



# Local # 171 ALERT

A.F.G.E Local 171 of Council of Prison Locals #33

FTC Oklahoma City & FCI El Reno, Oklahoma

Editors: B. Coker & J. Lepird

## More Positions for Staff Safety by J. Lepird

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We often receive questions regarding the shortage of staff, reassignment of staff, and general lack of staff to fill even daily rosters. As everyone knows, this causes major issues including augmentation, massive overtime, and budgetary problems. Programs suffer, staff become burned out, and people are unable to complete tasks that are mandated by policy. This is a huge problem, and has become worse over the past couple of years, especially when they eliminated approximately 6,000 positions nationally from the roster for the BOP.

Unfortunately, we cannot mandate the Agency hire people or open positions. However, we can work with folks on Capitol Hill and apply pressure nationally to address this issue. As we all know, lack of staff is a huge safety issue, along with all the other problems associated with staff members' ability to complete all the requirements set forth by law. Our membership and the Union has brought all of these issues to legislators, the DOJ, and the BOP, and we have had some success with highlighting the problem, and the Agency recognizing the problem.

With all of that in mind, I can tell everyone that the Agency is taking action and all of our effort has not been in vain. The BOP will be adding 3000 "temporary" positions to the roster nationally. I have confirmed with the Regional Vice President that the South Central Region will be receiving 482 of those positions. I don't have the exact number we will receive locally, but this will allow the Agency to begin to hire for some of the vacancies we are experiencing at both of our institutions. In addition, each institution will be focusing efforts on recruiting, which has been sent out by the Acting Director.

Though we face issues with federal employment and staffing, we will continue to push for safety, security, and the ability to do our jobs. We are tasked with many congressional mandates, but to accomplish these tasks we need staff. This is a focus for us when dealing with our legislators, and dealing with the Council of Prison Locals.

We appreciate your membership, and will continue to bring attention to this issue. We want to thank everyone for working together as we face these staff shortages, as we only have each other to watch our backs. Thank you for your membership, and your Union will continue to pressure everyone to do the right thing, both locally and nationally.

### Inside this issue:

Projects @ FTC	2
Interrogatories	2
Settlements @ FTC	2
Evals – Providing Info	3
ECOMP Documents	3
Bullying of Staff	4
Did You Know?	4
Informal Files	5
EEO Information	5
CPOF	5
E-Board/Stewards	6
Your Rights	6

### Next Union Meeting:

Tuesday  
May 14<sup>th</sup> 2019  
5PM at the  
FTC Oklahoma City  
Training Center

Meetings are held every other  
month.

## Current and Ongoing Projects at the FTC by S. O'Brien

In the Correctional Services Department there has been an ongoing issue and staff concern regarding radiation exposure due to the routine and frequent use of the Body Scanner for inmates. Minimal safeguards have been in place for staff exposure in regards to the consistent use of the screening device. Upon receiving explicit concerns from R&D staff members the Union met with the Facility Engineer and Environmental Safety Administrator

to seek out an effective means to safeguard staff.

We discussed and agreed to place a Lead Curtain Screening system that will be easily operated, non-inhibiting to security and exceeds the recommended minimal safety ratings. The curtains have been purchased for this project, as well as the mounting apparatuses and all other required materials. The projected completion of this project is currently by the end of May 2019.

Staff have expressed concerns in regards to Weather Monitoring capabilities in the Special Housing Unit while conducting SHU Recreation. It was discussed and agreed upon to install a monitor in the Special Housing Unit Office for the purpose of Inclement Weather Monitoring. The Facilities Shop Steward has volunteered to oversee this project personally.

## Interrogatories by B. Coker

Interrogatories are written questions that are required to be answered to clarify issues. Staff may receive interrogatories in relation to their background investigation or EEO cases where they are a witness.

If you receive **interrogatories** in regard to either of the above issues, contact the Union for

assistance.

The Union has a great deal of experience in responding to these questions. Responding truthfully and in the correct format is crucial to getting your background cleared.

Interrogatories have timelines that must be adhered to when responding. The Union is here to

assist you throughout the process. Contact the Union as soon as you receive your questions, don't wait.

If you would like assistance, contact G. Brueggen (in ERE) or S. O'Brien (in OKL) or any Union Steward to begin the process.

## Recent Informal Resolutions and Settlements at the FTC by S. O'Brien and D. Jones

The Local 171 recently signed agreements referencing the occurrence of mismanagement of the Overtime Roster for Special Van/Air, misuse of the Hospital/Custody Overtime list and the misuse of Straight Time for Outside Hospital Posts. The Agency failed to adhere to the Local Overtime MOU in accordance with the Special Van/Air when it hired personnel whom were not signed up on the Special Van/Air list for an escort trip to Springfield MCFP. As result the escort trip resulted in 6 hours of paid overtime. These actions inhibited the qualified staff members who were signed up appropriately by denying their right to a fair and equitable rotation of Overtime. As result the members affected were awarded 6 hours of

of compensation.

The Agency failed to adhere to the Local Overtime MOU when they exhausted the Overtime list, vacated a Custody post and placed a qualified staff member in the hospital for straight time. As result the Agency hired overtime for the Custody post using an "all call" in lieu of exhausting the respective overtime list first. As result of the Agency's neglect, the affected staff member was awarded 8 hours of compensation.

Additionally the Outside Hospital overtime list was not appropriately exhausted; the agency would assign a custody officer; vacating them from the institution in order to assign a

qualified staff member (BPT) to the outside hospital for Day Watch on numerous occasions. As result, a non-custody staff member(s) was augmented in order to fill the vacancy on the custody roster. Due to the direct result of the mistake in hiring and failing to exhaust the Overtime list, the Union negotiated on behalf of the affected grievant(s) to be awarded eight (8) hours of Compensatory time, as well as those eligible whom were augmented to cover the shortage.

## Evals - Providing Input to Your Rater by K. Menz

Some staff simply show up to work with their boots on the correct feet and get all O's every evaluation. For most staff this is not the case. If you are not providing your rater input for your evaluation you are making a mistake. Simply relying on the integrity of the rater, reviewer, and CEO of the institution to do the right thing and recognize your merit and work ethic will only lead to heart ache and disappointment.

Every year when you sign for your rating elements and evaluation standards you should be getting a copy of the standard set used in your rating, if not they are available on sallyport. These standards are what qualify you for an outstanding rating in each element, you should take the time become familiar with the outstanding qualifications. Once you are familiar with the outstanding standards you will see how you can satisfy at least one

section of each element any given quarter. As you satisfy an outstanding requirement, keep a record of it to turn in to your rater when input is asked for. If you give specific examples of your outstanding performance, your rater should include it in the narrative of your performance log or give you specific reasons why it could not be used. The performance log is then used to document and substantiate the final ratings.

From this point you should leave the rater no option but to rate your performance at the outstanding level for the quarter. The overall evaluation to determine the final rating by your rater, reviewer, and CEO will already be locked in due to the majority of the performance log entries at the outstanding level. The Union is here and happy to help if you are not getting the evaluation you feel like you deserve. However, taking the time

to send your rater things that qualify you for an outstanding rating will provide the evidence and background to make your case very strong in moving forward with a grievance if the Agency is unwilling to correct the issue. Without evidence and your participation in the process this becomes very difficult.



## Uploading documents to ECOMP by B. Coker

The best way to add documents to your Workers Compensation Case is to use ECOMP. The Electronic document submission process on ECOMP ensures that your files are immediately added to your case. To submit a document on ECOMP you will need to use a computer that is running a current version of Adobe Flash Player, normally a cell phone cannot be used.

To upload a file to ECOMP it is necessary to know the following information: Case #, Last Name, Birthday and Injury date. If any of these do not match exactly then a file cannot be added to the case file. Also this allows your Doctor to add a file to your case.

The following document types can be uploaded to ECOMP: .jpg .jpeg .gif .png .tif .txt .rtf .pdf .doc .docx If possible the best file type to use is a pdf file as it cannot be changed. Also the picture file types can exceed the file size and will not be allowed if they do.

Uploaded documents are limited to 10 pages and a maximum file size of 5mb. Workers Compensation does not allow color documents, as a result all images need to be submitted in black and white. Black and white scans generally decrease the file size. When scanning a file to pdf format, ensure that the image resolution is set to no greater than 200 dpi (dots

per inch).

After a document is uploaded to ECOMP it will become part of your file. Uploaded documents cannot be viewed or access after they are uploaded even from your account. It is also not possible to delete a file that is uploaded after the fact.

For help with your Workers Comp case in El Reno contact R. Barger and in Oklahoma City contact S. O'Brien.

## Bullying of Staff

by R. Miller (Blast from the Past)

In today's work force, there is no place for mis-treatment of staff by a supervisor. There should be no tolerance for it and there won't be, if you are a bargaining unit member of Local 171, unless you are allowing it to happen. What am I talking about? I am glad you asked! I am talking about the coercion, intimidation, threats, bullying, lack of respect and in general overall abuse dealt out on a daily/weekly basis from managers/supervisors toward bargaining unit staff.

The Law (workplace violence) prevents it. The US Department of Justice directive on workplace violence prevents it. The Federal Bureau of Prisons Program statement prevents it. Just as importantly so, you're Master Agreement and Local Supplemental Agreement prevents it.

## Did You Know?

Did you know we have posted most of the Agreements that protect your rights as a Bargaining Unit Member? AFGE Local 171 has a webpage that we keep our LSAs and MOUs updated for the membership to review if they have questions about an issue or situation.

The LSAs and MOUs are separated by institution. Remember, though we represent both the FCI and the FTC, our agreements are only applicable at the institution it was negotiated at. The reason for this is because of the differing missions of the institutions, and the different administrations. The benefit for this local is we have 2 highly competent teams of folks available to work on issues at each institution.

But understand, none of the above kicks in, or means anything if you cow down and expect it. We are all human and all of us understand as a human were going to have a bad day from time to time. When these bad days by the supervisor become to be expected and/or accepted as just the way it is going to be and is something you have to do to keep your job then a problem exists.

When these conditions exist, it is considered to be a hostile work environment and you are protected from such activities by the above mentioned laws, directives, program statements and agreements.

If you have this going on in your department or you think you may have, contact your Union official. Many times if this is happening, a simple meeting with you, the

Union and your manager/supervisor can correct the situation. If not, we will take it to upper management for you or with you. If we get no resolution there, we will then file the grievance and take it to a hearing for you if necessary and have a third party ruling on it. The Union is willing to do this as many times as needed to resolved the problem.

Never doubt, if you belong to this local and you need help, that you will be represented to the fullest of our abilities. You are the reason we exist as a labor organization, the labor organization is not the reason you exist.

by J. Lepird

The Local website is:  
<http://www.afgelocal171.com>

If you go to the local website, simply click on the "Agreements" tab at the top of the page. You will then be directed to our Agreements page where you can view applicable agreements.

Knowledge regarding your rights is important, because you are protected by a collective bargaining agreement and local agreements. You have rights, and the Union is here to enforce these agreements and protect your rights. If you find a violation, do not hesitate to contact a Union Representative who will investigate the issue and try to resolve the problem. We are committed to you, the membership, and will continue to

put out information and publish agreements we have with the Agency.



# Informal Files

by B. Coker

Recently we have had some issues with supervisors keeping informal files on Bargaining Unit Staff. Supervisors have kept information about the job performance of a staff member and attempted to use the information in evaluations without going thru the correct process of making significant log entries. This practice is contrary to the Master Agreement. In the Master Agreement, Article 6 section r states "If a supervisor maintains an informal file about an employee, the employee shall be given an opportunity to see any notation as soon as practicable, and before the notation is used officially, but no later than fifteen (15) working days after the notation is made.

Remember, anytime that a

Manager is keeping records about your work or concerning you, that is an Informal file. This includes electronic files as well. Every Bargaining Unit Member has a right to review that material under the Master Agreement and Local Supplemental Agreement. If you discover that your Supervisor is keeping a file on you, please let the Union know so that we can assist you in reviewing the file and making sure that it is not being used in a manner contrary to law and our agreements. Many Bad Managers at the Agency are keeping Informal files and using the items that they collect to negatively rate you on your Evaluation in violation of our Agreements. This is not acceptable, and using files like this is wrong.

ANY file kept by Management outside of Human Resources, that holds information about or regarding you, is an Informal File and you have a right to review it under the Master Agreement and the Supplemental Agreement.

There is no reason for a Supervisor to keep an informal file on any staff member. If you hear that your supervisor is keeping an informal file on your work, immediately notify the Union. The Union will assist you in the matter to ensure that your supervisor isn't breaking our contract and the law.

# EEO Information

by D. Jones

It is illegal to discriminate against someone because of that person's race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. It is also illegal to retaliate against a person because he or she complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or an EEO lawsuit.

If you believe that you have been discriminated against at work because of any of the listed prohibited acts you can file a charge of discrimination. Contact the Union office or reach out to LaHonda Boyd, she is the Regional EEO Counselor for the South Central Region 318-765-440 EXT 4437. You have 45 days after the discrimination occurred to provide notification to the EEO Counselor

in order to file your complaint. The most important thing to remember is, if you don't report the violation of a prohibited act, chances are it will happen again; if not to you, then it will be your co-worker.

# Correctional Peace Officers Foundation

by G. Brueggen

The Correctional Peace Officers (CPO) Foundation is a national, non-profit charitable organization created in 1984. Its primary function is to preserve and support the surviving families of Correctional Officers. The men and women who have lost their lives in pursuit of their chosen profession of protecting the public from those remanded to correctional custody and supervision in the nation's prisons and jails. CPOF helps its members and member's families with

financial assistance in times of hardship in the event of a death or catastrophic event such as illness, injury, and in some cases natural disasters. The Catastrophic Assistance program is designed primarily for correctional staff, spouses, and dependent children.

I personally have received assistance from CPOF when my house was struck by lightning and burned. CPOF sent me financial assistance, got with our clothing vendors and provided me new

uniforms at no cost, and even sent some items for my children.

You can join CPOF for as little as \$3 a pay period. If you would like to join CPOF call G. Brueggen in El Reno and we will get you signed up. In Oklahoma City contact S. O'Brien. This is truly a wonderful organization that really cares about its members and wants to help in any way that they can.

# Local 171 E-Board/Stewards

## AFGE Local 171

307 Reformatory Road  
El Reno, OK 73036

Phone El Reno: 405.422.2820

Fax El Reno: 405.422.2850

Phone OKL: 405.680.4298

Fax OKL: 405.680.4297

E-mail: Afge171Alert@yahoo.com



*United We Stand Together in Solidarity*

Local 171 Website:  
[www.afgelocal171.com](http://www.afgelocal171.com)

### E-Board

J. Lepird – President / SCR Legislative Coordinator

S. Johnson - Secretary/Treasurer

B. Coker – Vice-President ERE / OWCP

B. Hutchinson – Vice-President OKL / CPOF

Vacant – Chief Steward ERE

T. Russell – Chief Steward OKL / OWCP

S. O'Brien – Sergeant at Arms

### Stewards – El Reno

K. Menz – Correctional Services

T. Wright – Correctional Services/EEO

G. Strider -- Correctional Services

T. Norton -- Correctional Services

R. Barger – Facilities/Unicor/OWCP

G. Brueggen – Health Services/CPOF

D. Boling – Education/Recreation/DAP

B. Kuykendall – Trust Fund

J. Turnage -- EEO

### Stewards – Oklahoma City

B. Houck – Correctional Services

M. Michon – Correctional Services

J. Guerrero -- Correctional Services

D. Jones -- Correctional Services/EEO

K. Hyden -- Correctional Services

J. Stepp – Correctional Services

D. Watts -- Business Management/CPOF

T.J. Howard -- Business Management

J. Grigsby -- Food Service

D. McMullin – Food Service

C. McPherson -- Unit Management

S. Warren -- Facilities

Back Issues of this Newsletter can be found on: [www.afgelocal171.com](http://www.afgelocal171.com)

## You're Rights during Background Investigations

Know your rights when you're dealing with Background Investigators. The Master Agreement Article 6, section I states: "Employees being questioned by representatives of the Employer will be informed of the identity of the investigator, unless already known by the employee, and the investigator will present their credentials to the employee being interviewed and their Union representative, if applicable, prior to the commencement of the face-to-face questioning.

1. investigations/examinations under Section f. above will not take place at the residence of the employee without the consent of the employee;

2. time spent in investigations/examinations will be compensated in accordance with applicable pay regulations; and

3. no employee will be required to sign statements or affidavits that the employee believes to be inaccurate or incorrect".

When you meet with the Background Investigator ask to see their identification if they fail to provide it. Insure the meeting is scheduled while you are at work and on duty time. There is no reason for you to be meeting the Investigator at your home or talking to them via phone when you are off duty. The Background Investigators are contractors with OPM, they are

not Federal Agents. All appointments for meetings should be set up thru the Human Resources Office on your behalf.

If a Background Investigator calls you while off-duty, simply provide them the number for the HRM so that they can set up an appointment on your duty time. If the HRM refuses to fulfill their responsibilities please let us know so it can be addressed.

92