

Employee Engagement “Deep Dive” Initiative

In our last issue we informed you of five initiatives that CBP was pursuing to address its low scores in the annual OPM Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). One of the initiatives was a CBP-NTEU Employee Engagement Process administered by a CBP consultant, Deloitte, using its DeepDive™ process. A “Deep Dive” combines a highly-structured and focused group discussion with creativity and team-building. The core of the “Deep Dive” is the rapid identification of breakthrough ideas that the parties can act on to solve tough challenges.

CBP and NTEU representatives addressed five issues. The first four subjects relate to those FEVS results that were particularly poor while the fifth subject was selected as a result of the equally disappointing findings of the annual DHS Labor-Management Relations survey.

The subjects addressed were:

- Management and recognizing performance;
- Collaboration across teams and work units;
- Confidence in leadership;
- Innovation and empowerment; and
- Improving labor-management relations.

The goal of this initiative is to generate ideas and solutions to address these organizational challenges.

NTEU and CBP each agreed to select 20 representatives to work these issues on May 7th and 8th in Washington, DC. Two representatives from the Detroit Field Office were in attendance, NTEU Chapter 173 President Ryan Gibson and Assistant Port Director (3802) Gerald Little.

After so many years of government surveys of CBP employees with limited follow-up action, NTEU is hopeful that CBP’s attention to its

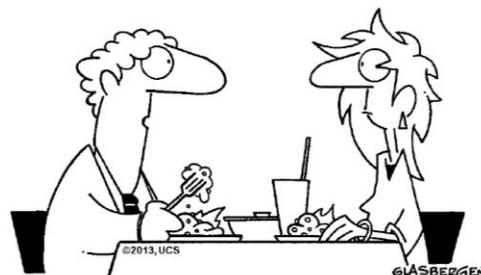
FEVS and DHS survey ratings, which suggest that the workforce does not feel sufficiently engaged, will result in workplace improvements for our bargaining unit. Based on the 2013 report of The Best Places to Work in the Federal Government, CBP ranked 277 overall out of 300 agency subcomponents so it shouldn’t be too hard to move up.

The initial feedback from the participants was positive and Deloitte is in the process of putting together a detailed report of what occurred which we will share with you once we get an opportunity to review it. There will be a lot of follow up work that needs to be done to breathe life into the many good ideas that were jointly suggested and NTEU Chapter 173 is going to keep this subject on the Field Office agenda during our next Labor-Management Relations Committee meeting on Wednesday, June 18th.

What Makes A Productive Worker?

Article from: NTEU Chapter 46 “NEWS” November/December 2013 (Revised)

Because the problems mentioned in the annual OPM Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) aren’t being corrected, much less being addressed (until now), the effect is simple: low morale. When any employee feels disrespected, belittled, or just downright awful



“My boss really screwed up today. He accidentally made me feel valued and respected.”

because of poor management methods, then he/she is naturally going to have low morale. Nothing can be more detrimental to both an employee’s well-being, and an organization’s productivity, than low employee morale.

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There are many things that can result from employees having low morale. One of those consequences is distrust of management, to a point where employees end up doubting management's ability to provide them with reliable information on any subject, thus creating poor working relationships throughout the organization. Another result of low morale is a poor attitude (in an employee), whether it is isolating oneself from other employees, being overly temperamental, or as one employee put it: "taking the happiest of people and turning them downright grouchy all the time." When a person is "grouchy" all the time, he/she has the tendency (amongst many things) to take it out on loved ones, co-workers, and even misdirect their ill feelings towards an innocent member of the traveling public. Really, if the employees weren't made to feel so grouchy, perhaps they would be happier in doing their jobs on a consistent daily basis.

Because of all of the transgressions that lead to low employee morale, it is safe to say that the most detrimental effect is the most glaring one: low productivity (read as poor quality). When an employee isn't happy he/she will be much less likely to produce quality work. An employee will be less likely to do his/her job effectively, efficiently, and certainly won't do it consistently well. When employees

don't get help in getting questions answered, making sure they receive all the necessary information and assistance regarding their pay, leave, and benefits, and get talked to (as more than one employee has put it) "Like we're children!", then the end result will most likely be little to no desire to do their jobs to the best of their abilities, thus severely



affecting quality.

It needs to be pointed out that employees are well aware of the job for which they were hired, and are being paid, to do. Employees are also well aware of what the requirements of the job are. Employees actually want to do their job, and they want to do it well. They unfortunately lack the necessary leadership exemplars to do so. Employees throughout this organization have said repeatedly, that "the job itself is easy and rewarding to do; it's all the gyrations that management has us doing that make everything so difficult."

Dr. John Schaefer (PhD Psychology) is a speaker and author of "The Vocational Shrink - An Analysis of the Ten Levels of Workplace

Disillusionment", and a leadership coach who helps people and organizations such as: The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, The National Institutes of Health, Crowne Plaza Hotels, The Cancer Treatment Centers of America, Pepperidge Farm, Godiva Chocolate, and Bovis Construction. In one of his seminar-based articles entitled "Turning Around Low Morale", he states that "A loss of confidence in leadership follows when people believe that those in charge either don't really know what they're doing, don't care about employees or are fundamentally dishonest. To turn this around, individual leaders need to look in the mirror and get good, sometimes anonymous feedback from employees about what they really think about the leadership of the company, and make necessary adjustments."

So what is the solution? The employees who have raised concerns to this office all feel the solution, or rather solutions, are simple, and these are the solutions they propose: "Listen to employee concerns, understand (and empathize) with personal situations, offer solutions instead of only punishments as a response, provide viable and useful training. Make sure that all management officials have a close eye kept on them to ensure these offences aren't repeated; stop holding only the employees accountable (include management as well); appreciate

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the employees that are actually assisting the traveling public and trade community. Always ensure that managers communicate openly, honestly and fully with their employees; and, above all, treat

every employee of CBP with dignity and respect.” The best things about these recommendations are that they are reasonable, valid, logical, and above all, will not cost an extra dime to implement. Any opposition to these solutions is unfortunate. After all, how can the employees of

CBP be at their best to provide top quality service to the traveling public and trade community when management won't even do what's necessary to help them all be happier? As the saying goes, “A happy worker is a productive worker.”

Check Your Mailbox

As we informed you in our previous newsletter, NTEU Chapter 173 will be sending out some important information to your home address (that was on file prior to Saturday, May 3rd, 2014) during the months of June (on or about June 3rd) and July (and on or about July 14th). Please be on the lookout for this information!

**OPERATION: BREAK ROOM**

In October of 2012, NTEU Chapter 173 launched our Operation: Break Room campaign in response to the numerous emails that were received asking for some items to be made available to improve the break rooms within our chapter. It was our goal to provide you with items that would make your day easier. As a result of this operation, NTEU Chapter 173 has purchased the following items:

- Ambassador Bridge – One (1) Commercial Coffee Maker;
- Detroit Metro Airport – Three (3) Commercial Coffee Makers, One (1) Toaster Oven and the installation of a water line for a coffee maker.
- Detroit Windsor Tunnel – One (1) Commercial Coffee Maker;
- Fort Street Cargo Facility – Two (2) Commercial Microwaves, Two (2) Standard Microwaves and One (1) Refrigerator;
- McNamara Federal Building (2nd Floor) – One (1) Commercial Microwave;

This operation is an ongoing progression. In fact, as we were preparing this newsletter we received some other requests that we are going to be evaluating. Please continue submitting your ideas to operationbreakroom@nteu173.org or let a chapter leader know about any suggestions you may have.

NTEU Chapter 173**Executive Board****Ryan Gibson***Chapter President***Dave Lira***Executive Vice President***Roger Amodio***Vice President - Airport***David Wood***Vice President – Border***Youssef Fawaz***Vice President – Trade***Sean Gibson***Secretary***Jeffrey Marshall***Treasurer***NTEU Newsletter Committee****Youssef Fawaz***Executive Editor***Janet Ebel***Editor***www.NTEU173.org**

OPERATION: HYDRATION

On July 6, 2012, NTEU Chapter 173, at the suggestion of one of our stewards, launched Operation: Hydration. This operation was started to recognize all the officers who had to work outside during the heat waves over the past two years. However, despite our best efforts, this operation was met with some criticism, primarily from those who were not working on the day selected for the operation.

That is why this year, NTEU Chapter 173 and the Port of Detroit Firearms staff are teaming up. During the fourth quarter, the Detroit Firearms staff is going to be conducting part of the firearms training outside. Since we know that the temperatures in the summer can get hot, NTEU Chapter 173 is going to be purchasing bottled water for each range session conducted in the fourth quarter. This will ensure that every employee



in the Port of Detroit will have the opportunity to benefit from this operation.

NTEU Chapter 173 would like to thank Aron Cooper and Tom Sheehy for bringing us this idea and agreeing to assist. While it might not make the temperatures any cooler during the firearms training, we hope that it will make them more bearable.

National Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day

Take Our Daughters to Work Day was created in New York in the summer of 1992 by the Ms. Foundation for Women and its president, Marie C. Wilson, with support from foundation founder Gloria Steinem. The first celebration took place on Thursday, April 22, 1993, and has since been celebrated on the 4th

The program was officially expanded in 2003 to include boys; however, most companies that participated in the program had, since

“This will be my new good luck charm”
– Tanner

Thursday of April every year in order for the 37 million children, parents, schools in over 3.5 million workplaces across the country, and additionally participants in over 200 countries around the world, to plan ahead for the annual event. The day has generally been scheduled on a day that is a school day for most children in the United States. Schools are provided with literature and encouraged to promote the program and educators are provided with materials for incorporating career exploration into school curricula on the day before or after the event.



“It’s just like the medal’s I get from my Karate Tournaments.”
– Sheyenne

the beginning, allowed both boys and girls to participate, usually renaming it "Take Our Children to Work Day" or an equivalent. The program's official website states that the program was changed in order to provide both boys and girls with opportunities to explore careers at an age when they are more flexible in terms of gender roles. The Ms. Foundation also states that men who have hosted children have benefited from being seen as parental figures in addition to their roles as professionals, which can contribute to combating gender stereotypes as well. *(Continued on page 5)*

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This year, NTEU Chapter 173 is proud that we were able to take a small part in the Port of Detroit's Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day. At the request of Committee Member Shelia Appling, NTEU Chapter

173 donated 70 challenge coins to all of the children who were taking part in this year's event. According to Ms. Appling, all of the children were very excited to receive the challenge coin and the parents were in much appreciation regarding our donation. NTEU Chapter 173 is honored have been able to contribute.

Contract Re-Negotiations to Begin

As most people know, when the federal government made the decision to merge the PPQ-APHIS portion of the USDA and the border operations portions of the INS and Customs into what is now CBP/OFO, new hires were left without any contractual protections from 2003 and those legacy employees were subject to the interpretations of as many as three (3) contracts. That all changed in 2011 when NTEU and CBP, after negotiation, mediation, and arbitration, finally came out with a new Collective Bargaining Agreement covering all CBP/OFO employees; legacy and new hires.



Well, three years have passed since that agreement was finalized and it is time for NTEU and CBP to enter into negotiations on that document. NTEU National has solicited Chapter Presidents and other union leaders for their input on any additions, changes or deletions that might be needed with the current agreement. In response, NTEU Chapter 173 has forwarded a list of 56 separate items to be addressed by the negotiating team.

Hopefully, the negotiations won't be as lengthy as they were the last time around. NTEU Chapter 173 will keep you posted on how the negotiations are going through e-mail and the chapter's website once the process gets started.

Implementation of the Import Specialist Commodity Team Realignment

By various communication channels, members within the trade offices have been advised and provided with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) stating that a new bid and rotation process would be implemented for import specialists, resulting in new local import specialist team alignments. The central concept behind this process is that by bidding to a local team(s), import specialists would also be bidding to a Center(s).

establishing the number of import and senior import specialists per team, and finally the expected allocation of a port's import specialists among the ten Centers.

The local import specialist bid and rotation process will begin on June 18, 2014, at which time the survey tool enabling employees to bid to local teams will go live. It will remain open until midnight, EDT, July 2, 2014.

Pursuant to the MOU, CBP has created an online survey tool that import specialists will use to bid to local teams. They have begun providing instructions for completing the survey, started to define the number of local import specialist teams by port, are

Meetings will be taking place over the next few weeks and NTEU Chapter 173 will be seeking any additional information that may be needed during our Labor-Management Relations Committee meeting in June.

IN MEMORIAM

NTEU Chapter 173 would like to dedicate this newsletter to one of our own, CBPO Suleiman Warsame. On March 23, 2014 at 0430 hours EDT, CBP Officer Suleiman Warsame, assigned to the Detroit Metropolitan Airport, passed away at the Oakwood Hospital in Dearborn, Michigan after an enduring battle with cancer.



Legislative Information:

FLAP Amendment Approved in Markup of H.R. 3846, CBP Authorization Act

NTEU worked with the House Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security to include an amendment to H.R. 3846, the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Authorization Act, that reaffirms Congress' support for the Foreign Language Awards Program (FLAP) and its current funding level.

From our previous emails, you know that CBP has again proposed to cut by 85% the amount of

Customs user fees allocated to foreign language proficiency incentives for qualified CBP Officers and Agriculture Specialists from \$19 million to \$3 million.

At this week's Subcommittee markup of the CBP authorization bill, H.R. 3846, the Border Subcommittee approved the Sense of the Congress amendment expressing Congress' continued support for FLAP and maintaining the 2013 funding level. Congress

authorized FLAP in 1993 and directed it to be fully funded by customs user fees pursuant to 19 U.S.C., Section 58c (f)(3) (A)(i).

The bill has not yet been scheduled for action by the full House Homeland Security Committee. NTEU will continue to work with the House and the Senate to ensure full funding for FLAP. We will provide updates as they are received.

Introduction of Senate Legislation Giving Federal Employees a 3.3 % Pay Raise

On May 22, Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI), joined by Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD), introduced S.2397, the Federal Adjustment of Income Rates (FAIR) Act, that would extend a 3.3 percent pay raise to federal employees in calendar year 2015. Earlier this year, Reps. Gerry Connolly (D-VA-11), Elijah Cummings (D-MD-7), and Jim Moran (D-VA-8) introduced the FAIR Act, H.R. 4306, in the House of Representatives.

NTEU strongly supports this legislation. After shouldering a three-year pay freeze, cuts to retirement benefits for new hires, unpaid furloughs, sequestration, and last October's government shutdown, federal employees deserve a decent pay raise to keep federal wages ahead of increases in food, utilities, and health care premiums. NTEU is also pleased that both the House and Senate now have bills based on the

proposal that we made in January for a 3.3% raise in 2015.

NTEU will be urging all Members of Congress to cosponsor these two bills to ensure a fair pay raise for federal employees, and we ask that you write your Member of Congress as well to ensure they all hear our collective voices.

Seized Property Specialists

At NTEU's request, CBP has agreed to update the Seized Property Specialist (SPS) position description, as it was last updated in 1996. Since then, Customs and CBP have added new duties and training requirements such that the SPS position has been transformed from an administrative to a law enforcement focus. Four NTEU-selected members that occupy this position will work with CBP managers to update the position description. Once the modified position description has been approved by CBP, NTEU will request a grade review to determine whether the position should be upgraded to a GS-12 journeyman grade.

NTEU Chapter 173 is proud to announce that Seized Property Specialist Joe Maroon was selected as one of the four NTEU-selected members. It is our belief that the dedication and passion that Joe has for this topic will be beneficial in getting the Agency to see the need to provide these Seized Property Specialists their much anticipated grade increase.