



News Release

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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Union, management sign master labor agreement

CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE, S.C. – Charleston AFB ushered in a new era of cooperation and consultation with the union that represents civilians on the base and management when they signed a new master labor agreement June 25.

The agreement, signed by the 437th Support Group commander and the American Federation of Government Employees Local 1869, will replace the MLA from 1995.

The 100-page agreement states the policies, procedures and methods that govern working relationships between the employer and the union. Both sides had eight people negotiating on the agreement. Negotiations began March 26 and concluded with the signing ceremony.

After the signing ceremony, the agreement was sent to DOD Field Advisory Services in Virginia, where it will be reviewed for legal and regulatory compliance. The agreement is not in effect until its legal review is complete. When the document comes back, it will be published and distributed, and the workforce will be trained on it in August. The agreement will be in effect for at least three years and can be renewed indefinitely if both sides agree.

The negotiations were tough at times since a single word change can change the intent of an article in the agreement. “I came in very apprehensive, but went out very optimistic,” said Keith Livermore, a retired AFGE national representative and a business agent for Local 1869.

Kaan was pleased with the way the contract was negotiated and the outcome of negotiations.

“This contract has been sitting out there for about two years, and we elected to wait until after the strategic planning sessions,” Kaan said. “We have increased the communication and education of our people. There was benefit in waiting until we completed that before we started negotiations. The contract is solid. We negotiated over some tough issues at times, but we did it professionally and we were able to laugh at the end. It says a lot about teamwork.”

CAFB has about 600 plus appropriated bargaining unit civilians (non-supervisors). AFGE Local 1869 also represents two private contractors on the base, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, the Defense Commissary Agency employees at Charleston and at the Naval Weapons Station, and all non-appropriated fund employees.

Mitchell said the new agreement will be a working document for both sides and should prevent past misinterpretations.

“With the last agreement, we had a book for management and another one for the civilian employees,” Mitchell said. “We also kept a book in our office and another one in the union office on what this meant. With this document, we won’t have a separate book, so I think it will be easier for both sides to understand and will result in a lot less misunderstandings. Ease of understanding was key to the new agreement.”

(For more information, contact Master Sgt. Daniel Murphy at 963-5582 or Staff Sgt. Pamela Smith at 963-5589)