

IN THE NEWS

Union, base leaders agree on plan to enhance mission

By Lt. Col. Ed Memi
437 AW Public Affairs

Base leaders and union officials met June 13-15 to develop a strategic plan to enhance labor management relations and develop a comprehensive game plan that identifies several jointly developed goals to better meet the base's mission.

The base has 800 civilian workers represented by the local union, the American Federation of Government Employees, Local 1869.

As part of efforts to improve the base labor relations environment, base senior leaders and the union requested assistance from the Federal Labor Relations Authority.

In response, FLRA conducted a three-day strategic planning session led by Linda Norwood, the acting director for the FLRA Atlanta Regional office, and Gail Hitchcock, a dispute resolution specialist in the same office.

The purpose of these sessions was to develop a labor relations strategy — an approach by which labor and management jointly develop a plan for how they will conduct labor relations. A labor relations strategic plan is an effort to identify the goals in labor relations desired by labor or management, individually or jointly; to determine the strategy needed to reach those goals; and to develop the actions that are necessary to carry out that strategy.

Eighteen members of the AFGE Local 1869 and 20 base senior leaders and supervisors attended the seminars where they developed several goals. Those goals are to improve knowledge and understanding of management and union roles and goals through education, more effective communication and to resolve disputes at the lowest levels.

The base and union developed some aggressive timelines to implement their action plan as a result of these discussions.

"It will be very beneficial to get it started as quickly as possible," said Col. Dennis Kaan, 437th Support Group commander and the designated senior official for deciding matters that deal with labor relations. "We've been working to improve relations with the union for the past six months. The labor relations strategic plan is the culmination of those efforts and the action plan is the key to those collaborative efforts that will enhance our mission effectiveness."

Richard Egal, president of AFGE Local 1869 and the union president since 1991, said, "During the process, the union and management learned to respect and contribute jointly to processes that would resolve complaints.

Management and labor are also committed to working jointly in areas such as communication and education of federal employees and supervisors in the area of labor relations."

Trudy Pendergast, first vice president of AFGE local 1869 and facility maintenance controller in the 437th Civil Engineer Squadron, said, "We identified ways that we could work together in the spirit of cooperation. We were able to create guidelines to provide to management and the union with a way to do business that will provide continuity in the future as the leaders change."

Developing a strategic plan allows the parties to move away from simply reacting to each other, towards an approach where they have a clear understanding of the best way to operate effectively to accomplish the mission of the agency and achieve their labor relations goals to ultimately support mission objectives.

"This will ultimately benefit the employees where people will develop better solutions to problems and avoid costly litigation," Norwood said. "I applaud the highest levels of the base leadership and union for this commitment to their employees."



Pilot for a Day

Tech. Sgt. Brian Jones

Jordan Price, 7, gets a feel for the C-17 as he sits in the simulator during his tour of Charleston AFB. Jordan, who has Lupus, and his mother and brother, received the tour as part of the Pilot for a Day Program. The program, which is coordinated through the 17th Airlift Squadron and the Medical University of South Carolina Children's Hospital, offers base tours to children with serious illnesses.

Award

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involved. She also handled two pre-trial confinement hearings held at the Charleston Naval Brig.

She's transcribed trials for people with charges ranging from drunk and disorderly to rape. "Though some of the cases really bother me, I cannot let the job get to me personally," she said. "I get satisfaction from doing my job and knowing that I did my part to get criminals off the streets."

Overly said, "Dee has volunteered to record and transcribe hearings we hold where an independent investigator from the Department of Defense investigates Equal Employment and Opportunity complaints. These can some-

times last the entire day."

The AMC and Air Force awards also recognized Abernathy's contributions to off-duty programs, such as the Charleston-based Victim & Witness Assistance Program, which she was personally selected to head up.

She runs all aspects of the program, to include notification of impending prisoner releases and coordinating with all government agencies to determine benefits available to victims harmed by Air Force members.

Abernathy said she's honored by the award and sees it as another benefit to doing what she loves. "There aren't many people who can say they like what they do and that they enjoy going to work everyday, but I can."

Reminder: No shot, no school

All students who attend school in South Carolina must have received the following shots for the 2000-2001 school year:

- Three polio vaccines (OPV or IPV): one dose must be given on or after the fourth birthday.
- Three tetanus shots (DPT, DtaP, DT, Td): one dose must be given on or after the fourth birthday.
- Two measles, mumps and rubella

shots (MMR): all students attending kindergarten through 12th grade must have two MMRs with both doses on or after the first birthday and separated by at least one month.

■ Three hepatitis B shots: for students in kindergarten, first, second, third, seventh eighth and ninth grades.

A current South Carolina Certificate of Immunization is required on the first day of school.

Will your child be ready for daycare? Effective August 2000, children attending day care must have a varicella (chickenpox) vaccination on or after their first birthday if they were born on or after January 1, 1999. A current SC Certificate of Immunization is required for registration in daycare.

Former Charleston commander, wife selected for O'Malley award

Dynamic leadership and devotion to people have led to the selection of the former commander of the 437th Airlift Wing at Charleston Air Force Base, S.C., and his wife as the 2000 General and Mrs. Jerome F. O'Malley Award winners.

The Air Force selected Brig. Gen. Robert D. Bishop Jr., currently the deputy director, Directorate of Operations and Training, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C., and his wife Mary, for the award presented annually by the Air Force chief of staff to recognize the best wing commander and spouse team in the service.

Gen. Michael E. Ryan, Air Force chief of staff, will present the award to the Bishops Sept. 21. (AFPN)

