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# THE GOVERNMENT STANDARD



May/June 2004

for current and retired government workers and their families since 1933  
American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO

## AFGE members volunteer for war effort



(l-r) **Brian Kelly** (Tobyhanna Army Depot employee and longtime AFGE member), **Keith Hill** (Pres., AFGE Local 1647) and Major **John O'Neill** (U.S. Army).

At last count, 606 AFGE members have been activated, serving with their National Guard and Reserve units in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. There's also another group of members serving in the War on Terrorism. They're not soldiers, sailors or airmen and women—they're federal workers who volunteered to be deployed overseas on temporary duty. Though the number of members who fall into this category is unknown, one thing is certain—every AFGE member who volunteered to serve in the War on Terrorism in any capacity is a proud American with an impressive history of helping the public good. **Keith Hill**, President of **Local 1647**, is such an AFGE member.

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## NSPS rescheduled until after elections "Remain vigilant"

The Department of Defense (DoD) originally planned on implementing major components of the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) by October 1, 2004. Those plans have been pushed back one month, until after the November elections.

Secretary of the Navy **Gordon England** announced in mid-April that DoD now anticipates submitting a labor-relations draft regulation to the *Federal Register* on November 4, and plans on releasing proposals for performance based pay and appeal rights in January of 2005. Additionally, the first group of defense workers scheduled to move into the new system will be in June/July of 2005. The Office of Personnel Management will now

be more involved in the development of the new system.

"We must remain vigilant and take nothing for granted," says AFGE National President **John Gage**. "DoD can do an about-face at anytime." Gage is right. According to the *Federal Employees News Digest*, England said the schedules "could be longer (or) they could be shorter, because it's event-driven and it depends on how we do each step."

Since DoD presented its anti-worker concepts paper on February 6, 2004, civilian defense workers have successfully informed taxpayers and members of Congress of the **Bush** Administration's radical plan to silence decent, hard working Americans in DoD. For more information, log onto [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org).

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Writing on the wall



## AFGE draws media attention nationwide

ABC, CBS, FOX and NBC television stations—as well as regional radio networks and daily and weekly newspapers—are covering AFGE-sponsored town hall meetings, marches, rallies and Lunch & Learns nationwide. Letters-to-the-editors illustrating the important work AFGE members do every day for the American people are also springing up.

The extensive media coverage AFGE members have received is a clear indication that large and small communities throughout the country want to know what's

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AFGE National President **John Gage** conducts a live interview with **Sharon DeRycke** of KWQC-TV (NBC-6) during an April rally for Rock Island Arsenal (Illinois) defense workers.



John Gage

## A Message from National President John Gage

# Operation cannibalism— *is DoD conducting a plan to rub out its own?*

It was conceived in the belly of the Pentagon. Secrecy was paramount. If uncovered before the launch date, there would've been public outcry, congressional hearings and media investigations. After all, the plan called for methodically silencing almost one million people while simultaneously creating a harsh, politically volatile environment.

While Baghdad fell one year ago, a new personnel plan by the Department of Defense (DoD) was set in motion. Civilian defense employees throughout the country never knew what hit them.

Secretary **Donald Rumsfeld** rifled his creation through Congress and slipped the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) into the \$400 billion

defense bill signed by President **George Bush** last November. As NSPS traveled down the legislative path, Rumsfeld duped legislators into believing that the existing personnel system was so broken that he couldn't possibly win the War on Terrorism without a new one. With the exception of a half dozen legislators, Congress fell for it—hook, line and sinker.

Today, the very same civilian defense employees at installations all over the country who have been working 12-hour shifts to support our men and women in uniform are in jeopardy of losing their rights and jobs. Many of the defense workers are veterans, supporting the U.S. through Vietnam, the Gulf War and the War in Iraq—many have seen action in Iraq.

Civilian defense employees are wondering what waiving appeal rights, as well as gutting collective bargaining rights and pay provisions have to do with defeating al-Qaeda?

Further, if praise equals support, DoD officials and military brass are actually proponents of the existing personnel system. General **Peter J. Schoomaker**, the Army Chief of Staff and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Rock Island Arsenal workers in early April that they “really ought to take a lot of pride ... in the great part you're playing in this global war on terrorism.” **Diane K. Morales**, Deputy Undersecretary of Defense (Logistics Material Readiness) cited the role of civilian defense workers at the Naval Weapons Station in Charleston, South Carolina, saying that

their “dedication to duty makes our military missions the overall successes they truly are.” Air Force Chief of Staff General **John P. Jumper** recognized civilian defense employees with the Air Force Materiel Command at Warner Robins Air Force Base in Georgia, for their efforts in Operation Iraqi Freedom, calling them “the backbone of the U.S. Air Force.”

In Norfolk, Virginia, civilian defense workers were commended by the Department of the Navy for “applying their expert logistics skills and expertise, meeting and exceeding our high-quality standards and consistently demonstrating individual professionalism and ‘can-do attitudes.’” Rumsfeld joined in the praise—issuing a Meritorious Award to civilian defense employees at the Defense Logistics Agency in New Cumberland, Pennsylvania, for exceptional performance in their actions in support of the nation's warfighters.

Which Rumsfeld are civilian defense employees and members of Congress to believe? And, how will this untested radical personnel system impact future generations of Americans called to public service?

As more light shines on the Bush Administrations' creation to rub out its own civilian defense workforce, public outcry, Congressional hearings and media investigations just might commence. After all, we're only talking about taking away the rights of almost one million hard-working, decent Americans who proudly call themselves civilian defense workers.

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# AFGE News

## DHS plan "fails to advance the public's interest"

AFGE, along with its union allies, told the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) that the proposed personnel system in DHS fails to protect worker rights and could have an adverse impact on national security.

"Taken as a whole," stated AFGE and its allies in a 92-page document on March 23, "the proposed system fails to advance the public's interest in protecting homeland security. ... We are compelled to object to the system in its entirety and strongly recommend that it not be implemented until the many serious defects (described in the comments) have been corrected."

The 92 pages of comments and recommendations for changes were submitted by Presidents **John Gage** (AFGE), **Colleen M. Kelley** of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), and **Michael Randall** of the National Association of Agriculture Employees (NAAE).

AFGE, NTEU and NAAE expect DHS and OPM to give "full and fair consideration" to their comments, adding that they stand ready, as provided in legislation setting up DHS, "to meet and confer in an effort to reach agreement over the many disputed areas." The DHS system is expected to serve as a model for agencies across the federal government. For complete details, including union and administration proposals, log onto [www.DHSworkers.org](http://www.DHSworkers.org).

## Whistleblower protections are paramount

Proposed personnel changes in the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Defense could leave unions incapable of protecting whistleblowers from workplace retaliation. "The Bush Administration has sent a clear and chilling message to public workers—speak out and you'll be out," said AFGE National President **John Gage**. "Without a strong union protecting potential whistleblowers, employees understand they'll have no protection from dismissal, often on bogus charges, should they put the public's interest first by speaking out."

## Contractor releases report on private screeners

*Poll: voters feel safer with federal screeners*

BearingPoint (a contractor) recently presented a report to Congress on the effectiveness of private security firms (other contractors) in the only five airports in the nation still run by private screeners. Not surprisingly, the contractor found "no evidence that any of the five privately screened airports performed below the average level of the federal airports."

However, a recent poll commissioned by AFGE found that 59 percent of 1,049 likely voters said they would "feel safer if airports used a federal baggage screener workforce" rather than a "private company screener workforce." Only five airports participated in a pilot program designed to test the prospects for returning airport security to the hands of private contractors, as it was prior to 9/11. Log onto [www.screenersunion.org](http://www.screenersunion.org) for more details of the report and poll.

## AFGE—the best investment you'll ever make!

Thousands of federal and D.C. workers have joined AFGE in 2004. What are you waiting for? Join today! Simply visit the AFGE Local office in your building or call (202) 737-8700. Be sure to visit AFGE on the Web at [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org).



## AFGE wins advertising award

Every year the American Association of Political Consultants (AAPC) presents the prestigious Pollie Awards program, honoring the very best in political campaign advertising and expertise. Winners are chosen from over 80 different categories, recognizing a wide spectrum of political and public affairs communications. In 2004, AFGE won second place for "One Christmas" in the National Public Affairs TV category. The ad dealt with corruption and government contracts and was produced by MacWilliams, Robinson and Partners. To view the ad, log onto [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org).

## House adopts pay resolution

The House of Representatives adopted a pay parity resolution which is intended to help ensure that federal civilian employees, as well as military personnel, receive a 3.5 percent pay increase in fiscal year 2005. The March 31 motion passed by a vote of 299-126.

## Gage joins AFL-CIO executive council

AFGE National President **John Gage** was recently sworn in as a National Vice President to the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO. The AFL-CIO's mission is to bring social and economic justice to our nation by enabling working people to have a voice on the job, in government, in a changing global economy and in their communities. For more information, log onto [www.afl-cio.org](http://www.afl-cio.org).



# AFGE is on the move

During the first quarter of the year, AFGE Locals, Districts and Councils held Metros, mini-Metros, Union Fairs, rallies, Lunch & Learns (L&Ls), informational outreach events, town hall meetings and PAC receptions at an unprecedented rate. By April 30, over 560 of these union building events had been conducted, and thousands of members were added to

AFGE's growing army of worker/activists. However, retirements, reorganizations and contracting out also took their toll at various agencies—many thousands were dropped from the roles. Still, thanks to an organization-wide effort to build the union, AFGE's active membership now stands at 205,772 up 1,396 since January.

## FIRST QUARTER ACTIVITY REPORT

### ■ AFGE DISTRICT 2

[N.J., N.Y., Conn., Maine, Vt., Mass. N.H. & R.I.—(732) 828-9449]

**Local 400** (Ft. Drum, N.Y.) picked up 13 new members during a two-day L&L program. 36 new members were signed up at the former NAGE-now AFGE-DCMA units. **Local 1674** (VAMC, West Haven, Conn.) signed up 20 new members during a weeklong organizing event. **Local 2138** (VA, West Haven) registered 69 new voters during a recent voter registration day. And, **Local 190** (DoD, Newport, R.I.) signed up 20 new recruits during a two-day organizing campaign while also soliciting signatures for a new DECA unit.

### ■ AFGE DISTRICT 3

[Del. & Pa.—[www.afge3d.org](http://www.afge3d.org) (610) 660-0316/0317]

Three days of signature gathering for professional employees at **Local 1793** (VAMC-Philadelphia) the week of April 5 brought in 14 new members in addition to the signature of 93 showing-of-interest cards. A meet-and-greet, an information table and a walk through gave the Local an opportunity to provide valuable information to VA bargaining unit employees. 71 voter registration forms were disbursed and 91 VA surveys were collected.

In early March, the District hosted organizing and mobilization efforts at **Local 1709** (Dover AFB, Del.) and **Local 1156** (Mechanicsburg, Pa.). Between the two Locals, 37 L&Ls were held, 118 new members were recruited, 520 voter registration forms were handed out, 86 signed up for the AFGE Action News, and 213 DoD postcards were collected. Several of Local 1709's new members returned their \$50 rebates, telling AFGE to put the money toward the union's continued fight against DoD's outrageous personnel plan. Local newspapers carried front-page stories about the unfair treatment of DoD employees under Rumsfeld's new personnel plan as a result of informational outreach efforts and a town hall meeting held at Local 1709.

### ■ AFGE DISTRICT 4

[Md., N.C., Va. & W.V.—[www.kreative.net/dist4](http://www.kreative.net/dist4) (410) 480-1820]

In North Carolina, Locals **1770**, **1738**, **2923** and **3509** held 22 events during a two-week period in early March, recruiting a total of 98 new members,

211 contract surveys, 33 AFGE Action News signups, 136 VA funding postcards and 22 voter registration forms.

**Council 33** [Bureau of Prisons (BoP)] held events in mid-March in Butner, N.C., with **Locals 405**, **408** and **3696**, holding breakfast and dinner sessions for federal correctional workers coming to and from their work shifts. A Union Fair was also held at the BoP Medical Center. Some 159 employees filled out postcards addressed to President **George Bush** and Senator **Elizabeth Dole** (R-N.C.), 47 signed up for the AFGE Action News, nine voter registration forms were returned, and 58 membership forms (1187s) were collected.

A total of 23 L&Ls were held at **Locals 406**, **2065** and **3509** (Jacksonville, N.C.) the week of March 22, netting 79 new members, 18 voter registration forms, and 46 signups for the AFGE Action News. Local 1992 (DLA, Richmond, Va.) held a weeklong organizing drive starting March 22. Four L&Ls and a Union Fair were held, adding 25 new recruits. 149 DoD postcards were also collected, as well as 40 registration forms and 32 Action News signups.

### ■ AFGE DISTRICT 5

[Ala., Fla., Ga., S.C., Tenn., Puerto Rico & Virgin Islands—[www.AFGEDist5.org](http://www.AFGEDist5.org) (770) 907-2055]

39 events at **Locals 2206** and **2207** (Birmingham, Ala.) in late January and mid-March, resulted in 82 new members, 156 contract surveys, two Action News signups and eight voter registration forms.

Right on the heels of a big organizing push at **Local 1858** (Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, Ala.) in mid-February, the Local held three L&Ls, three information tables and one issue discussion event during the week of March 29. In Feb., the Local picked up 106 new members in four days with 16 L&Ls and three Union Fairs. The Local also held two town hall meetings and a PAC reception, netting media coverage from the local newspaper and \$2,170 in PAC contributions. 158 employees also took time to fill out DoD postcards and four members registered to vote.

24 events during three days of organizing in Charleston, S.C., at **Local 1869** (Charleston AFB) and **Local 523** (VAMC) during the week of March 15 resulted in 69 new members, 48 AFGE Action News, 54 faxes to Congress, and 11 voter registration forms. The VAMC events focused on a new unit of doctors and other professional employees who had selected AFGE representation just the week before.

Other events held in District 5 included: Feb. 23-26, **Local 1951** (Beaufort, S.C.) held three L&Ls, resulting in seven members, three DoD postcards, and one voter registration form. On-going L&Ls and new employee orientations since the first of the year have netted **Local 1945** (Anniston Army Depot, Ala.) 52 new recruits. So far the Local has held four L&Ls and two new orientations. The Local has also scheduled a one-week organizing drive beginning June 7. March 11, **Local 1594** (VA Regional Office, St. Petersburg, Fla.) added seven new members and five Action News signups (one L&L).

Feb. 23-27, **Local 2778** (VA Medical Center, Atlanta, Ga.) held five L&Ls and three Union Fairs, resulting in 27 new members, 93 voter registration forms and 205 VA contract surveys. On-going new employee orientations at **Local 547** (VA Medical Center, Tampa, Fla.) have recruited 26 new members since the beginning of the year. A week at **Local 548** (Bay Pines VA Medical Center, Fla.) brought 19 new members. Seven L&Ls and five Union Fairs were held. Four Actions News signups, four contract surveys and 25 voter registrations were also collected. Training was also conducted as well as mobilization and attendance at a Congressional hearing on VA CARES.

### ■ AFGE DISTRICT 6

[Ind., Ky. & Ohio—[www.afgedistrict6.org](http://www.afgedistrict6.org) (317) 542-0428]

Two days of organizing at **Local 3970** (Perryville/Mansfield, Ohio) at the beginning of March brought in nine new members from two L&Ls. On March 3, some 150 union members rallied in Cincinnati to call attention to DoD's new National Security Personnel System (NSPS), VA's CARES proposals and the new proposed personnel system for DHS employees. Eight new members were also added to **Local 3448's** (SSA) rosters at a nearby L&L held that same day. A mini-Metro at **Locals 1148** and **3970** (Columbus, Ohio) in mid-February added 35 new recruits as a result of five L&Ls, eight Union Fairs and one town hall meeting. A number of AFGE Action News signup forms and DoD postcards were also distributed.

### ■ AFGE DISTRICT 7

[Ill., Mich. & Wis.—[www.afgedistrict7.org](http://www.afgedistrict7.org) (312) 421-6245]

Organizing at **Locals 46**, **1741**, **1882** and **2274** (Tomah, Wis.) the week of April 5 netted 46

new members from 13 events. 41 Action News signups and 56 FEHBP letters were collected. AFGE's letter urges lawmakers to support proposed legislation in both the Senate and the House that would increase the government's share of health care premium costs from the current average of 72 percent to 80 percent. Local 46 (INS, Sault Sainte Marie, Mich.) held a L&L on April 6 and signed up six new members.

**Locals 15, 584, 703, 2119 and 2134** at Rock Island Arsenal (DoD) teamed up for a five-day organizing blitz in Illinois the week of March 29. A large rally of 150+ members on April 1 drew media coverage from every single TV station and newspaper in the area. All totaled, 15 L&Ls were held, resulting in 79 new members, 25 Action News signup, 126 DoD postcards, and two voter registration forms.

**Locals 2274 (VA) and 3272 (SSA)** in Saginaw, Mich., held seven L&Ls the week of March 29. All totaled, 40 bargaining unit employees signed 1187s, 19 signed up for the Action News, 23 contract surveys (VA) were collected and one voter registration form was returned. Three L&Ls held at **Locals 1741, 2092, 2795, 3239** (Ann Arbor, Mich.) in early March netted 33 new members, 16 contract surveys, 31 Action News signups and seven FEHBP letters. There was also a three-day blitz at **Locals 2343 and 2483** (Marion, Ill.) in mid-March. Six L&Ls were held resulting in 49 new members, 228 FEHBP letters to Congress, 45 contract surveys, 38 AFGE Action News signups, 91 BoP/VA postcards and one voter registration form.

Other events held in District 7 included: a L&L at the beginning of March that gained five new members for **Local 704** (EPA, Chicago). A L&L on March 16 at **Local 46** (INS, Port Huron, Mich.) that added seven new members. A L&L at **Local 2795** (Detroit). 15 new recruits from a L&L at Local 3907 (EPA, Ann Arbor) on March 17. The District has also filed a petition with the FLRA for a unit of some 55 professionals at the VAMC in Appleton, Wis.

## ■ AFGE DISTRICT 8

[Iowa, Minn., Neb., N.D. & S.D.—[www.afge-8th-dist.org](http://www.afge-8th-dist.org) (952) 854-3216]

Thirteen new members were picked up among **Locals 1509, 3035, 3185, 3807, and 4040** (Sioux Falls, S.D.) in mid-February. Five L&Ls, a Union Fair, two legislative lobbying visits, two walk throughs, and a PAC reception and training were held. A number of voter registration forms and AFGE Action News signup forms were also distributed. A total of \$436 was donated to AFGE-PAC. In conjunction with the Sioux Falls organizing events, the District held training classes and a leadership reception to discuss the importance of voter registration and AFGE-PAC, and led the grassroots lobbying efforts in Sioux Falls.

## ■ AFGE DISTRICT 9

[Ark., Kan., Mo. & Okla.—(405) 670-2656]

Organizing at **Local 1336** (SSA) in St. Louis, Mo., Feb. 23-27 brought in two new members, eight voter registrations, and 12 FEHBP/overtime letters to Congress. A total of eight L&Ls were held.

Mobilization training the week of March 22 for **Council 245** (St. Louis Area Council of AFGE Locals) brought in 37 new/upgraded PAC contributors, collecting \$3,206 for AFGE-PAC. The Council also ran a raffle, collecting over \$500 for AFGE-PAC. **Local 916** (Tinker AFB, Okla.) has been holding bi-weekly new employee orientations, gaining some 25 new members since the beginning of the year. In addition, the Local has held eight L&Ls this year adding 40 new recruits. A two-week organizing drive is scheduled at Local 916 in mid-May.

## ■ AFGE DISTRICT 10

[La., Miss., Texas, N.M. & Panama—(210) 735-8900]

**Local 1920** (DoD) enrolled 279 new members at Fort Hood, Texas, between March 15-24. The Local held 36 total events over the eight days, including a town hall meeting and a rally that was covered by the media. Ten new employee orientations held since the beginning of the year at **Locals 2437** (VAMC), **2921** (AAFES), and **3377** (INS) in the Dallas area have yielded 26 new members. **Locals 1454, 1633, 1920, 2128, 3184** came together for a huge two-week blitz in Waco/Houston, Texas, which began March 15. A total of 98 events were held in a 10-day period. This level of 'event-per-Local' activity far exceeds the AFGE average for Metros. The results: a whopping 509 new recruits, 80 contract surveys and 51 Action News signups.

## ■ AFGE DISTRICT 11

[Alaska, Idaho, Mont., Ore., Wash., Colo., Guam, Okinawa, Utah & Wyo.—[afge11.dyndns.org](http://afge11.dyndns.org) (360) 253-2616]

**Local 1014** (VA) held two L&Ls on April 8 and 9 in Cheyenne, Wyo., gaining 12 new members, 10 Action News signups and 15 VA surveys. A four-day organizing blitz in late January at **Local 3197** (VA Medical Center, Seattle, Wash.) gained a total of 90 new members. An information table with member benefit information ran each of the four days. Six L&Ls were held, as well as a breakfast get-together, a special Title 38 information meeting for nurses and a PAC reception. A voter registration and AFGE Action News signup drive was held in conjunction with the organizing events. 50 voter registration forms were returned. Guest speakers provided lively discussions on unionization, national health care, retirement and the Social Security system.

**Locals 498, 1501, 1502, 1504** joined together to hold a mini-Metro in Tacoma, Wash., the week of Feb. 23. 26 new members were recruited. A number of AFGE Action News signups, voter registration forms and DoD postcards were also collected. Events included six L&Ls, a town hall meeting, a Labor 2004 Planning Event, and a PAC reception.

Mobilizing efforts at Local 181 in Walla Walla, Wash., culminated in an evening march and town hall meeting of some 200 people on March 16 sponsored by Local 181, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and community leaders. At issue is the VA's CARES

proposals which would downsize and cut veterans' services at the Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center. Local newspapers and television stations provided coverage throughout the day's events. Three new members signed up at L&Ls held during the day, 15 voter registration forms were handed out and 18 people signed up for the AFGE Action News.

## ■ AFGE DISTRICT 12

[Ariz., Hawaii, Calif. & Nev.—[www.afge12th.org](http://www.afge12th.org) (760) 233-7600]

**Local 3723** (Naval Station, San Diego, Calif.) began its weeklong organizing efforts April 5. Seven events gained a total of 19 1187s, 26 Action News signups, and 45 DoD faxes. Three L&Ls held at **Local 1406** (Edwards AFB, Calif.) the week of April 5, netted 12 new members, three AFGE Action News signups, and three voter registration forms.

Organizing held in conjunction with District training in Hawaii in mid-March resulted in 29 new recruits. **Locals 1209, 1213, 1218, 1229, 2886, and Local 1** (TSA-Honolulu Airport) were all involved in the organizing efforts. Nine voter registration forms were also collected, as well as 20 Action News signups, and the distribution of more than 200 DoD postcards. 200+ attended a rally held on March 25. All totaled, 15 L&Ls were held during the two-week period. Several AFGE-PAC events were also held in Hawaii, including a silent auction and a 50/50 raffle. All totaled, \$7,421 was raised in PAC contributions from new/increased PAC membership, a silent auction and a 50/50 drawing. In addition, \$1,630 was raised for LAF. 2004's first Organizing Institute was held in Hawaii at which 20 Local activists went through an intensive organizing boot camp.

A DoD blitz at **Locals 1220, 1547 and 2846** (Phoenix, Ariz.) the week of March 15 finished up with 65 new members, a whopping 550 DoD letters and faxes to Congress, and 25 new voter registrations. 30 L&Ls were held. In mid-January, 17 L&Ls in Tuscon, Ariz., at **Local 2924** (Davis Monahan AFB) and **Local 3973** (DCMA) resulted in 27 new members, 65 DoD postcards, 45 AFGE's Action News signups, and 20 voter registration forms. Legislative mobilization training was also provided. Hundreds of employees attended a rally and town hall meeting at Davis Monahan AFB on Jan. 27 to discuss DoD's proposed new personnel system. Several local newspapers and radio stations covered the event.

## ■ AFGE DISTRICT 14

[D.C. Metropolitan area & Europe—[www.afge14d.org](http://www.afge14d.org) (202) 639-6447]

A two-week Metro in Washington, D.C., which began March 29 netted 132 new members, 48 Action News signups, 26 DoD postcards, seven voter registration forms and three new AFGE-PAC contributors. A total of 14 events were held during the two-week period at **Locals 476, 1402, 1812, 1924, 2463, 2449, 2532, 2798, 2876 and 3147. Locals 12, 17, 421, 727, 1092, 1534, 1935, 3403 and 3615** have picked up members during L&Ls and Union Fairs.



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**www.afge.org**

Toll-free Benefits Line:

**1-888-844-2342**

AFGE-ClipNSave Ad 4/04

## AFGE members volunteer for war effort

(continued from page 1)

Hill is a civilian defense worker who's been with the federal service continuously for over 32 years. On May 20, he'll have 30 years at the Tobyhanna Army Depot in Pennsylvania, where he works as an electrician on Air Force radar systems. However, since February 15, 2004, he's been over in Afghanistan on voluntary deployment as a civilian defense worker assigned to the Army Material Command, Logistics Support Element. Hill's part of a skilled team performing repairs and providing support to sophisticated computer and electronics systems.

Hill's also a Vietnam-era Navy veteran who enlisted in 1971. After boot camp and Electricians Mate "A" School, he served two years as an Electricians Mate aboard an amphibious assault ship. Hill's been married for 20 years to **Peggy**, who's patiently waiting for him to be re-deployed to the states on June 13, 2004. They have four sons. **Ryan's** a welder and **Dylan's** currently serving with the 101st Airborne Division—he returned in February from a year deployment to Iraq where he and his unit participated in the invasion and occupation. **Adam** and **Evan** are in high school—Adam's a senior, Evan's a sophomore.

"Although I'm honored that The Government Standard would want to do an article about my deployment to Afghanistan," says Hill during a telephone interview, "I'm somewhat embarrassed by the attention I've drawn solely because of my position as President of AFGE Local 1647."

There are Tobyhanna employees who

have been deploying on a continuing basis for the past eight to ten years and they've done so with little or no recognition whatsoever. "It would be impossible for me to name all of them and I apologize to those I miss," adds Hill. "But I'd like to pass some of the recognition that's being given to me on to Tobyhanna employees and union members who really deserve it."

**Brian Kelly**, pictured on page 1, did his first deployment to Hungary and has been deployed at least 12 times in the past eight years. Other Tobyhanna union members who Hill says deserve recognition for continuous deployments to Bosnia, Kosovo, Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan are **Ray Roxby**, **Rick Kowalski**, **Tom Dooley** and **Glenn Hill**.

It's also worth noting that federal employees deployed on temporary duty work under different rules than contractors and military personnel. When military personnel deploy, they do so tax-free. When a contractor deploys, and after 335 days in country, the first \$85,000 of income for that year is tax-free. A federal employee pays taxes from day—no matter how long they're deployed.

Do you know an AFGE member serving in the National Guard, Reserve or on temporary duty? Please send their names, photos and information (similar to the details provided in the above story) to: "AFGE Members Volunteer," c/o AFGE-The Government Standard, 80 F St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. All photos become property of AFGE. We regret all submissions may not be published.

## AFGE draws media attention nationwide (continued from page 1)

really happening within—and in some cases to—their government.

In Walla Walla, Washington, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) workers and a local veteran service organization conducted a town hall meeting and march over proposed cuts to VA services. The events received extensive TV, radio and newspaper coverage. VA worker events in Cleveland brought out all four local TV networks. The same results were seen in Cincinnati, when AFGE members held an informational rally against privatization.

Civilian defense employees in Honolulu (Hawaii), Rock Island Arsenal (Ill.), Norfolk Naval Base (Va.), Portsmouth Naval Shipyard (N.H.), Fort Hood (Texas), Davis Monthan Air Force Base (AFB) (Ariz.), Warner Robins AFB (Ga.), Redstone Arsenal (Ala.), and Dover AFB (Del.) sponsored rallies, Lunch & Learns, and town hall meetings over the radical personnel system. The media response was overwhelming—TV, radio and newspaper reporters came out of the woodwork to talk with AFGE members, sometimes conducting live interviews.

# Civil service history

## *Pendleton act, spoils system*

Following the assassination of President **James A. Garfield** by a disgruntled job seeker, Congress passed the Pendleton Act in January of 1883. The act was steered through Congress by long-time reformer Senator **George Hunt Pendleton** of Ohio. The act was signed into law by President **Chester A. Arthur**, who had become an ardent reformer after Garfield's assassination.

The Pendleton Act provided that federal government jobs be awarded on the basis of merit and that government employees be selected through competitive exams. The Act also made it unlawful to fire or demote for political reasons employees who were covered by the law. The law further forbids requiring employees to give political service or

contributions. The Civil Service Commission was established to enforce this act.

Although President **George Washington** made most of his federal appointments based on merit, subsequent Presidents began to deviate from this policy. By the time **Andrew Jackson** was elected President in 1828, the "spoils system," in which political friends and supporters were rewarded with government positions, was in full force. The term "spoils system" was derived from the phrase "to the victor go the spoils." In the years after Jackson's Presidency, the flaws and abuses in this system were serious. Political appointees were required to spend more and more time and money on political activities. As the federal government grew, Presidents were increasingly hounded by job seekers. In

Jackson's time there were approximately 20,000 federal employees. By 1884, there were over 130,000. Additionally, with the industrialization of America, federal jobs became more specialized and required special and specific skills. (Source: U.S. National Archives & Records Administration)

## *Civil service system poll*

A recent *FedNews Online FedPoll* asked readers for their opinions on the status of the federal civil service system. Participants in the unscientific, online survey were asked whether the state of the civil service is better than it was three years ago. Only 19 percent of respondents said yes, while 67 percent said no and 14 percent were undecided. On the question regarding whether the government should overhaul the general schedule system with improved pay for performance to help attract qualified applicants, 34 percent said yes, 60 percent said no and six percent were unsure.

## I have a story

*By Carmen Lees, AFGE Local 1904*

"My story is a personal one of what a government job did for me as a single parent and lots of others like me. In 1981 there was a mass hiring at Fort Monmouth, N.J., and I was one of the lucky ones to get a job there. I was forced to go to work after being divorced and having three small children to support. My experience had always been with the Telephone Company, but I had taken the federal exams and got an interview.

"I choose the government because I knew that it was a place where women could advance, I could have benefits for myself and my children, and also, if I worked hard, I could get more education. That was 20 years ago and the government did all that—not only for me, but lots of women. Some of these women even completed their college

education and were earning as much money as their counterparts.

"To contract jobs out in the government is taking away great possibilities for women, disabled people, veterans, etc. The generation coming up today does not have any job security. The government has always been the backbone of our country and it is being sold out.

"What is going to happen to all the military men and women who are serving their country now? When this present crisis is over, what are they going to do when they come back? There will not be any job security awaiting them.

"I know AFGE will continue to fight to keep government jobs available, but I just can't understand why everyone of us doesn't realize what an important issue this is. Even our elected officials and those in high places have children that will eventually need a stable environment with some kind of job security in this country. Don't take the backbone out of our country or surely all that we have worked for will collapse."

## Headquarters Spotlight: Mark Roth

### *AFGE General Counsel*

Three decades ago, **Mark Roth** could be found working diligently on litigation and legal matters as a Staff Counselor for AFGE. Today, he's AFGE's General Counsel—leading a team of 11 attorneys.

Roth's passion for the labor movement has been with him since childhood, when his father was actively involved in the National Association of Letter Carriers. "My Dad not only loved, but believed in, the union as far as bringing fairness to the work site," remembers Roth. Roth learned much more about the labor movement during high



Mark Roth

school summer breaks at the Bakery and Confectionery Workers Union. "I found out early on that the labor movement was the best vehicle for me to make a difference,"

adds Roth. "And, I've been greatly honored to devote my energies to AFGE members."

Roth's leadership role at AFGE—combined with his past union experiences—has helped

him fulfill the heavy responsibility of preventing and correcting inequalities that may affect AFGE members. Did you know that AFGE has had nearly 1,500 cases in court—probably more than any other union? "This heavy case load could not have been accomplished without a highly-skilled professional staff," says Roth. "GCO staff provide an incredibly powerful voice for AFGE members in the courtrooms of America."

As for the near future, Roth will be doing all he can to help preserve civil service and union rights for government workers while helping to increase AFGE membership. "Collectively," says Roth, "we can make a tremendous difference in 2004 and beyond."



"Four more years of Bush will mean a huge number of union jobs lost to new free-trade agreements and the outsourcing of the federal work force.... If their team doesn't win, they don't eat."

— Grover Norquist\*  
New York Times, Jan. 11, 2004



[www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org)

\* Norquist is President of Americans for Tax Reform, a coalition of taxpayer groups, individuals and businesses opposed to higher taxes. ATR organizes the TAXPAYER PROTECTION PLEDGE, which asks all candidates for federal and state office to commit themselves in writing to oppose all tax increases. To date, President **George W. Bush**, 217 House members, and 42 Senators have taken the pledge. In the words of former Speaker of the House **Newt Gingrich**, Norquist is "the person who I regard as the most innovative, creative, courageous and entrepreneurial leader of the anti-tax efforts and of conservative grassroots activism in America." (Source: ATR.org)