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ARMY NEWS SERVICE (JUNE 30, 2006) ARMY ESTABLISHES NEW CORPS FOR CIVILIANS

As the nation prepares to observe 230 years of independence on July 4, America's Army civilians celebrate the establishment of the new Army Civilian Corps.

The new name unifies civilians serving the Army, and "embodies the commitment of these dedicated individuals who serve as an integral part of our Army team," according to a June 19 memo jointly signed by Francis J. Harvey, Army Secretary, and Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, Army Chief of Staff.

"Army civilians serve in all three theaters, and are deployed worldwide supporting the Army mission and the global war on terrorism," Harvey and Schoomaker said. "As the Army's missions have become more complex, so have the roles of Army civilians."

More information on the Army Civilian Corps can be viewed by visiting the following Web address: http://acpol.army.mil/employment/about_civcorp.htm.

AIR FORCE PRINT NEWS (JULY 13, 2006) SECOND PHASE OF NSPS BEGINS IN OCTOBER

WASHINGTON—The Defense Department announced plans July 12 to transfer more than 66,000 additional DoD civilian employees into the new National Security Personnel System beginning in October.

The plan, delivered to Congress earlier this week, ushers in the second phase in implementing the new pay-for-performance personnel system and affects organizations throughout DoD.

The first 11,000 DoD civilian employees were converted to the new system under "Spiral 1.1" of the phase-in on April 30. Defense officials are taking cues from this group to help smooth the way for the "Spiral 1.2" transition.

Mary Lacey, NSPS program executive officer, recently met with senior leaders from the Spiral 1.1 transition to identify what worked well and what improvements are needed.

"We are already assessing implementation for the first group of employees," she said.

The transition for the first group ran smoothly. Officials reported a 99.9 percent accuracy rate in completing affected employees' personnel actions and no glitches in processing their pay through the Defense Finance and Accounting Service.

"We are pleased with what we are seeing thus far, at least with the technical aspects of the conversion," Lacey said.

The Spiral 1.2 roll-in will take place over a four-month period through January 2007, and will include civilian employees from organizations throughout DoD, including some overseas.

Affected components will have the discretion to convert their workforce anytime between October 2006 and January 2007 to ensure enough time to train their employees, Lacey said.

"Training is critical to the successful transition to NSPS," she said. "We want to give organizations sufficient time to train employees, do it right, and implement when they are ready."

Ultimately, the system will apply to more than 650,000 DoD civilian employees.

Employees being converted to the new system will receive new performance plans that are clearly linked to their organization's mission and strategic goals. They will also be converted to pay bands that replace the grade ratings under the general schedule.

Officials emphasized that no employee will lose pay during the conversion to NSPS. Most will receive an initial pay bump to account for time already earned toward their next within-grade increase. A conversion tool in the NSPS 101 course, posted on the NSPS Web site, helps employees estimate the value of their within-grade increase, as well as their career group and pay band under the new system.

The performance appraisal cycle for Spiral 1.2 employees will begin on the actual day of their conversion to NSPS and continue through Sept. 30, 2007. These em-



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employees will receive their first performance pay increase in January 2008.

The ongoing NSPS conversion includes only the human resources parts of the system, which include job classification, compensation, performance management, staffing, and workforce-shaping elements.

It does not include elements of the new system involving labor relations, collective bargaining, independent third-party review, adverse actions, and the National Security Labor Relations Board.

DoD and the Office of Personnel Management have appealed a late February court decision blocking implementation of these provisions. U.S. District Judge Emmet Sullivan ruled that they would fail to protect civilian employees' ability to bargain collectively. The decision was based on a lawsuit filed by the American Federation of Government Employees and 12 other labor unions.

Defense officials hope for a decision on the appeal by the year's end as they continue implementing parts of the new personnel system not caught up in litigation.

NSPS is one of Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld's key initiatives designed to transform DoD operations to better meet 21st-century needs. It is replacing what officials call an outdated, 50-year-old civilian personnel management system that rewards employees for length of service rather than performance. The new program, in development since 2003, replaces the current general schedule personnel system with broad pay bands.

"NSPS is critical to the department's transformation to a results-oriented, mission-focused culture," said Michael Dominguez, principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for personnel and readiness. "The performance-based system will create an environment where our employees will be focused on outcomes that support our national security mission, and they will be rewarded for the results."

AIR FORCE MATERIEL COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS (AUG. 3, 2006) PERSONNEL CENTERS SCHEDULED FOR REALIGNMENT

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio— In an effort to provide and deliver services in the most effective and efficient way for the Air Force, military officials plan to realign about 170

civilian personnel positions to the Air Force Personnel Center at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.

From the 170 positions, 135 are slated to realign from Air Force Materiel Command's four Interim Personnel Centers. Realignment has been programmed for fiscal 2011 to accomplish centralized work loads.

Within Air Force Materiel Command, it will involve positions at IPCs located at Hill Air Force Base, Utah; Robins Air Force Base, Ga.; Tinker Air Force Base, Okla.; and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. The Air Force also will realign positions from Bolling Air Force Base, Washington, D.C.

Base Realignment and Closure, or BRAC, directed the Air Force to centralize some Air Force Materiel Command civilian personnel servicing functions at Air Force Personnel Center.

These decisions supplement Air Force's long-established strategy called "PALACE Compass"—part of Defense Department regionalization efforts directed by BRAC to consolidate transactional civilian personnel services.

The Air Force began consolidating civilian personnel services to Air Force Personnel Center in 1996 in response to the DoD-mandated regionalization of civilian personnel operations.

The Air Force presently provides a full range of personnel services for approximately 85,000 Air Force civilians and limited services for all employees Air Force-wide (approximately 140,000).

According to Roger Blanchard, assistant deputy chief of staff for manpower and personnel, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, the Service is approaching the implementation of the BRAC language in the context of the larger things that are happening to the Air Force across the institution.

"That means that we're going to do this in a way that helps the Air Force recapitalize and balance its portfolio," Blanchard said. "We're going to do this in a way that respects and preserves the mission capability of critical interim personnel center institutions. We're going to do it in a way that is deliberate, systematic, and we're not going to rush to judgment."



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Blanchard, along with Barbara Westgate, Air Force Materiel Command executive director, is a co-chair of the Air Force Service Level Agreement Steering Group.

The steering group will include participation from a commander at one of Air Force Materiel Command's three air logistics centers, a senior level representative from a customer command, and the executive director of the Air Force Personnel Center.

The steering group will define the required level of service for review and approval by Gen. Bruce Carlson, commander of Air Force Materiel Command, and Lt. Gen. Roger Brady, deputy chief of staff for Manpower and Personnel.

Service-level agreement efforts will position the Air Force to implement consolidation efforts meaningfully, efficiently, and without degrading mission capability.

According to Westgate, it's important to understand what transactional services can move to Randolph Air Force Base versus those non-transactional activities that should be accomplished locally.

"Our working group has the experience needed to make that determination," she said. "Gen. Carlson is not going to let any servicing resources leave until we're sure our core mission will be supported adequately."

AIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMAND NEWS SERVICE (AUG. 17, 2006) AETC PREPARING FOR REDUCED CIVILIAN AUTHORIZATIONS

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas—Air Education and Training Command officials are looking at ways to streamline organizations to smaller, more agile forces and organizational structures to reduce the effect of reductions in the civilian workforce next spring.

The Air Force plans to reduce its civilian workforce strength by 2,000 positions during fiscal 2007 as a result of Program Budget Decision 720.

"This is not just an AETC effort. Every command and organization in the Air Force is transforming to a smaller, leaner, and more capable force all while engaged in com-

bat operations." said Col. Greg Patterson, the AETC A1 manpower and personnel director. "Part of this is driven by our Air Force's urgent need to modernize our fighter and mobility aircraft."

The colonel said the people portion of the budget equation is one of the few places left to attain large, long-term financial changes.

"It's a very delicate balance between ensuring we are taking care of our people while we strive to generate savings in a constrained budget environment as we try to recapitalize the Air Force," Patterson said.

"I want our civilian workforce to know we are very concerned about the impacts of any force reductions within the command," said Gen. Bill Looney, AETC commander. "We are going to work with every individual and hope to find viable options and opportunities to make this work for us and our Air Force."

"This will not be an easy process, or one without pain," he said. "We have recently determined the overall number of positions our command is going to lose. Now, we are concentrating on finding the most efficient, least painful approach to implementing those reductions."

Patterson said AETC should pass the number of authorization reductions to the wings shortly.

"At that time, we will be able to discuss the options available for us to provide support to all affected employees," he said.

Patterson said some of the possible support options include the Voluntary Early Retirement Authority, Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay, and placement via the Department of Defense Priority Placement Program.

Noting that any reduction in the number of civilian authorizations can potentially lead to a reduction in force, Patterson said, "Using the programs we have available and in place, we believe we can minimize any impact on our civilian workforce."

"It's important that folks work with us as we go through these reductions, and we'll make every effort to keep everyone informed as we reach key milestones."