



## National Association of FSA Support Employees (NASE)

***JUNE 9, 2014***

[www.nasefsa.org/](http://www.nasefsa.org/) and USDAConnect



**NASE needs award nominations for the following awards. Award nominations are typically submitted by May 1<sup>st</sup> of each year but the committee chairperson has asked that nominations be send to her by June 11<sup>th</sup> (no later please). Please send to Julie Williams at [julie.williams@in.usda.gov](mailto:julie.williams@in.usda.gov)**

**B. SPIRIT AWARD:** This award will be given to a NASE member who has been a member of NASE for less than two years and has made a significant contribution to NASE on either the local or national level. NASE members will be asked to nominate someone for this award.

**C. HORIZON AWARD:** This award will be given to a member of NASE who has been a member of NASE for more than two years and has made a significant contribution to NASE on either the local or national level. This award will be given after the full association board is polled for their recommendations.

**D. BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS AWARD:** A nomination for the NASE Blood, Sweat & Tears Award is an honor befitting those who have performed well above the call of duty on behalf of the members of our Association.

Please respond to the following when placing a nomination:

- a. Has the individual served as a State or National Officer, been involved on task forces, served on State or National committees, or a Zone Representative or Alternate in the past or present? Please list all areas of service and dates.
- b. Please give specific instances of this person working above and beyond their normal duty requirements.
- c. Has the nominee continued to support the Association since their term of office was completed? In what capacity?
- d. Keep in mind this is a very special honor reserved for those individuals who have diligently worked on behalf of the Association, many times at great personal sacrifice. Most nominees should have worked at a national level. However, state level service can be considered. Dedicated service should be ongoing and not limited to the distant past (more than 5 years ago).

**E. SED OF THE YEAR AWARD:** To nominate your SED, please submit a narrative describing how your SED has been supportive to the Association. The state making a nomination for this award should have an active membership that is recognized by their SED. The nominations will be submitted to the Resource Committee prior to May 1st of each year.

**F. STATE REPRESENTATIVE AWARD:** Nominations for this award will also be forwarded to the Board of Directors prior to the Spring Board Meeting for their recommendation. If you know of a State Representative that has done a really good job, show them that you appreciate their hard work by nominating them.

**NASE IS OFFERING THE FOLLOWING INCENTIVES FOR MEMBERS TO ATTEND!**

**New NASE members that sign- up for a 2014/2015 NASE membership during the convention will receive a \$100 refund for your convention registration fee.**

**First Timers – If you are a NASE member and attend the National Convention for the first time – NASE will refund \$100 of your convention registration fee.**

**You will receive the refund at the convention – Rhonda Hoffman, Treasurer will provide the reimbursement while you are at convention.**

## **NASE BOARD TO DC**

The NASE Board; Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer along with three Zone Representatives and IT, FLP and FP committee chairpersons went to Washington DC to meet with National Office employees last week.

I have heard that they had an excellent conversation with National Office staff and when I get the notes from the trip it will be posted to Connect.

## **Hot Topics Training**

The Loan Making Division will be conducting a 2<sup>nd</sup> series of “Hot Topics” training this summer. They are asking the employee associations to provide topics for the sessions. If you have a topic that you would like to have discussed during these sessions, please let me know by Thursday, June 12 at [cindy.porter@ne.uds.gov](mailto:cindy.porter@ne.uds.gov)

## **NASE FUND RAISING**

The raffle tickets for a mini iPad was such a great success last year, the NASE board has decided to do it again for the 2014 National Convention in Chicago. This year the iPad mini will be the latest updated mini with the retina display.

Raffle tickets are on the NASE website. Remember sell, sell, sell.

The name tag ribbons will also be sold at the National Convention.

**2014 NATIONAL CONVENTION – ROSEMONT, IL**

**June 29 – July 2, 2014**

**Crowne Plaza Chicago O’Hare Hotel & Conference Center**

**PLEASE SUBMIT NEW RESOLUTIONS TO MARILYN**

**NASE Resolutions-ResolutionResolutions-Resolutions-Resolutions-Resolutions-Resolutions-Resolutions for Zone**

Do you have cost saving, efficient and/or effective ideas to make your workday flow so much smoother than it flows now? Share those ideas on the **fillable** Resolution form. Hearing your co-workers grumble NAP regulations, MIDAS, CRP, Guaranteed computer applications (GLS), eCORP, outdated handbooks, forms that need to be enhanced, etc.... You will make it better; all you have to do is type your resolution and solution on the fillable resolution form and email it to Marilyn McMullen, NASE Resolution Co-Coordinator. [Marilyn.mcmullen@mt.usda.gov](mailto:Marilyn.mcmullen@mt.usda.gov)

Where do you get the wonderful fillable Resolution forms to write your creative ideas? On the NASE website, of course. ☺ [www.nasefsa.org](http://www.nasefsa.org) and also on the [USDAConnect](http://USDAConnect) website – NASE community. If you are unable to pull up the form contact Marilyn or [susan.long2@ks.usda.gov](mailto:susan.long2@ks.usda.gov) for a fillable resolution form.

Do you know where to send your Resolution forms when you get them completed????? Resolution Co-Coordinator-Marilyn McMullen. [Marilyn.mcmullen@mt.usda.gov](mailto:Marilyn.mcmullen@mt.usda.gov)

With NASE's Resolution Process, **all of YOUR ideas** are given consideration, first at the Zone Meetings, then on to the National Convention where resolutions are voted on by the membership attending the convention. The successful resolutions from the National meeting are sent to the National Office, Farm Credit Applications Office, Farm Loan Operations Office and/or Kansas City for determining feasibility. In the Past, NASE has seen almost all resolutions put into permanent practice!

**NASE is extraordinary people with sound ideas...please share them.**



## National Association of FSA Support Employees

**[Tab through form completing the information needed; tap the space bar to remove prefilled data and leave the block blank]**

**Turn in all resolutions to:  
Your Zone Representative  
or the Resolution Coordinators:**

[susan.long2@ks.usda.gov](mailto:susan.long2@ks.usda.gov) and [marilyn.mcmullen@mt.usda.gov](mailto:marilyn.mcmullen@mt.usda.gov)

**PROGRAM/COMMITTEE (Mark one or more applicable boxes) :**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farm Loan Program      | <input type="checkbox"/> By-Laws        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farm Program           | <input type="checkbox"/> Nominating     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Resource       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel              | <input type="checkbox"/> Ways and Means |

**DATE:**  
[Enter date]

**Number** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Assigned by Coordinator)

HANDBOOK REFERENCE: [Handbook and/or form reference]	SPONSOR (Name and Phone) [Enter your name]	[State] [Enter your phone number]
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\_\_\_ Attachment (form, copy of handbook page, screen print, etc)

WHEREAS [Identify the problem, form, handbook reference, or automation issue]

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT [Explain how you think this issue can be resolved]

ZONE \_\_\_ MEETING REVIEW: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENT:

RECOMMENDATION BY COMMITTEE: YES  NO  DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENT:

NATIONAL CONVENTION: MOTION: \_\_\_\_\_ SECOND: \_\_\_\_\_  
PASSED:  DEFEATED  DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENT: (Reason for resolution being defeated)

NATIONAL OFFICE RESPONSE:

List of Government DISCOUNTS: [GIMMEMYDISCOUNT www.govexec.com](http://GIMMEMYDISCOUNT.www.govexec.com)

## One Big Advantage of Retiring

By Tammy Flanagan

June 5, 2014

I've met some very good federal retirement specialists over the years. One of them, Denise, recently wrote to let me know she won't be there the next time I lecture at her agency. She's not retiring from her job; she's just retiring from her long commute by transferring to another federal position closer to home and at a lower grade.

Commuting issues are among the top reasons many federal employees look forward to retirement. Here's what Denise told me about her daily travails:

I was commuting 4 ½ hours each day (no telework available unless expecting inclement weather), five days a week. In commuting 22 ½ half hours every week (providing there were no Metro delays, no traffic issues, or weather to impact the traffic), I found that not only was I missing out on life, I was not living a quality life. I was exhausted, cranky and basically spent more time commuting than I did with my family Monday through Friday. I also found out that I developed mild high blood pressure for which I now take medication.

Many thought I was crazy for taking a downgrade. I did the math; my downgrade actually gave me an increase in my pay, as I had to be placed at a higher step in the lower grade. I also now receive a raise as I am no longer paying for parking, supplementing my Metro fare due to the shortfall of the Metro subsidy and toll road fees. I was spending \$5,000 annually out of pocket to go to work -- and this does not factor in my gas, car maintenance or upcoming Metro increases.

The most important outcome of my decision is the priceless time that I have gained back in my life to spend with my family, and time to do things that I enjoy and want to do in my life. My job no longer is my life; I have taken control and now have my life back. I meet friends for dinner, joined a gym, cook family dinners, watch movies and do things with my family instead of falling asleep on the couch from exhaustion.

Denise provided a link to an informative article from *Time* called "[10 Things Your Commute Does to Your Body](#)." It notes that the average American's commute to work is 25.5 minutes each way. That adds up to 204 hours per year, or more than five 40-hour work weeks. This just happens to be almost equal to the 208 hours of annual leave accrued each year by most federal employees.

Commuting, as Denise notes, can be expensive, too. You can use this [online calculator to determine the cost of your commute](#) in dollars and cents. Keep in mind that the [2014 mileage allowance](#) computed by the General Services Administration for federal employees who use privately owned transportation for traveling on official business is 56 cents per mile. Based on this allowance, a 30-mile daily commute would cost \$16.80 per day, or more than \$4,000 a year for a person on a normal full-time work schedule.

Ending your daily commute is just one reason to consider retirement. If you would like even more, read the [Top 25 Reasons to Retire Early](#), compiled by Ernie Zelinski, one of my favorite authors on the subject of the mental preparation for retirement.

## Federal Government Continues to Shed Jobs

By Kellie Lunney

June 6, 2014

The federal government overall lost about 5,000 jobs in May, according to the [latest numbers](#) from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Federal jobs, excluding the U.S. Postal Service, decreased by 2,800 last month while the Postal Service lost 1,600 jobs in May, after gaining 800 jobs in April. The federal government, including the Postal Service, lost 3,000 jobs in April and about 9,000 in March.

Monthly fluctuations mean the jobs situation for the federal government has remained relatively unchanged for a while, but long-term data reveal a federal workforce that is slowly shrinking. The federal government shed 63,000 jobs between May 2013 and May 2014, according to BLS.

The civilian workforce, excluding the Postal Service, has hovered around 2.1 million for the past few years, with the most federal employees in California; Texas; Virginia; and Washington, D.C. Sequestration, an increasing number of federal retirements, more buyouts, and hiring freezes at many agencies have contributed to the reduction in federal jobs.

Government at all levels -- federal, state and local -- gained 1,000 jobs overall in May primarily because of increased employment in local government, which added 11,000 jobs last month. State government jobs fell by 5,000 in May as well.

The U.S. economy overall (total nonfarm payroll employment) added 217,000 jobs in May, and unemployment was 6.3 percent, the same as in April. Employment increased in professional and business services, health care and social assistance, food services and drinking places, and transportation and warehousing

## The Rule of Nobody: When Leaders Can't Lead

By Timothy B. Clark

June 6, 2014

Recent polling of the federal workforce suggests that morale is worse than ever. Limits on pay increases, furloughs, and the generally negative tone pervading political and media discussions of agencies and their employees surely contribute to the gloom.

But perhaps there's another side to civil servants' discontent: their inability to take risks, make decisions outside of strict norms, to make a difference in progress toward the common good. Perhaps they feel caught in a spider's web of complex and detailed laws and regulations.



Analysts for centuries have perceived bureaucracies as slow, inefficient and impermeable to change. This picture emerges again in a new book from Philip K. Howard, an iconoclastic thinker and activist on improving government in the United States. Its title, [\*The Rule of Nobody\*](#), suggests his provocative thesis: that the United States suffers not from overweening government authority but from a deficit in power to take action on issues large and small.

Howard is a lawyer, a partner at Covington and Burling in New York, versed in legal theory and with a fine appreciation for the unintended effects of accumulating law and regulation in our country--an accretion that increasingly deprives officials of the power to decide.

In all, Howard calculates, the federal government has produced 100 million words of binding law and regulations, and state and local regulators another 2 billion. And there's little effort to make sure new initiatives fit with the old, or to discard outdated programs and rules. It's like accumulation of sediment in a harbor, as Howard observes.

Who can understand the Affordable Care Act, whose 2,700 pages have spawned many more thousands of pages of regulations? How can banks, even with armies of lawyers, comply with the Dodd-Frank law on banking oversight, whose regulatory juggernaut has produced more than 1,000 pages just to implement what was intended as a simple dictate banning proprietary trading? The complex Medicare program is getting ever more complex, with its reimbursement categories set to increase exponentially next year, to well over 100,000.

Regulatory regimes go too far. Hemmed in by rules, teachers in the classroom can hardly discipline unruly students, cannot pat someone on the back for a job well done, and in many cases are confined to teaching to the test. It's little wonder that parents are deserting public education for private, as in New Orleans whose school system has just converted to an all-charter model. The nursing home industry is cited as also suffering from excessive regulation, with highly detailed, prescriptive rules taking most of the soul out of caregiving.

Desperately needed infrastructure in this country is often held up because so much permitting is required and no one is empowered to give the go-ahead. A project to raise the roadbed on the Bayonne Bridge in New Jersey, key to keeping the port in business in the new era of global supertankers, is a leading example. Even President Obama, with a designation of the bridge as a key infrastructure project, could not definitively get through the thicket of reviews (resulting in 47 permits) and lawsuits holding up its progress. It's a classic case of the Rule of Nobody.

Howard laments the condition of people whose jobs in government don't come with the authority to make things happen. "People lose their energy when they're forced to trudge through life just doing what

they're told," he writes. "Centralized legal dictates make people go brain dead. People not only don't have fun, but don't get much done. That's what's happened to government employees."

So what can be done? Howard has a sweeping vision of reform, encompassing simplification of regulatory regimes, more reliance on officials' sense of what is right in particular circumstances, and less rote judicial review.

He suggests that Congress appoint special "spring cleaning" commissions to help recodify the law in many fields, such as education and infrastructure approval. Looking forward, he proposes that all laws with budgetary impact automatically expire after 15 years. He suggests steps to enhance presidential authority, including more latitude to deal with personnel and other management issues. To expedite decision-making, Howard would construct limits on people's ability to bring suit without first showing illegality or abuse of discretion.

Finally, Howard makes a powerful case for institutionalizing a system of citizen oversight of the federal government. He notes that civic groups in places like New York City have attained reputations for independence, and thus the moral authority, to speak out effectively for the public good. It's happened in Washington too from time to time. In 2010, for instance, former Sen. Alan K. Simpson, R-Wyo., and former White House chief of staff Erskine Bowles, who was president of the University of North Carolina system after serving as President Clinton's chief of staff, teamed up to analyze the country's fiscal issues. Their credibility ensured that the Simpson-Bowles Commission's report would become a vital part of the ongoing debate about controlling deficit spending.

A new group, perhaps called the Council of Citizens, would be composed of distinguished citizens without regard to partisan affiliation. It could gain the moral authority to advocate long-range actions of benefit to the nation and to critique those who would "saddle society with long-term costs for short-term political gain."

This ambitious vision might require, in Howard's estimation, five new constitutional amendments. That is a heavy lift, but who knows, a principled appeal might form the basis for a political movement strong enough to turn another page in our evolving system of government.

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By Timothy B. Clark

June 6, 2014