



# 720 Federal Workers Join in San Antonio

When the Los Angeles Metro team broke AFGE's long-standing record for the most new members signed at a Metro (604) earlier this year, many thought the **12<sup>th</sup> District** would be the record-holder for quite some time. Apparently, the 22 AFGE Locals that decided to

participate in the San Antonio Metro saw the record as a target to aim for—and aim they did! When the dust had settled and all of the 1187's (membership forms) were counted, the San Antonio Metro in the **10<sup>th</sup> District** produced 720 new union members for AFGE. (see **San Antonio** on page 3)

## Focus: Alaska Railroad Worker

Working outdoors on the Alaska railroad in the winter, AFGE members face difficult and dangerous situations on a daily basis—ice, deep snow, remote locations with temperatures as cold as 60 below zero and wind chills over 100 degrees below zero. For some Alaskans, the railroad is their vital link, the only transportation corridor to medical care, food and supplies necessary to survive the great wilderness. For **Ken Brookman**, of **Local 183**, keeping the rail line open during this time of year was his job. (see **Alaska** on page 4)



## Anchors Aweigh on \$6 Billion Boondoggle

The Navy/Marine Corps have launched an effort to privatize its proposed *intranet* system. An *intranet* system (not to be confused with the Internet) is a privately maintained computer network that can be accessed only by authorized persons, especially members or employees of the organization that owns the intranet. AFGE is working hard to bring this boondoggle back to port before it impacts the livelihood of AFGE members and creates a national security embarrassment.

(see **Boondoggle** on page 6)

## Notice of Nominations & Elections

AFGE will hold nominations and elections for the offices of National President, National Secretary-Treasurer and Director of Women's/Fair Practices Departments at its Thirty-Fifth (35<sup>th</sup>) National Convention, which is being held on Monday, August 21 through Friday, August 25, 2000, at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort. The Resort is located at 1000 West Buena Vista Drive, Lake Buena Vista, Fla. 32830. Nominations and elections will be conducted, and protests filed, in accordance with the "AFGE Rules of Conduct for an Election," as provided in Appendix A of the AFGE National Constitution, and with the Convention Rules, the current version of which is set forth in Appendix C of the AFGE National Constitution. All offices are for a three-year term.

**Nominations:** The Convention will convene on Monday, August 21, 2000, at 10:00 a.m. Nominations shall be made by delegates in writing, stating the name of the candidate and signed by the delegate making the nomination. Under current Convention Rules, nominations shall be received by the chair of the Election Committee before 4:00 p.m. on Monday, August 21, 2000. No person may be a candidate for more than one office.

**Qualifications:** No person shall be a candidate for, or be elected to, national office unless he or she has been a government employee for three consecutive years; has been a member in good standing of the Federation for the three consecutive years immediately prior to the date of nomination; and is not a member in any labor organization not affiliated with the AFL-CIO.

**Election:** Under current Convention Rules, the polls will open to delegates for the election of officers from 7:30 a.m. through 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, August 23, 2000. Any required run-off election will be held immediately following the tally of votes.

## DoD About-Face

Due to tough AFGE resistance, the Department of Defense (DoD) did an about-face and backed away from several personnel reform proposals. DoD originally asked for legislation that would have allowed the department greater flexibility in creating an alternative hiring system, a flexible work force, phased retirement, a collection of wage data and the scheduling of full-scale surveys.

(see **DoD About-Face** on page 7)



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# A Message From President Bobby L. Harnage

## Are We Prepared to Build for a Successful Future?



AFGE has won many significant battles against privatization. We defeated the contractors' bill (Freedom from Government Competition Act) and numerous other similar attacks. And yes, we have lost some battles, too. We have proposed legislation to suspend all contracting out which has garnered support in Congress, but not enough to become law.

If we want a bright future for ourselves, then we must provide our union with the resources to win the enormous battles we face with the corporate contractors. If we are prepared to win, we can win. The fight won't be quick, easy or inexpensive. It will last for five to ten years. Some of the future strategies we must pursue include:

- ★ Increasing membership—getting more people into the fight to increase our collective strength;
- ★ Providing more formal education for our Local volunteers so they can provide better representation and involve their co-workers more legislatively;
- ★ Creating a media fund to publicize what's wrong with privatization and what's right with public employees;
- ★ Strengthening AFGE's PAC by getting more members to contribute \$1 a pay period to help elect a more friendly Congress;
- ★ Strengthening our capacity to file more lawsuits (a recent privatization lawsuit will cost \$100,000 before it is over);
- ★ Strengthening our capacity to represent workers through collective bargaining, addressing future salary, pension and health care needs.

None of this can be done for free. At our Convention in August, delegates will face this question: Do we fund our union to win for you or do we try to get by on the cheap and probably fail?

It may take a few pennies a week more to win, but do we want to lose? What does a few extra pennies a week in your pocket mean if your future is sacrificed or your health benefits take it all?

If you are willing to invest in your future, let your Local leaders know. Your Local leaders have some tough choices to make at this Convention. But if they know you will support what it takes to build for a bright future, and they won't have to come home to members who are angry because their dues went up, then their ability to make the best choice for you becomes a lot easier.

This is a question AFGE delegates will answer at our National Convention this August.

AFGE has a proud history. Since 1932, AFGE has been the one real and constant voice for federal and D.C. government workers. AFGE represents more federal workers than all other federal unions combined.

Almost every piece of important legislation, court suits, etc., affecting federal and D.C. employees is the work of AFGE. This list includes: pay, retirement, health benefits, MSPB rights, workplace safety, EEO protections, child care, etc., as well as the right to have a union and bargain to improve working conditions. The case may have another union's name attached to it but AFGE did the work. In recent years, AFGE has continued to represent and negotiate fair working conditions for AFGE members as former federal workers when a private company has taken over their work. In so doing, we have continued to help protect their economic future from being devastated when their employment has been transferred.

For the past two decades we have all been under attack—and the attacks have taken various forms. The attacks have included both political rhetoric and real assaults, such as the government lockouts (shutdowns) of 1995 or the constant legislative proposals to cut pension benefits, cap our pay, shift health care costs, downsize, abolish agencies and privatize our jobs.

Why is this happening? For the last two decades big corporations have bought more and more influence with Congress and Presidents through their massive campaign contributions. And these big corporate contractors will continue to buy more influence in the elections to come. Their goal is clear—they want virtually every government job to be privatized so they can make bigger profits.

Who will look out for us, you ask? What will happen to me, you ask?

Only AFGE members can look out for our own interests. If we want a good future for our families and ourselves we must be prepared to invest in our future and we must be prepared to win.

*Union Insights... Union Insights... Union Insights...*

## Why do you renew your membership with AFGE?



**John Tsapogas**  
Chief Steward, Local 3403  
National Science Foundation  
Washington, D.C.

I've been a member for 20 years because AFGE provides me with an opportunity to be part of a community of workers, good benefits and job protection—the union is there for me when I have problems dealing with supervisors.



**Vernessar Morris-Lee**  
Local 1658  
Army Heavy Combat CBU  
(Commodity Business Unit)  
Detroit

I believe in what the union stands for and I've never cancelled it in the seven and a half years I've been a member.



**Dennis Thomas**  
Legislative Chair, Local 2040  
Defense Finance and  
Accounting Services (DFAS)  
Denver

What AFGE stands for is important to me. What I have learned in the past year, such as ways to combat contracting out, has helped me. I joined AFGE last May and I will definitely renew my membership this year.

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Bobby L. Harnage Sr., **National President** **P.U. Art from Prev.**  
Rita R. Mason, **National Secretary-Treasurer**  
Kitty Peddicord, **Dir., Women's/Fair Practices Depts. Standards**

**National Vice Presidents:** District 2-Derrick F. Thomas; (732)828-9449; NY, NJ, CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT. District 3-Jeffery R. Williams; (610)660-0316; DE, PA. District 4-Joseph Flynn; (410)480-1820; MD, NC, VA, WV. District 5-Mary Lynn Walker; (770)907-2055; AL, FL, GA, SC, TN, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico. District 6-Arnold Scott; (317)542-0428; IN, KY, OH. District 7-Robert C. Nelson; (312)645-1803; IL, MI, WI. District 8-Terrence L. Rogers; (612)854-3216; IA, MN, NE, ND, SD. District 9-Michael Kelly; (405)670-2656; AR, KS, MO, OK. District 10-Roy Flores; (210)735-8900; LA, MS, TX, NM, Panama. District 11-Gerald D. Swanke; (360)253-2616; AK, CO, ID, MT, OR, UT, WA, WY, Guam, Okinawa. District 12-Eugene Hudson; (760)597-2100; AZ, CA, HI, NV. District 14-David J. Schlein; (202)639-6447; District of Columbia, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in Maryland; Arlington and Fairfax Counties and the City of Alexandria in Virginia, Europe.

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## San Antonio (continued from page 1)

“When Roy [referring to 10<sup>th</sup> District National Vice President (NVP) Roy Flores] told everyone at the buy-in meeting about the success of the Los Angeles Metro,” said David McKibbin, President of Defense Finance and Accounting Services (DFAS) Local 1840, “we decided then and there that we would work hard to set a new record.”

Members from McKibbin’s Local came to the buy-in meeting prepared to set the example for participation. “Local 1840’s strong commitment early on really got things rolling,” said NVP Flores.

According to 10<sup>th</sup> District National Representative (NR) Sherry Cardenas, Local 1840 brought to the buy-in meeting a Metro contract (the commitment to participate), a buy-in check (for Metro goodies) and a Lunch & Learn schedule (for 22 events during the two-week period).

Hats off to the following officers, Locals, Councils and staff who participated in this monumental Metro: National Secretary-Treasurer Rita Mason; NVP Flores; 1004’s Lin Armondo, J.J. Deuel and Ed Pedraza; 1017’s David Guerro and Gary Portier; 1022’s Gerald Harris and Evelyn Mendoza; 1055’s Andy Ward; 1367’s Benito Garcia, Liz Rosales and Eloise Stripling; 1617’s Ray Cantu, Roy Castorena and Jesus Conchas; 1656’s Esteban Garcia and Rudy Niera; 1757’s James Austin, Margaret Smithers, W.D. Whiting; 1840’s Gilbert Berryhill, Neville Cartwright, David McKibbin and Joe Muniz; 2128’s Ron Cochran, Larry Johnson, Myra Marshall and Jackie Newton; 2139’s JoAnn Natarajan, Kelly Stevens and Peggy Wyse; 2258’s Bridgett Peterson and Steve Peterson; 2281’s Rae Doppler, Roger Doppler,



(Standing l-r) 1840 Local Pres. David McKibbin, Retiree/Steward Gilbert Berryhill, Steward Joe Muniz, Steward Ernie Garza and (sitting) new member Guy Edwards.

Amy Smith and Dean Ward; 2455’s Lee Roy Garcia; 2911’s Anna Munoz; 3027’s Pete Soriano; 3320’s Philip (Kinney) Aguirri and Molly Ruiz; 3511’s Bill Harris, Jerry Ibarra and Joe Vasquez; 3637’s Gaylor Spiller; 3828’s Jeff Ormsby; 3961’s Jose Flores; 4032’s Bob Ellington; Council 53 Representatives J. David Cox and Barbara Sheridan Cook and Council 214’s Scott Blanch; 10<sup>th</sup> District NR’s Cardenas, Harry Dawson, Leo Mencio, R.C. Rodriguez, Jesse Salcedo and 9<sup>th</sup> District NR Jesus Sanchez; National Organizers Claudia Cortez, Tina House, Eugene Martin and Joel Zamora; Temporary Organizers Pete Garza and Gloria Myles; volunteers from the National office; and AFL-CIO Community Organizer Terri Ramos.

### More Metros Equal More Members

In addition to the L.A. and San Antonio Metros, the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Districts held Metropolitan Empowerment Initiatives during March in the Charleston, S.C./Savannah, Ga., area, Dayton, Ohio and Louisville, Ky. The Charleston/Savannah effort brought in 154 new union members and the Dayton Metro added 155. Louisville numbers were unavailable at press time. Isn’t it time *your* Local caught the Metro fever?

# BONUS \$ BUCK\$ IS BACK!

## APRIL 17 - AUGUST 6, 2000

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## Districts For More Information

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732/828-9215 (FAX #)  
New Jersey, New York, Connecticut,  
Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts,  
New Hampshire, Rhode Island

#### 3RD JEFFERY R. WILLIAMS. NVP †

#10 Presidential Blvd, Suite 117  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004  
Phone 610/660-0316 or 17 (O)  
610/660-0318 (FAX #)  
Delaware and Pennsylvania

#### 4TH JOSEPH P. FLYNN. NVP ♦

3525 Ellicott Mills Drive, Suite D  
Ellicott City, MD 21043  
Phone 410/480-1820 (O)  
410/480-1825 (FAX #)  
Maryland, North Carolina,  
Virginia, West Virginia

#### 5TH MARY LYNN WALKER. NVP ♦

6724 Church Street, Suite 2  
Riverdale, GA 30274-4711  
Phone 770/907-2055 (O)  
770/907-2051 (FAX #)  
Alabama, Florida, Georgia,  
South Carolina, Tennessee,  
Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands

#### 6TH ARNOLD R. SCOTT. NVP ♦

5664 Caito Drive, Suite 100  
Indianapolis IN 46226  
Phone 317/542-0428 (O)  
317/542-0519 (FAX #)  
Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio

#### 7TH ROBERT C. NELSON. NVP ◊

449 N Clark St., Room 300  
Chicago IL 60610  
Phone: 312/645-1803 (O)  
312/330-0072 (Cell Phone)  
312/645-0724 (FAX #)  
Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin

#### 8TH TERENCE L. ROGERS. NVP †

2950 Metro Drive, Suite 315  
Minneapolis MN 55425  
Phone 612/854-3216 (O)  
612/854-6257 (FAX # O)  
612/652-2161 (FAX # H)  
Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska,  
North Dakota, South Dakota

#### 9TH MICHAEL C. KELLY. NVP ♦

3000 Tower Drive, Suite 708  
Del City OK 73115  
Phone 405/670-2656 or 57 (O)  
405/820-9818 (Cell Phone)  
405/677-8481 (FAX #)  
Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma

#### 10TH ROGELIO A. FLORES. NVP ◊

6800 Park Ten Blvd., Suite 296-W  
San Antonio, TX 78213-4204  
Phone 210/735-8900 (O)  
210/735-0909 (FAX #)  
Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas,  
New Mexico, Panama

#### 11TH GERALD D. SWANKE. NVP ♦

312 S.E. Stonemill Drive, Suite 135  
Vancouver WA 98684  
Phone 360/253-2616 (O)  
360/253-2716 (FAX #)  
Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon,  
Washington, Colorado, Guam,  
Okinawa, Utah, Wyoming

#### 12TH EUGENE HUDSON, JR.. NVP ♦

1800 Thibodo Road, Suite 310  
Vista, CA 92083-7515  
Phone 760/597-2100 (O)  
760/597-2116 (FAX #)  
Arizona, Hawaii, California, Nevada

#### 14TH DAVID J. SCHLEIN. NVP †

80 F Street N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20001  
Phone 202/639-6447 (O)  
202/639-6467 (FAX #)  
D.C. Metropolitan Area, Europe

IN ADDITION TO THE \$20 FROM THE NATIONAL, EACH DISTRICT IS ADDING INCENTIVES AS FOLLOWS:

♦ = \$20   † = \$30   ◊ = \$35   ◊ = Merchandise

(continued from page 1)

This winter, Alaska had a series of severe Chinooks—warm, dry winds (in excess of 100 miles per hour) that create ice lenses on snowfalls and prime conditions for avalanches. In late-January, ground and helicopter avalanche crews used explosives to clear ice and snow caused by a Chinook off of one of America's most dangerous stretches of highways in the Bird Flats—the area known as Five Fingers. As a heavy equipment operator, Brookman's job for 21 years was to help keep the rail line open, in some places parallel to highways, by moving the snow and large concrete-like pieces of ice created by the explosions.

On February 1, 2000, several avalanche experts deemed the conditions safe enough to begin the arduous task of clearing the thick ice and snow from Five Fingers. In some places, the snow was in chunks over 1,000 feet wide and nearly 20 feet deep. Two heavy equipment operators from the State of Alaska Department of Transportation began working the highway



area as Brookman began pushing snow from the rail line. The weather was calm as they started the job. Within an hour the wind picked up and the area quickly became loaded with snow. The safety watchman had only a moment to shout into the radio, "AVALANCHE! AVALANCHE! AVALANCHE!"

With only a second before the 200-mile per hour avalanche struck, the operators instinctively swung their bulldozer blades into the oncoming wave. Miraculously, the state operators were not severely injured but Brookman, whose machine was directly impacted, was not as fortunate. The tremendous power of the slide picked up the 36,000 pound machine and carried it 400 feet. It floated upside down, coming to rest with only the machine tracks visible. Brookman managed

to somehow stay near the surface of the snow and waved with his arm for help. A helicopter that had been working the area landed beside Brookman's machine. The pilot and another railroad employee dug Brookman out of the avalanche and flew him directly to the hospital in Anchorage. Brookman sustained massive internal injuries and did not survive emergency surgery.

The ceremony of remembrance for Brookman overflowed the capacity of the funeral home—many of his fellow workers stood outside in silence. Governor **Tony Knowles** (D) ordered the state flag flown at half-mast over the State Capitol Building in Juneau. A monument will be erected at Bird Point this summer dedicated to the memory of Brookman.

If our union is a family, then our workplace is our home. AFGE Local 183, Alaska Railroad Workers, lost a member of their family and his presence will be missed in their home.

## Army Shines Light of Truth on the Shadow Work Force

In an interim rule published in the *Federal Register* on March 15, 2000, the Army boldly declared its intention to establish a contractor inventory. This inventory would allow the Army to determine the size of its ever-growing contractor work force.

**Paul Light**, a political scientist at the Brookings Institute, notes that "Not only does the shadow work force create an illusion about the true size of government, it may create an illusion of merit as jobs inside government are held to strict merit standards while jobs under contract are not."

As Light points out, "more information about the size of the contractor work force would also influence agencies' contracting out decisions." For example, according to an Army report referred to in the interim rule, the service employed 269,000 contractor employees. Prior to the report, it was mistakenly assumed that the service's contractor work force consisted of just 47,000 employees. Analysts pointed out that the failure of the Army to "take full credit for (its) level of contracting... could result in driving increased civilian manpower cuts that may compromise governmental control and erode critical technical and readiness capability."

Taking the lead in Congress has been Representative **Tillie Fowler** (R-Fla.), who fought for two years to include a requirement in the last defense authorization bill that DoD simply count its contractor employees. Apart from the Army's interim rule, there has been no compliance whatsoever with this law.

AFGE has been pushing the Administration to make the contractor work force more accountable to taxpayers. In fact, the Administration told National President **Bobby L. Harnage** in a letter dated February 2, 1999, that the "Office of Management and Budget would work with AFGE to develop the assumptions necessary to properly estimate the

## AFGE is On the Watch

In response to strong objections from AFGE, the Department of Interior recently reversed its anti-worker contracting out policy. The change will protect thousands of federal employees who serve the public from this unfair outsourcing plan.



In a memorandum that found its way to AFGE, the agency originally stated that it was the Department of Interior's "policy to use exemptions to formal A-76 cost comparisons to the maximum extent possible." This means that the agency wanted to circumvent all public-private competition in favor of direct privatization.

This decision was reversed at the insistence of AFGE. The change provides for reasonable, complete competitions and cost comparisons. It will provide the public with a means to achieve efficient delivery of public services while defending federal employees from unfair attack.

number of contract employees, in the aggregate, by agency and function." However, no progress has been made towards fulfilling that commitment.

"I commend the Army for acknowledging that such information is critically important to policymakers and lawmakers and that it can be collected with a minimum of expense," Harnage declared. "The Army's effort should serve as the basis for the long-promised, government-wide inventory of contracts and contractor employees."

**AFGE Statement of Revenue & Expenses  
for the 12 Months Ending 12/31/99**

**REVENUE:**

Per Capita Tax	\$25,314,483
Death Benefit Income	988,322
Building & Garage Income	2,094,062
Interest Income	434,987
Sale of AFGE Supplies	35,537
Sale of Organizing Materials	83,315
Education & Training Fees	334,627
Carryover Funds for Expenditure	575,379
Miscellaneous Income	<u>279,094</u>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$30,139,807</b>

**EXPENSES:**

Salary & Employee Benefits	\$16,192,382
Discretionary Expense	1,364,005
Affiliation Fees	2,561,795
Building Expense	3,383,138
Administrative Expense	1,958,336
District Organizing Programs	659,960
Death Benefit Premiums	758,053
Travel Expense	947,364
Special Organizing Programs	769,355
Special Organizing Supplies	128,580
Other Expenses	<u>1,178,344</u>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$29,901,312</b>

<b>NET REVENUE OVER EXPENSES</b>	<b><u>\$238,495</u></b>
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## AFGE Has Strong Presence At Conference

National Secretary-Treasurer **Rita Mason** and Women's/Fair Practices Departments Director **Kitty Peddicord** traveled to Chicago in March, representing

AFGE at the *AFL-CIO's Working Women's 2000 Conference*. Mason was a recipient of the "Women at the Top" award. Over 5,000 women attended the event.

## Chavez Holiday

After a five-year effort by union activists and supporters, Arizona will soon honor the late **Cesar Chavez**, founder of the United Farm Workers of America

(UFW), with a holiday. Both houses of the state legislature passed bills designating March 31 as an unpaid state holiday in honor of the brave union leader.

**NEW!**

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## On The Record With...

**Representative Lane Evans (D-Ill.)**



*Committees:* Veterans' Affairs (Ranking Member) and Armed Services

### Reconsider, Secretary West

VA medical facilities play a role in veterans' health care that the private sector either cannot or does not provide. Nowhere else could veterans be expected to receive the medical diagnostic screens and treatment that are specific to their health care needs. VA has developed expertise not found in the private sector for caring for veterans' specific health care needs.

VA has identified several "special emphasis" programs, including spinal cord dysfunction, blind rehabilitation, traumatic brain injury, prosthetics and amputee care and treatment, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, substance use disorder treatment and many other mental illnesses, and homelessness. These programs are developed for veterans and, in many ways, are substantively different from like programs in the private sector.

To designate these activities as interchangeable with "like" commercial work, and therefore "duplicative" of commercial activities, is to question the reason for a unique VA health care system. I urge Secretary West to reconsider the "commercial" designations of VHA activities.

## TRAC Attack Continues

Thanks to AFGE members, the union's contracting out reform legislation gained an additional 14 co-sponsors in mid-April. The Truthfulness, Responsibility, and Accountability in Contracting (TRAC) Act (H.R. 3766) was introduced by Representatives **Al Wynn** (D-Md.) and **Paul Kanjorski** (D-Penn.) on February 29, 2000. The TRAC Act now has 129 co-sponsors.

The latest co-sponsors to H.R. 3766 include: **James Barcia** (D-Mich.), **Benjamin Cardin** (D-Md.), **Donna Christensen** (D-V.I.), **Benjamin Gilman** (R-N.Y.), **William Jefferson** (D-La.), **Nick Lampson** (D-Texas), **Ron Lewis** (R-Ky.), **William Luther** (D-Minn.), **Patsy Mink** (D-Hawaii), **Dennis Moore** (D-Kan.), **Connie Morella** (R-Md), **Grace Napolitano** (D-Calif.), **Max Sandlin** (D-Texas) and **Robert Weygand** (D-R.I.).

The TRAC Act would temporarily suspend new service contracts until: 1) agencies established systems to track costs, quality and the number of contractor employees for every single contract; 2) no work was contracted out or privatized without public-private competition; 3) agencies hired however many federal employees were necessary to perform work when we could do the work more efficiently; 4) work performed by contractors was subjected to the same amount of public-private competition as work performed by federal employees; and 5) the Department of Labor and the Office of Personnel Management reported to Congress on how the wages and benefits of contractor employees compared to those of federal employees.

For more information on TRAC, please call AFGE's Legislative & Political Affairs Department at (202) 639-6413.

## Boondoggle (continued from page 1)

The Navy/Marine Corps Intranet (NMCI) contract would privatize the Navy/Marine Corps' *entire* communications function. NMCI would incorporate a fully integrated system of computer hardware and software for the transmission, receipt, processing and display of voice, video and data, as well as system maintenance, training, operation *and oversight of the contract!*

For reasons unknown, the contract process has been placed on a fast track. Originally scheduled to go forward in June of 2001, plans now call for the contract to be reviewed as soon as June of 2000 with immediate implementation.

The Navy is also making the false claim that the A-76 requirement of public-private competition prior to a decision to privatize doesn't apply to the NMCI because it constitutes as "new work." The NMCI contract is to be a service contract.

The Navy won't be buying the new computers or the new software—they'll be leasing equipment that belongs to the contractor. Yes, a need exists for upgrades in the Navy's communications capabilities. But the answer to outdated communications equipment is not contracting the work for new and upgraded equipment.

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***The prospect of the Navy's official communications being transmitted through means that will be owned, operated and controlled by a private corporation—perhaps an international corporation—is mind-boggling.***

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**AFGE**

Another concern regarding NMCI is national security. The Defense-wide Information Assurance Program's purpose is to ensure that various agency information systems and networks are secure, reliable and "programmed and executed in accordance with DoD's priorities." The Navy is pushing its intranet privatization effort without the benefit of an analysis by the Information Assurance Program office. The prospect of the Navy's official voice or data communications being transmitted through means that will be owned, operated and controlled by a private corporation—perhaps an international corporation—is mind-boggling.

AFGE has also asked repeatedly for the Navy to identify the number and location of federal employees who will be affected by the NMCI privatization. There have been times when the Navy has said that no one will be displaced and other times they have talked about retraining and re-employment assistance. If no one will be displaced or laid-off, a budget question immediately arises. If the existing work force will remain employed and contractors are hired to do their jobs, how does the Navy expect to pay for these redundant work forces? Has the Navy even thought about these questions?

At a Capitol Hill hearing on NMCI privatization in late March, Navy representatives said they could cover the funding of this scheme by borrowing from various military readiness accounts. Aside from the legal questions this approach raises, it is necessary to ask what aspect of military readiness the Navy contemplates reducing in order to award additional billions to its contractors?

The Navy's claim that it is exempt from A-76 because it is "new work" is nonsense. AFGE will continue to ask the most basic and difficult questions on the NMCI privatization on behalf of its members and America's national security.

## Keep VA-HUD Contractors Accountable

National President **Bobby Harnage** testified before the House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on VA-HUD regarding the FY 2001 appropriations. Harnage told the subcommittee that, "Sending veterans to non-VA health care providers who are not held accountable to the same standards of care as the VA is not right. Currently, neither the VA's Medical Inspector nor the VA's Inspector General study the medical errors that are occurring at facilities in which VA contracts for veterans' medical care."

Harnage pointed out that unlike VA staff, VA's contractors are not required to inform veterans of medical errors or adverse events that occur in a contractor facility. Veterans are not entitled to additional compensation or disability benefits when they suffer medical malpractice or negligence at the hands of a VA contractor. Representative **David Hobson** (R-Ohio), who was Acting Chairman of the Subcommittee, was distressed by this disparity in treatment. AFGE will continue to press to keep VA and HUD accountable for their respective use of contractors. Harnage's full statement is available on AFGE's Web site at [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org).

## IG Report—A Must-Read

An audit released on March 10, 2000, by the Pentagon's Inspector General (IG) concluded that the Department of Defense (DoD) is wholly negligent in its oversight of contracts. The study looked at 105 DoD contracts worth \$6.7 billion. Every one of them had some type of oversight problem. But even as reports like this one are released, the Pentagon continues to drastically increase its use of service contracts. DoD spends billions of dollars on contracts annually but it does not guarantee that it pays a fair price or even receives the services.

During his testimony before Congress, Auditor **Robert J. Lieberman** said, "In nearly ten years of managing the audit office of the [Inspector General], I do not ever recall finding problems on every item in that large a sample of transactions, programs or data." He was talking about the fact that over three-quarters of the contracts did not provide adequate cost estimates. The report states that this "clearly left the government vulnerable—and sometimes at the mercy of the contractor."

Here are some of the general findings about problems in these contracts: 77 percent inadequate government cost estimates; 69 percent inadequate use of prior history to define requirements; 68 percent inadequate price negotiation memoranda; 67 percent inadequate contract surveillance; 60 percent inadequate competition; 57 percent cursory technical reviews; and 25 percent lack of cost control.

Some specific findings included: 1) The Army contracted with Raytheon for 39 years to service a HAWK missile system but it never bothered to establish a fixed price for the contract. Instead, the Army awarded Raytheon a cost-plus-fixed-fee deal that allows the contract to go above the expected price. 2) A government contracting office had \$8 million worth of taxpayer dollars to spend on a contract but only found \$5.8 million in costs. The Pentagon decided to put the extra \$2.2 million in the contract anyway. 3) A National Guard contract was estimated at \$2.2 million, a figure that copied the \$2.1 million application from a contractor. A review discovered that the real costs only totaled \$1.2 million.

From 1992 to 1999, DoD increased its yearly purchases of services from \$39.9 billion to \$51.8 billion. At the same time it got rid of the people who

On The  
Record With...

Representative  
**Steven LaTourette**  
(R-Ohio)



Committees: Government Reform, Banking-Financial Services and Transportation-Infrastructure

## Pay of the VA Health Care Work Force

The workers who care for our nation's ailing veterans do so with tremendous professionalism and heart. VA nurses, like their co-workers, find their jobs challenging and rewarding, but their pay is not equally rewarding.

A 1990 law that created a locality-based pay system for VA nurses initially helped to recruit and retain a quality nursing force. Regrettably, it has since turned into a cowardly tool to avoid giving VA nurses raises. I introduced the VA Nurse Appreciation Act of 1999 (H.R. 1216), to improve this pay system. Under my bill, VA nurses and their co-workers who are hybrid employees will be assured the same annual increase as General Schedule (GS) workers. VA will also be able to increase pay above the GS level if needed.

If our veterans were worthy of a 4.8 percent pay increase this year, shouldn't the very people who care for them be worthy of that increase, too? It's time to change the law and respect VA health care workers.

oversee those contracts. In 1990 there were 460,000 people in the Pentagon's acquisition work force. In 1999 that number plummeted to 230,000.

There is a better way. The government should focus on serving the public, not building corporate coffers. Public employees can and do serve the public first. One hard-working manager at the Mechanicsburg, Pa., Navy Fleet Material Support Office saved taxpayers \$873,599. **Yvonne Whisenant** tracked down overcharges by greedy contractors who were robbing the public blind. She found \$205,000 in erroneous long distance toll charges in 1999 alone. Public employees do not have to worry about generating profits—they serve the taxpayer first.

Turning over public services to profit-making corporations carries huge hidden costs. The government has to spend billions of dollars to stop these companies from cutting corners to make higher profits.

*The full title of the audit is "Contracts for Professional, Administrative and Management Support Services," No. D-2000-100. The summary and full text are available at [www.dodig.osd.mil/audit/reports/00report.htm](http://www.dodig.osd.mil/audit/reports/00report.htm).*

## DoD About-Face (continued from page 1)

In a strongly worded letter to the Deputy Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy, National President **Bobby Harnage** cautioned the Department and expressed AFGE's disappointment over proposed personnel reforms. "They (the personnel reforms) appear to be the culmination of political rhetoric and an attempt to wrongfully solve problems caused by ill-conceived downsizing and a failure to adequately compensate federal employees. We do not support these proposals."

The Department's response to AFGE's letter was uncharacteristically swift. Four of the proposals—flexible work force, phased retirement, collection of wage data and scheduling of full-scale surveys—were immediately removed. Action on the fifth proposal—the alternative-hiring system—has been suspended pending further discussions with DoD and review by AFGE.



## The Struggle Continues

Wright-Patterson Air Force Base employees went to work on the morning of March 14 and were greeted by approximately 20 informational picketers from AFGE **Local 1138**. The Local was protesting a planned switch to a private contractor of technical and operations support jobs at the Air Force Research Labs. The proposed change will cost 120 jobs and millions in the long run.

“The union doesn’t oppose fair competition when it benefits the American taxpayer. We only oppose unfair competition where the government ends up wasting money on a bad contract,” said Local 1138 President **Tom Robinson**.

## Mayor Honors Local 1539 for Community Service



For improving the community of Hot Springs, S.D. (a.k.a. Veterans Town), being a positive influence, giving back to the community and providing volunteer support for the community, **Local 1539** received a proclamation from Mayor **Karleen Kirchner** (pictured far left). Congratulations (l-r) **Pat Russell, Mic Layton, Barb Layton** and **Dori Dufault**. AFGE salutes you.

## We’re Here To Report What Your Local Is Doing

It may not be news to you, but it’s news to us! What role does your Local play in the federal government? Send in the story and a non-digital/non-Polaroid picture to: *The Government Standard*, ATTN: Local Story & Photo Album, 80 F St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. Please clearly list the roles and responsibilities of your Local, as well as its history. Please identify all the subjects in the photos. All photos and stories become property of the AFGE Communications Department.

## Spread the Word

**L**ocal 2402 President **Kathy Maynard** (l) and **8<sup>th</sup> District Natl. Rep. Alan Achtner** (r) staff a SWAMP (Stop Wasting America’s Money on Privatization) table at Fort Meade, S.D., to inform fellow members, unit employees, as well as management and patients about the VA FAIR Act Inventory and the result of contracting out jobs. Visit [www.afge.org](http://www.afge.org) for more information on how you can promote the SWAMP campaign. Call your Local or District office or the AFGE Legislative & Political Affairs Department at (202) 639-6413 for more SWAMP information.

Turn to **On The Hill** (pages 6-7) for an update on H.R. 3766—AFGE-backed legislation to suspend contracting out at all federal agencies.



## AFGE Challenges Illegally Awarded Contract

Had laws been followed by the Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC) regarding a civil engineering contract at Tinker Air Force Base (AFB) in Oklahoma City, federal employees would have been awarded the contract and not DynPar Corporation.

AFGE filed a lawsuit in mid-March in U.S. District Court in Dayton, Ohio, alleging that the low bid on the contract was by the Most Efficient Organization (MEO), federal employees at Tinker, and that AFMC illegally provided DynPar Corp. multiple appeals to win the contract.

“Laws mean nothing to the international, multi-billion dollar corporations playing the contracting out shell game at Tinker AFB and other federal facilities,” said National President **Bobby Harnage**. “America’s greatest threat is contracting out,” added Harnage.

The jobs and careers of federal employees who are members of **Local 916** and **Council 214** have already been lost by the illegal actions of AFMC and DynPar Corp. More than 10,000 AFGE-represented employees work for the AFMC at various locations throughout the country.

DynCorp, the parent corporation of DynPar, has more than \$1.4 billion in annual revenues, a \$4.4 billion contract backlog and a global network of more than 19,000 employees. Visit [www.dyncorp.com/news/newcon.htm](http://www.dyncorp.com/news/newcon.htm) to find out about DynCorp’s newest contract wins.

