

NAATS HQ E-Mail Update Vol. 5 #39

June 29, 2005

Well it now looks like the decision will be put off another couple of weeks as the Administrator leaves for Alaska and Europe, she should be back sometime around July 12th. So while we are all waiting for the decision that affects our future, the Administrator will be traveling. You can all rest assured the FAA is going to be well represented around the globe. Sorry for the sarcasm, but I really can't believe the continued lack of concern for people.

The vote on the amendment to the appropriations bill has still not happened as of 7:30 pm. It looks as though it may be done tomorrow. We still need your help with those Republican Representatives that may be wavering. In an effort to chip away at our support, the FAA is out there telling your elected officials that we are all being taken care of with that wonderful severance package in the RIF MOU. Wally put together a quick list of talking points to counter our opponents who are attempting to make the case that the severance pay agreement somehow resolves the retirement concerns of our members. The other stretch is that the legacy stations are guaranteed to stay open past three years. Please contact those members you feel are on the fence and give them the truth along with a copy of the MOU if they want to take the time to read it. Let them know that the FAA is not making every reasonable effort to avoid a RIF by placing people. Let them know that the FAA has only offered jobs to approximately 120 people out of the 1000 who cannot retire, not to mention those who do not want to retire. Let them know that the FAA has put out policies to help place people and are not using them to their fullest extent, and by doing that have once again set up false hope for people who are looking to continue their Air Traffic Control careers and earn their retirements. I could go on for pages, but below are the talking points Wally has been using.

Talking Points

- Under the Lockheed plan there are 3 hub facilities and 17 additional "legacy" facilities. There is no Lockheed or FAA guarantee that the 17 legacy facilities will stay open beyond October 2008 or that employees located at the legacy facilities will have jobs beyond that date. Only the 3 hub facilities are assured of staying open during the life of the Lockheed contract. The 3 hub facilities again are Fort Worth, Prescott and Leesburg.
- The FAA agreement to comply with government-wide regulations on severance pay was predicated on receiving \$150M from congressional appropriations for this purpose. If this money is not allocated then the FAA has no item in its budget to pay these expenses. In the past the FAA has avoided its employee obligations by arguing it does not have sufficient funding to meet its obligations.

- Regardless, the FAA agreement on severance pay does nothing to mitigate the legitimate employee pension concerns. The current FAA/Lockheed plan requires that if an employee cannot retire on the transition date (October 4 2005) they will substantially lose all of their retirement contributions. Further the additional .5% the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) controllers have contributed will be lost as a retirement calculation.

I guess when you can't defend the process or reasons why this mess was created you stoop to levels to defend your mistake. A little poetic justice this evening, while I was watching C-SPAN, Congress was evacuated again! Another plane entered restricted space, a sign of times to come.

Kate Breen