jurczak wrote. “I wanted to try working from home because my health was not in the best of shape. I figured if I could work from home, I would use less sick time and may even build time. I might even be able to take an actual vacation at some point in time.”

“I began to let people know that I had applied for telework and with the union’s help we could get telework for our work area,” she continued. “I am proud to say that there are six other people, one seasonal, that I work with in Department

3, FRE and five perm employees from Department 1, an external lead who also wanted to begin this journey. Our work is all electronic and there is no need to come into the office, when we could do the same job or amount of work from the comfort of our home and not have to worry about traffic, the everyday stresses.

“In September the day before my trial, I guess you can say, management settled, which was wonderful. After furlough We would begin to work a 6 month pilot at which we can all apply after 4 months for permanent telework.

“So far, so good. I am on week 2 and doing great!” Ms. Jurczak concluded.

“That’s a great story,” said NTEU73 President Rick Riley. “That is exactly the kind of thing I am so proud of being able to get done for employees.”

Telework has been a priority during Mr. Riley’s tenure as Chapter President. Several groups have been approved and are now working from home. This is the

latest group of employee’s to enjoy that benefit.

There is a national pilot that is in process for employees in Customer Service (telephones) and it is hoped that soon they will be given the opportunity as well.

“Telework can be a buig part of the answer as to where to move employees out of Submission Processing,” added Mr. Riley. “If we can have groups of people working from home we can get more people placed in the vacated areas.”

People who work from home, generally, come into the office one to four days per month. In this way, several people can use the same desk for their “in office” days.

“This has been a slow process but I am happy to say we have been making steady progress,” said Mr. Riley. “I think for most areas it is more a question of when they will be able to work from home, not if.”

If employees are interested in telework, they can request it from their manager. Contact the union for more details about how to proceed through the process.

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

Visit nteu73.org

**On Facebook:
Official NTEU
Chapter 73**

National Web Site

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, Erin Cooper, 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 - Jan Colwell, Sarah Corea, Brandon Mikusa.

Night & Swing Shift

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

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

NTEU73 Chapter Meeting held January 18 at GWC

NTEU73 held its quarterly Chapter meeting in Room 506 of the Gateway Center on Wednesday, January 18, to an extremely low turnout.

Routine business was discussed by NTEU73 President Rick Riley, including progress being made in attempting to help employees affected by the closing of Submission Processing.

NTEU73 Secretary Julia Wiley opened the meeting with a reading of the last meeting's minutes.

Vice President Karen Walsh was not in attendance due to a personal injury from which she is recuperating.

Treasurer Laura Mitchell was not in attendance due to a personal illness, but her financial reports were ready. So Rick Riley went over the chapter's finances, highlighting the reports. If any member would like to get a copy of the report, just stop by any union office. The reports

included the recent audit that was done by an independent accountant.

Next, Membership Coordinator Jeff Seibert gave a brief report on the Chapter membership. He reported that the current membership is 59.5% and that it is the

Chapter's hope that it will push over the goal of 60% with the next National Office membership report.

Mr. Riley used the remainder of the meeting to talk about recent developments in the Chapter and update those in attendance with the



President Rick Riley and Secretary Julia Wiley at the January Chapter Meeting.

latest news.

A big item was discussion about a letter Mr. Riley had written to the Commissioner about bringing other work to the center. It was very well received and the Commissioner has sent it down the chain as "marching orders."

The next quarterly Chapter meeting will be held in April.

When You Retire You Can Remain a Member of NTEU

Remaining a member of NTEU after you retire is only \$42 a year! You can even arrange for only \$3.50 a month to be deducted from your federal annuity payment. The first year you retire is prorated, depending on the month you retire. You keep your right to vote in Chapter elections, and can still take advantage of member discounts! You can also stay informed about what is going on in Congress and the national union in regard to federal employee issues.

NTEU has thousands of retired members, many of whom play an active role in their local chapters in a number of ways including on legislative issues.

NTEU aggressively works on behalf of retirees, seeking to protect federal retirement programs, that seem to be constantly under some sort of Congressional attack. NTEU also fights to boost government's share of health care premiums as well as Congressional efforts to reduce social security payments.

It is important for not only the people who work here, but those who are retired, that these efforts be continued.

If you would like to remain a member of NTEU after you retire, simply stop in the union office for the forms. It's easy, it's economical and it's important!

NTEU to Lobby Congress in Washington

NTEU's Legislative Advisory Committee met January 9 in Washington, D.C., to recommend the union's priorities for the 115th Congress.

This meeting was in preparation for the 2017 NTEU Legislative Conference, in which NTEU representatives across the country fan out across the capital to lobby Congress about federal employee issues.

NTEU73 will have four representatives talking to area Congressmen and Senators during the conference.

NTEU73 President Rick Riley, NTEU National Vice President Debbie Mullikin, Director of Communications Jeff Seibert and Swing Shift Steward Jim Gregory will be lobbying on employee's behalf. NTEU

National Office sets up appointments for the groups.

The NTEU Advisory Committee set priority items to be discussed. They include fair pay, workplace fairness,

"It is a perfect opportunity to put this issue in front of the people who can do something about it," Mr. Riley said. "I will have written material ready to give them. We are working this issue hard as a chapter."

The Chapter will also deliver letters signed by the employees to the Senators and Congressmen who have not yet gotten them.

"We still have a big stack of letters from their constituents to give to Senators Portman, Paul and Brown," Mr.

Riley continued. "We need to make sure they understand that

many people who vote for them and their families are watching this issue. We are seeking funding and alternate plans, including bringing other work here to help the situation. We have already gotten lot of positive response and the legislative conference with give us another opportunity!"



NTEU Legislative Advisory Committee: Debbie Mullikin is top row, second from right.

protecting retirement, affordable health care and accomplishing agency missions.

While he has already been in contact with area representatives, NTEU73 President Rick Riley will add the closing of the Submission Processing Center to the legislative agenda.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2017

AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING & MATHEMATICS

Katherine Johnson
Mathematician, NASA, and the first African American woman to work on NASA's space program.

James Ernest Wilkins Jr.
Physicist, inventor, and the first African American to receive a PhD from MIT.

Gulan Bluford
Astronaut, NASA, and the first African American woman to fly in space.

Annie Easley
Mathematician, NASA, and the first African American woman to work on NASA's space program.

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2017

AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE

ENGINEERING

Innovation and invention through engineering

Things we use every day, often without giving a second thought, started with these four creators.

Meredith Gourdine held over 70 patents, changing the way electrical generators are used to remove smoke from burning buildings, fog from airport runways, accurate imaging and much more. In addition to inventing the first all-weather generator, he was an Olympic long jumper, winning a silver medal in 1902.

Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson is the first African American woman to earn a PhD from MIT where her research led to inventions in technology applied to the portable fax, touch tone telephones, fiber optic cables, color CD and DVD writing.

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Making our lives safer and easier through the science of engineering.
www.nteu.org

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2017

AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE

MATH

Brilliance in mathematics changed the American equation

Most students may wonder where math will fit into their lives. These mathematicians prove math is our everyday life.

Benjamin Banneker, born in 1731 was a self-taught genius who was instrumental in surveying the land that was to become Washington, D.C. He became an avid astronomer and published almanacs with astronomical calculations and other helpful information. A farmer, he built an irrigation system for his family farm.

Dr. Marjorie Lee Browne excelled not only in learning and inspiring. She was named Mathematics Department Director for North Carolina College in 1965. She was instrumental in establishing a digital computer center—one of the first of its kind at a minority college. While known throughout the field, she received awards and grants and continued to teach undergraduate and graduate courses.

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The National Treasury Employees Union

Using their minds to shape futures.
www.nteu.org

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2017

AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE

ENGINEERING & MATHEMATICS

MAE C. JEMISON
First African American woman to travel to space in Space Shuttle Endeavour on Sept. 12, 1992.

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The National Treasury Employees Union

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2017

AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE

ENGINEERING & MATHEMATICS

"Never limit yourself because of others' limited imagination; never limit others because of your own limited imagination."

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The National Treasury Employees Union

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2017

AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE

ENGINEERING & MATHEMATICS

"The LABOR MOVEMENT did not diminish the strength of the nation but ENLARGED IT."

—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 1961

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60 Second Updates

NTEU Opposed to Federal Hiring Freeze

NTEU supports 106 members of Congress urging the President-elect to reconsider the plan to implement an immediate federal hiring freeze. In a letter to President-elect Trump, the representatives led by Rep. Stephen F. Lynch (D-Mass.), warned the hiring freeze will decrease transparency, efficiency and accountability in the federal government. Members of Congress revisited a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report concluding that a series of hiring freezes disrupted agency operations and diminished federal oversight of programs. That loss of mission-critical skills, heightened by an approaching retirement wave, shows a serious danger.

"A hiring freeze will increase backlogs, decrease service quality and frustrate Americans seeking help from their government," said Reardon. "Empty



desks, dormant computers and ringing telephones don't deliver vital public services and safeguard our nation, federal workers do."

Congress Passes FY 2017 Budget Resolution

Congress has set broad funding guidelines for fiscal year (FY) 2017 in the budget resolution that has now passed both the House and the Senate. The congressional resolution provides for "reconciliation," a procedure allowing future budget bills to be considered without a filibuster in the Senate, and to pass by a lower threshold—a 51-vote majority rather than the typical 60-vote requirement. House and Senate leadership have indicated this reconciliation procedure will be used on legislation not yet introduced to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

The resolution provides guidelines to congressional committees, including a Jan. 27 deadline for certain committees to report on legislation repealing the Affordable Care Act and to produce targeted savings. NTEU will be working to

ensure that such legislation does not have a negative impact on federal employees.

OPM: FEHBP Carriers Focus on Drug Costs

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) released the annual call letter on the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) to carriers. In 2018, OPM is encouraging carriers to continue balancing participant's prescription drug needs with escalating drug costs. "OPM appreciates efforts carriers have made to provide drug cost calculators that display up-to-date information and requirements for covered prescription drugs," the letter said.

According to OPM, 25.5 percent of the FEHBP budget went to prescription drugs in 2015. NTEU will work with the growing number of elected officials calling for prescription drug reforms, to ensure that any actions taken to address the cost of prescription drugs include relief for FEHBP.

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 Dreier**
- ◆ Night Shift Steward **Julie Orick**

Fourth Street Center (Flat-top):

- ◆ Stewards **Tommie Braswell**, **Michelle Robinson**, and **Jim Gregory** (Night Shift).
- ◆ Treasurer **Laura Mitchell**
- ◆ Director of Communications, Office Manager **Jeff Seibert**

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

Jan Colwell has worked several cases in Florence Files and Innocent Spouse.

Sarah Corea helped an employee with an AWOL case.

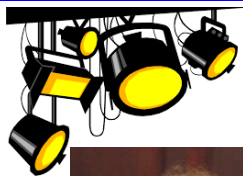
Nicole Guethlein has worked a tax compliance case for an employee representing them in a TIGTA meeting. She has also solved several cases regarding AWOL, reassignments and bullying.

Will Kohler closed a case involving harassment of an employee. He also helped an employee with a promotion package and solved an FMLA case.

Tonya Morris had 2 charges of AWOL changed to LWOP. She also had a memo removed from an employee's drop file.

Michelle Robinson has helped an employee with a security issue. Also other employees with issues regarding furlough and leave. She closed over 13 cases in the month of January!

Jeff Seibert handled a TIGTA case for an employee regarding improper computer access in which the employee was cleared of wrongdoing.



NTEU73 Steward Spotlight

Working Hard for NTEU73 Members!



Lori Riedinger

Lori has worked for the IRS for 5 years, the last 9 months in TEGE in the flat top. She has been a steward since last September.

"I have a lot of respect for NTEU and its mission," she says. "NTEU has helped employees on a local and national level in many ways and is actively fighting to help us all transition through the shutdown in the most fair and effective way possible."

Lori has worked many cases and occasionally helps out in the union office and on special projects.



Jan Colwell

Jan started her IRS career in 1989. She has been a clerk, tax examiner, acting work leader, instructor, and has written ELMS courses. She is currently a Financial Technician in Innocent Spouse. Just last year, they were able to begin teleworking from home.

"The Union fought so that I could work from home," she says. "They continue to work for me in Congress so I get raises and awards... I have had the honor of working with an experienced team of NTEU leadership that cares about its members and stewards."



Tanesha McCants

Tanesha works in Accounts Management as a CSR. She has worked at the IRS for 3 years and been a steward since May, 2016.

"Having a strong union equals a strong work force and that is why NTEU is important," she says. "I believe the union plays a vital role in ensuring that employee's rights are protected."

"My father worked as a union steward. Fighting for others is something that has always been instilled in me. I love being a steward. I like making a difference."

Riley...pg. 1.

bringing new employees on board. Is this an opportunity for us working here to move onto a new position, a better position with better pay?

The IRS has a total attrition rate of 15.7%. That figures to about 12,000 employees a year. The number of employees nationally affected by the closing of the three submission centers are 7,500. The math is on our side here. When people leave, the work remains to be done. We have people, they got work, send it to us! The new Secretary of the Treasury has already said he wants more employees for the IRS. We have an opportunity here, to fill these vacant positions in the rest of the service center. They may be higher graded jobs, and we will have to compete for these positions, but, if I'm successful, you will see some positions open that haven't been filled for years. I will give you one piece of advice, no matter where you are, Prepare, Prepare and Prepare now and every day for your future.

Early Retirement for You?

Many people have been considering early retirement in light of news about the IRS shutdown. But what are the rules?

An employee can retire early if he/she has 20 years of service and has reached the age of 50. If an employee has 25 years of service, he/she can retire early at any age!

Now, that does not mean you will necessarily be able to live on the amount of retirement money you will get! Checking with a retirement specialist can let you know what the amount of your pension will be when you retire.

In addition to pension, some employees may be eligible for Social Security at age 62. Some can qualify for a Social Security supplement even earlier than that.

When you retire from the IRS, you can get three pay checks. One is your pension. The second is Social Security. The third is the money that is in your

Thrift Savings plan.

NTEU73 suggests that you make an appointment with United Benefits when they are here! They are experts on Federal Retirement and can even walk you through the process.

It can be a difficult decision for some to quit work. But there are resources available to help make your decision easier.

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.
