



# INTERAGENCY CONNECTION

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## Chair's Corner



Happy New Year to all! I hope your holidays were safe, full of family and fun!

During 2012, we included at least one informative article each month on the

topic of retirement. While informative and useful, Federal Law Enforcement Officers and Firefighters have a different computation for their retirements. To ensure no federal employee is left out of the information, there are two articles in this newsletter that are specific to these employees (CSRS and FERS, respectively).

The Oklahoma FEB's Emergency Preparedness and Continuity of Operations (COOP) Council will be using this year to re-work our Redbook. The Redbook was developed after the 1995 bombing of the A. P. Murrah Building as a guide to Emergency Preparedness; it was updated and rewritten after the events of 9-11. With the advent of "COOP", most agencies, if not all, have plans in place. The group will be identifying topics and information that will augment an agency's COOP efforts in a way that plans can be strengthened or additional appendices may be added to address unique situations that may not currently be included in a plan. Be watching for this product later in the fiscal year.

An email was sent in December to all federal leaders, providing the FY 13 Hazardous

Weather and Emergency Communications Plan for our FEB. You were also provided the updated emergency dismissal plan for the Washington DC area. Both of these documents are posted on our FEB website for reference and information.

With January comes a new flurry of activity, coordinating and communicating training events and opportunities, as well as preparing the annual award nomination packet for distribution to the federal agencies!

Be sure to begin preparing packages on your best and brightest employees NOW. This way you will have identified who you will nominate for recognition in this year's **awards competition!** *BEWARE!* Please read the nomination package and know that agencies are limited to ONE nomination per category (so you may need to have a local competition to determine who is nominated if you have more than one for a particular category).

This year, information is included in the solicitation package that your nominees will have points deducted if you have more than one nominee in a category (which would be very disappointing). I wish you all the very best in nominating worthy candidates for this year's event and look forward to reading their accomplishments!

A.D. Andrews, Chairman

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## Federal Workforce Critical to President’s Success Smart staffing, innovative training are keys

Public servants make the diverse array of federal programs happen. Accordingly, addressing workforce challenges should be a priority, regardless of the outcome of the election.

Our collective experience as Office of Personnel Management directors, representing different administrations, led us to agree on four areas needing particular attention:

**Sizing the workforce the right way.** Much discussion about the size of the workforce is focused on numbers. How many? What percent? This perspective argues for arbitrary staffing adjustments that may be only loosely connected to mission realities.

In this approach, agencies are left to figure out how to fit responsibilities to predetermined staffing levels, regardless of whether the number of people makes sense.

We believe determining an appropriate workforce size begins with understanding the tasks that need to be performed. With that insight, required capabilities and experience, as well as the number of individuals needed, can be aligned for success.

If funding is limited, tasks should be reevaluated, rather than trying to execute them on the cheap.

**Making the federal government and employer of choice.** For too long, civil servants have been derided in political campaigns and headlines and by late-night comics. Yet their work makes a positive difference in the lives of citizens, keeping them safe domestically and globally, administering direct services, and assuring the unhindered flow of commerce and information.

To attract the right people, the administration and Congress should acknowledge federal employees’ important work and promote it as a viable career option to a new generation and those seeking midcareer change.

Recruitment and on-boarding processes must continue to be streamlined, recruitment should be targeted and intensified, and pay and benefits should be set objectively and removed from the political process.

**Having a workforce ready to meet future challenges.** Advancements in technology, service

delivery and access to information will continue to raise performance expectations for all types of organizations and their employees. For the federal government to keep pace, agencies will need to create and operate under a 21<sup>st</sup>-century workforce model.

This includes innovative approaches to issues such as career paths, worksite arrangements, training and compensation structures. Identifying and embracing what is increasingly prevalent in other sectors will energize the workforce and improve the

government’s ability to compete for talent. Having a workforce that is ready, able and willing to deliver services in a contemporary manner must be a priority.

**Strengthening OPM.** The merit-based civil service system strives to ensure competition for job openings and fair treatment in the workplace. OPM’s record as upholder of the merit system must be resourced at a level enabling it to continue

governmentwide education and enforcement.

As civil servants are required to do more and different tasks, with ever-tighter resources, we believe OPM employees have the necessary expertise and experience to be critical players in identifying and implementing solutions to these challenges.

These are but a few of the challenges the administration will face, yet how the federal workforce is staffed, compensated and motivated will determine how the government deals with increasing complexity and scarce resources.

While it will be tempting to push these issues to the background as more urgent matters surface, we join the National Academy of Public Administration and the American Society of Public Administration in their effort to elevate the government’s management agenda.

Our goal is two-fold: that whoever is elected... understand the federal workforce is inextricably tied to his overall success; and, that enough progress be made in addressing these challenges that a similar op-ed isn’t needed four years from now.

Taken from Federal Times article dated October 29, 2012 by **Janice R. Lachance** and **Linda M. Springer**, former directors of the Office of Personnel Management—Lachance during the Clinton administration and Springer in the George W. Bush administration. Currently, Lachance is CEO of the Special Libraries Association, an international professional association for library and information professionals, and Springer is executive director of Ernst & Young LLP’s Government and Public Sector practice.



By **JANICE R. LACHANCE**  
and **LINDA M. SPRINGER**



## Spotlighting Information in Public Service

### Did you Know...

#### Rules Safeguard Senior Executives When the New Administration Begins

Every four years, our government has a transition. Sometimes that transition is quite dramatic, with political appointees changing at virtually every position. Other times, such as this year, the change will happen on a lesser scale, but change will occur. Because of these changes at the political level, special safeguards have been enacted to protect the career civil service from being politicized when there is a presidential transition.

Political appointees with previous government service recognize the value of the civil service and the reality that career federal employees are free from partisan politics as they perform their day-to-day duties. Unfortunately, many new political appointees do not know this and come to office believing those who served the previous administration ably and competently must have done so out of loyalty to the policies of that party. Stories have been told over the years, particularly in the years when political parties change, about hit lists of career senior executives who should be reassigned to insignificant jobs or otherwise made into targets because “they can’t be trusted.

This usually happens at the Senior Executive Service level because career senior executives are usually the federal employees who interact day to day with political appointees to carry out that administration’s political policies. Because of this and because congress wanted to provide some protection to career senior executives, the law on transition of government prohibits career senior executives from being reassigned or involuntarily removed from the SES for 120 days after the appointment of a new agency head or new political immediate supervisor with the authority to rate or remove the career senior executives from their positions.

The 120-day rule serves primarily to institutionalize continuity and expertise during a get-acquainted period. In an ideal world, all career senior executives would stay in their positions of record for four months after a new agency head or immediate supervisor is appointed. Agency operations should continue as necessary, with the political leadership learning the agency structure and the career senior executives learning how to serve the new political leadership. Often this is what happens, with career

senior executives using the four-month period to dispel preconceived notions held by some political appointees. It is the responsibility of every career senior executive to make effective use of this get-acquainted period. Remember that in every change of administration there are those who believe that a career executive did well only out of loyalty to predecessors, not necessarily competence.

Sometimes an agency may go through the 120-day rule somewhat pro forma and political appointees may start making noise about reassignments well before the 120-day period ends. There are two ways for the senior executive to respond to this. First, continue to pursue the get-acquainted period with vigor, competence and optimism hoping to turn things around. This sometimes works. Second, start negotiating for a place to land. The second option is perhaps the result of recognizing the reality of the situation.

An exception to the 120-day get-acquainted period is the “detail.” Career senior executives detailed out of their regular jobs during a transition will never have a get-acquainted period, and such a technique could be used to validate secret political hit lists and thwart the intent of Congress for continuity during transitions. As a solution, the stature on the 120-day rule and the Office of Personnel Management’s implementing regulations require a 60-day extension of the 120-day rule for an executive on detail during a transition. Thus, a detailed executive cannot be reassigned for six months. There are other exceptions to the 120-day rule for misconduct and performance-based actions that were ongoing when the agency head or political supervisor was first appointed.

While the changes in 2012 may not be as dramatic as they were in 200 or 2008, there are always new appointees at the beginning of an administration, even of a second-term president. It is helpful to understand the transition rules.

This article was taken from the Federal Times “Ask the Lawyer” column in the Federal Times, December 3, 2012 edition, written by Bill Bransford, managing partner of Shaw, Bransford & Roth in Washington. He serves as general counsel to the Senior Executives Association, Federal Managers Association and other professional associations.



## Understanding Risk and Return is Key to Good Outcomes

Taken from Federal Times “PersonalAdviser, Money Matters” article dated November 5, 2012

I sometimes hear Thrift Savings Plan investors define their investment goal as: “I want to make a lot of money without ever losing any money.”

This demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of investing—how it works and what it can do. In particular, this kind of thinking ignores the reality that investment risk and return are intimately connected. You can’t enjoy the latter unless you’re willing to endure the former.

Failing to recognize this truth will lead you to make poor investment decisions. Poor investment decisions usually lead to poor investment results, and poor investment results often lead to poor, or at least poorer, investors, in the end. So, successful investing relies on good decision-making, and good decision-making relies on a good understanding of the factors that affect the outcomes.

Two key factors in this equation are investment risk and return, and understanding them and how they work is essential to investment success.

Investment risk is the possibility that an investment will produce an unexpected return in the future. For our purposes, investment risk affects both the average rate of return over time and the sequence of periodic returns that produce that average. When you are contributing to or withdrawing from your investment portfolio, these factors affect the value of your portfolio.

While you may assume that earning 9 percent per year, on average, over 20 years, is preferable to earning 8 percent, the fact is that the 8 percent average may actually leave you with more money, depending upon how the sequence of yearly returns aligned with your sequence of yearly contributions or withdrawals. In other words, it is not just the long-term average rate of return that matters, but also the sequence of yearly returns that produces that average. Assuming that the investment strategy with the highest expected rate of return is the best choice can be dangerous.

Investment return, on the other hand, is the change in value that an investment produces in exchange for taking risk. Investment return consists of yield and price appreciation or depreciation. Yield is the cash income received from the investment while it is held—interest or dividend payments.

Appreciation and depreciation are produced when

an investment is purchased for a price and then later sold for a different price.

Investment risk and expected return are inexorably connected. A change in one always effects a change in the other. Risk is a means to an end and should not be indulged arbitrarily. You should always expect to be compensated for taking risk. Risk and expected return can be identified, quantified and managed to your advantage, and doing so is the point of investment management.

When it comes to managing your TSP account, your primary objective should be to realize the expected return in each and every period—I think a year is a reasonable measurement period—during the life of your account. Predictability is the most valuable commodity when you’re investing for maximum retirement income.

As an investment manager, your job is to manage your TSP account in a way that seeks to balance risk and return so that for the risk you’re taking, you can reasonably expect the maximum amount of return each period. From another perspective, you should manage your account to achieve a target return with as little risk as possible. This is maximizing predictability.

One way to do this is to use one of the TSP’s L Funds. While doing so doesn’t guarantee that your investment objectives will be met, or that your account will safely support your spending goals in retirement, it does ensure that your TSP investment will be risk-efficient. All of the L Fund asset allocation schemes have been carefully formulated to deliver the maximum expected return for the level of risk they assume.

It’s no coincidence that the L Funds employ all five basic TSP funds all of the time. That’s because this is one of the keys to achieving that optimal balance of risk and return. Using them, or even just the allocation models they provide, and sticking with all five of the basic funds all the time, ensures that you are never taking risk for which you don’t expect to be paid.

Mike Miles is a Certified Financial Planner licensee and principal adviser for Variplan, LLC, an independent fiduciary in Ashburn, VA, specializing in retirement planning for federal employees.



## UPCOMING EVENTS January 2013

**Jan 1, 2013**      **New Years Day!**



**Jan 3, 2013**      **Oklahoma Field Federal Safety & Health Council Meeting**  
10:30-12:30  
Location TBD, POC: Stephanie Schroeder, 405-954-0371

**Jan 8, 2013**      **Agency Visits-OKC**

**Jan 16, 2013**      **Interagency Training Council**  
10:00 am  
NW Library, 5600 NW 122 St, OKC  
POC: Stacy Schrank, 405-606-3823

**Jan 17, 2013**      **Executive Policy Council mtg**  
10:00-1:00  
301 NW 6<sup>th</sup> St, Oklahoma City  
POC: FEB Office, 405-231-4167

**Jan 21, 2013**      **Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday**



### INSPIRATION CORNER

Forget mistakes. Forget failures. Forget everything except what you're going to do now and do it. Today is your lucky day.  
-Will Durant

The secret of success is to be in harmony with existence, to be always calm....to let each wave of life wash us a little farther up the shore.  
-Cyril Connolly

The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it.  
-Theodore Roosevelt

## Your Federal Executive Board

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

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

- Kevin Donovan, Federal Security Director, TSA
- Jeremy Duehring, LCDR, Military Entrance Processing Station
- David Engel, Chief Administrative Judge, Social Security Administration, Tulsa
- Jim Finch, Special Agent in Charge, FBI
- Jerry Hyden, Director, US Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Ross Marshall, Executive Director, Tinker AFB
- Dottie Overall, Director, Small Business Administration
- Lindy Ritz, Director, FAA Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center
- Betty Tippeconnie, Superintendent, BIA-Concho Agency

This newsletter is published monthly as a cost-effective tool for communicating events and issues of importance to the federal community in Oklahoma. If you have news of interest, please fax to the FEB Office at (405) 231-4165 or email to [LeAnnJenkins@gsa.gov](mailto:LeAnnJenkins@gsa.gov) no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

### Officers

**Chair:**                      **Adrian Andrews**  
Special Agent in Charge,  
US Secret Service, Oklahoma City

**Vice-Chair:**              **Julie Gosdin**  
Director,  
US Postal Service District,  
Oklahoma City

### Staff

**Director:**                      LeAnn Jenkins  
**Assistant:**                      Nichole James



## More Mobile Apps



### LactMed

National Library of Medicine

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
26 Ratings

**Published** December 06, 2011

**App Link:**

<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/lactmed/id441969514?mt=8>

**App Description**

LactMed, part of the National Library of Medicine’s (NLM) Toxicology Data Network (TOXNET®), is a database of drugs and other chemicals to which breastfeeding mothers may be exposed. It includes information on the levels of such substances in breast milk and infant blood, and the possible adverse effects in the nursing infant. Suggested therapeutic alternatives are provided to those drugs where appropriate. All data are derived from the scientific literature and fully referenced. Data are organized into substance-specific records, which provide a summary of the pertinent reported information.

**App Screen Shot**



## First Aid by American Red Cross

American Red Cross

★ ★ ★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
3539 Ratings	1099 Ratings

**Published** August 08, 2012

**App Links**

iPhone: <http://itunes.apple.com/US/app/first-aid-by-american-red-cross/id529160691?mt=8>

Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.cube.arc.fa>

**App Description**

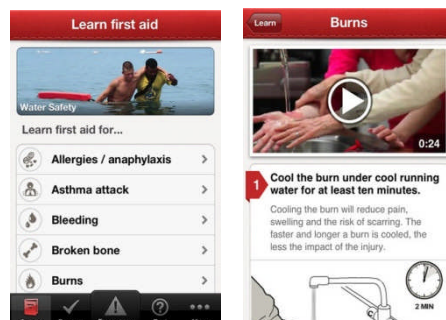
**\*\*Please note: The American Red Cross is a charitable organization, not a government agency.\*\***

Accidents happen. The official American Red Cross First Aid app puts expert advice for everyday emergencies in your hand. Get the app and be prepared for what life brings. With videos, interactive quizzes and simple step-by-step advice it’s never been easier to know first aid.

**Features:**

- Simple step-by-step instructions guide you through everyday first aid scenarios.
- Fully integrated with 9-1-1 so you can call EMS from the app at any time.
- Videos and animations make learning first aid fun and easy.
- Safety tips for everything, from severe winter weather to hurricanes, earthquakes and tornadoes help you prepare for emergencies.
- Preloaded content means you have instant access to all safety information at anytime, even without reception or an Internet connection.
- Interactive quizzes allow you to earn badges that you can share with your friends and show off your lifesaving knowledge."

**App Screen Shots**





## 2013 Federal Holidays

Federal law (5 U.S.C. 6103) establishes the following public holidays for Federal employees. Please note that most Federal employees work on a Monday through Friday schedule. For these employees, when a holiday falls on a nonworkday -- Saturday or Sunday -- the holiday usually is observed on Monday (if the holiday falls on Sunday) or Friday (if the holiday falls on Saturday).

<b>Tuesday, January 1</b>	<b>New Year's Day</b>
<b>Monday, January 21</b>	<b>Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.</b>
<b>Monday, February 18*</b>	<b>Washington's Birthday</b>
<b>Monday, May 27</b>	<b>Memorial Day</b>
<b>Thursday, July 4</b>	<b>Independence Day</b>
<b>Monday, September 2</b>	<b>Labor Day</b>
<b>Monday, October 14</b>	<b>Columbus Day</b>
<b>Monday, November 11</b>	<b>Veterans Day</b>
<b>Thursday, November 28</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Day</b>
<b>Wednesday, December 25</b>	<b>Christmas Day</b>

NOTE: *This year, the Inauguration Day holiday falls on Monday, January 21, 2013, which is also the legal public holiday for the Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. (See 5 U.S.C. 6103(c).) For Federal employees who work in the District of Columbia, Montgomery or Prince George's Counties in Maryland, Arlington or Fairfax Counties in Virginia, or the cities of Alexandria or Fairfax in Virginia, Inauguration Day is observed concurrently with the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday. Federal employees in these areas are not entitled to an in-lieu-of holiday for Inauguration Day.*

*\* This holiday is designated as "Washington's Birthday" in section 6103(a) of title 5 of the United States Code, which is the law that specifies holidays for Federal employees. Though other institutions such as state and local governments and private businesses may use other names, it is our policy to always refer to holidays by the names designated in the law.*



## CSRS benefits for law enforcement, firefighters

Some groups of federal employees have special provisions that allow them to retire earlier than most other employees and receive a more generous annuity computation. Among these are law enforcement officers and firefighters.

In this column I'll lay out the rules governing law enforcement officer and firefighter retirement under the Civil Service Retirement System. Next I'll do the same for those covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System.

A law enforcement officer, as defined by the Office of Personnel Management, is an employee whose duties are primarily the investigation, apprehension or detention of individuals suspected or convicted of criminal offenses. The definition does not include an employee whose primary duties are maintaining law and order, protecting life and property, guarding against or inspecting for violations of law, or investigating persons other than those suspected or convicted of criminal offenses.

A firefighter is an employee whose duties are primarily directly connected with the control and extinguishing of fires or the maintenance and use of firefighting equipment. The definition does not include employees whose primary duty is routine fire prevention.

Both definitions include employees who move directly from primary law enforcement officer or firefighter positions to secondary positions, where the employees serve either as first-level supervisors over law enforcement officers or firefighter personnel or in administrative jobs for which primary law enforcement or firefighting experience is a prerequisite.

To be eligible to retire under the special CSRS provisions, you must be at least age 50 with 20 or more years of service, separate from a position covered by CSRS and have been covered by CSRS for at least one year within the two years immediately before you retire. Accumulated sick leave can't be used to meet the minimum service requirements. Nor can military service, unless you went on active duty directly from a law enforcement officer or firefighter position and then returned to a covered position.

Once you have met the 20 year service requirements to retire, you don't need to stay in a law enforcement officer or firefighter position to have that portion of your annuity computed using the enhanced formula.

In general, all law enforcement officers and

firefighters are subject to mandatory separation at 57.

If you have completed 20 years of service under the special retirement provision, you must be separated on the last day of the month in which you reach the mandatory age, but only if you are currently occupying a law enforcement or firefighter position.

If you are already at the mandatory separation age and haven't completed 20 years of service, you must be separated on the last day of the month in which you complete 20 years. However, in the public interest, your agency head may exempt you from mandatory separation until age 60. To secure an exemption beyond that, the agency head must get the approval of OPM.

Because law enforcement officers and firefighters generally have shorter and more hazardous careers, their annuities are computed using a more generous formula than the one used for other CSRS employees. For this enhanced benefit, they contribute 2.5% of their basic pay to the retirement fund.

The annuity is the sum of:

- 2.5% of your highest three consecutive years of average pay, your high-three, multiplied by 20 years of covered service.
- 2.0% of your high-three multiplied by all remaining years of service.

For example, if you were a law enforcement officer or firefighter who had a high-three of \$100,000, 2.5% of that would be \$2,500. Multiplying that figure by 20 years of service would produce \$50,000. If you had five additional years of service, take 2% of your high-three—or \$2,000—and multiply it by 5. The product—\$10,000—would be added to the \$50,000 and yield an annuity of \$60,000.

So a 20-year career will produce an annuity that is 50% of your high three. Each additional year of service will increase your annuity 2%. If you had a 30-year career, your annuity would be 70% of your high-three. A 35-year career would be 80%.

Although a CSRS annuity as a general rule may not exceed 80% of your high-three, there is an exception: Sick leave is not in that limitation. So, if you had a long career and plenty of unused sick leave, you could receive an annuity greater than 80%.

*Written by Reg Jones, previously the head of retirement and insurance programs at the Office of Personnel Management. This article was published in the Federal Times, November 12, 2012 issue.*





## FERS benefits for law enforcement, firefighters

My Nov. 12 column reviewed the Civil Service Retirement System rules for law enforcement officers and firefighters. This column does the same for the Federal Employees Retirement System.

A law enforcement officer (LEO), as defined by the Office of Personnel Management, is an employee in “a rigorous position” whose duties are the investigation, apprehension or detention of individuals suspected or convicted of criminal offenses, or the protection of U.S. officials against threats to personal safety. This definition does not include an employee whose primary duties involve maintaining order, protecting life and property, guarding against or inspecting for violations of law, or investigating people other than those suspected or convicted of criminal offenses.

A firefighter is an employee in “a rigorous position” whose primary duties are directly connected with controlling and extinguishing fires. The definition does not include an employee whose primary duty is routine fire prevention inspection or maintenance or use of firefighting apparatus and equipment.

Both definitions include employees who move directly from rigorous LEO or firefighter positions to secondary positions, where the employees serve either as first-level supervisors over LEO or firefighter personnel or in administrative jobs for which experience in a rigorous law enforcement or firefighting position is a prerequisite.

Just like their CSRS counterparts, FERS law enforcement officers and firefighters can retire at age 50 with 20 years of covered service. However, unlike them, they can also retire at any age with 25 years of covered service. Unused sick leave can't be used to meet the minimum service requirement. Nor can military service, unless you go on active duty and return to a covered position.

Once the minimum 20-year-service requirement is met, an LEO or firefighter does not need to stay in a covered position to retire and receive the enhanced annuity computation for that service.

All LEOs and firefighters are subject to mandatory separation at age 57, but only if they are occupying an LEO or firefighter position. Those who have completed 20 years as an LEO or firefighter must separate on the last day of the month in which they

reach 57. Those already 57 who haven't completed 20 years of service must separate on the last day of the month in which they complete 20 years. An agency head may exempt an employee from mandatory separation until age 60. OPM must approve exemptions beyond that.

Because of their generally shorter and more hazardous careers, LEOs and firefighters receive a more generous annuity computation than other FERS employees. For this enhanced benefit, they contribute 1.7 percent of basic pay to the retirement fund instead of 0.8 percent.

The annuity is the sum of:

- 1.7 percent of the average of your highest three consecutive years of pay, your high-three, multiplied by 20 years of service.
- 1.0 percent of your high-three multiplied by all remaining service beyond 20 years.

For example, if your high-three were \$100,000, 1.7 percent of that would be \$1,700. Multiplying that figure by 20 years of service would produce \$34,000. If you had five additional years of service, you'd take 1 percent of the high-three—or \$1,000—and multiply it by 5. The product—\$5,000—would be added to the \$34,000 and yield an annuity of \$39,000.

While unused sick leave may not be added to the years of service to qualify for retirement, it would be added to your actual service and increase the amount of your final annuity. While CSRS employees receive full credit for those hours, FERS employees who retire before Jan. 1, 2014, get credit for only half of it.

If you are under age 62 when you retire, you'll also receive a special retirement supplement that approximates the Social Security benefit you earned while you were a FERS employee and continues until age 62, when you are eligible for a Social Security benefit. The supplement doesn't include active-duty service for which you've made a deposit to the retirement fund.

*Written by Reg Jones, previously the head of retirement and insurance programs at the Office of Personnel Management. This article was published in the Federal Times, December 3, 2012 issue.*



## How to Develop Resiliency

By Maj. Wistaria Joseph, 71st Mission Support Squadron Commander

In late March (2007), I had the great fortune to meet Dr. Al Siebert, author of *The Resiliency Advantage*, at a leadership seminar in Oklahoma City. Doctor Siebert is internationally recognized for his research into the inner nature of highly resilient survivors. His research also peers into the public sector to determine how public service members continue to do what they do every day.

The seminar centered on leadership skills for developing workforce resiliency, which I found to be interesting and confirmed a lot of my previous leadership training. This training was also very timely because it provided good reminders to help me in my job to prepare Vance AFB for the personnel challenges imposed by Personnel Services Delivery, National Security Personnel System, PBD 720 reductions, Force Shaping, Reductions in Force and the impending A1 Transformation which merges manpower and personnel with the services career field.

According to Doctor Siebert, “highly resilient people know how to bounce back and find a way to have things turn out well. They thrive in constant change because they are flexible, agile, creative, synergistic and learn from experience.” Resilient people know how to gain strength from adversity. Dr. Siebert also noted that there are five levels of resiliency, just like Maslow’s hierarchy of needs,

At Level 1 you need to be able to maintain your emotional stability, health and well-being. This is key to sustaining healthy and energy. A key attribute of resilient people is that they tend to be healthy and rarely have sick days. So instead of teaching “stress management” maybe it is time to incorporate self-reliance. To my amazement, Doctor Siebert is over 70 years of age, yet walks, travels and enjoys life like a man many years junior to his biological age. In my opinion, one good thing about the military lifestyle is that it keeps its members young. Our fitness test, along with our need to maintain a deployable ready posture, drives us to keep physically healthy.

Level 2 is where problem solving skills are integrated. By focusing outward on the challenges you face, you are able to deal better with problems emotionally. So instead of taking things personally, step back, look at problems objectively

and you will be amazed at how much of the emotion is removed from the problem itself.

Level 3 turns you inward toward the roots of resiliency. This is the time when you are able to develop a strong inner self through self-esteem, self-confidence and a positive self-concept.

There are 10 key attributes and skills found in resilient people. The 10 attributes and skills are to be playful and have childlike curiosity, to learn from life experiences, to adapt quickly, have a solid self-esteem and self-confidence, have good friendships, loving relationships, express feelings honestly, expect things to work out well, read others with empathy, use intuition, and defend yourself well. By building on these 10 key attributes, you develop resiliency skills at Level 4.

At the top of the triangle is Level 5, where you can exercise your talent for serendipity. At this high level you are able to learn good lessons from bad experiences. When you can clearly look back on anything bad that has happened in your life and learn something from it, you incorporate the highest most level of resiliency. The struggle to bounce back and recover from setbacks can lead to developing strengths and abilities that you didn’t even know were possible.

As military members and employees of a military service, each of us deals with adversity constantly. There is no doubt that today’s Air Force is more dynamic and going through more change than most people care to encounter. When faced with adversity and change, your mind can create either barriers or bridges to a better future. Resiliency cannot be taught, only learned. However, by using some of the tools Doctor Siebert has revealed, we can further develop our resilient workforce to embrace and learn from the ever revolving door of changes in our military because resiliency gives you a competitive advantage while sustaining your health and happiness.

*This article was written in 2007 after an FEB-hosted training on the topic of Resilience. Since the writing of this article, Dr. Siebert has passed; however, with the increasing frequency of change that our workforce is facing, I thought it appropriate to dust this off and re-print in our newsletter.*



# Financial Wellness Workshop



Date:	Wednesday, February 13, 2013
Time:	Three Hour Sessions (morning and afternoon, please identify your choice below)
Location:	Oklahoma City Public Works Training Facility, 3738 Southwest 15th Street, OKC
Why?	With Federal Salaries remaining flat and cost of living increasing, it is more important than ever for federal employees to be equipped with information on how to maximize their incomes.
Topics:	How Money Works – basic fundamentals you were definitely never meant to “know” Debt Solutions – alleviate unnecessary stress of too much month and not enough money Retirement Planning – protecting your money and never running out Long-Term Care – fastest growing need of people over 50
Instructor:	Jeff Wallace, First Command

## Registration

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign me up for the following session:

February 13, 2013, 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon

February 13, 2013, 12:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Mail registration to:	Federal Executive Board 215 Dean A. McGee, Ste 153 Oklahoma City, OK 73102
Or fax to:	405-231-4165
Or email to:	LeAnn.Jenkins@gsa.gov

*Cancellation Policy: Understanding that unforeseen circumstances may preclude an individual from attending, cancellations will be permitted through February 7, 2013. Since this is a “no-cost” training, we ask your courtesy to cancel early so that we can accommodate people on the waiting list, if one exists.*



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
January 2013		1 	2	3 10:00 OFFSHC	4	5
6	7	8 Agency Visits-OKC	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16 10:00 ITC	17 10:00 Executive Policy Council	18	19
20	21  Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

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