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HRO LEADERSHIP

Staff		
Human Resources Officer	COL Craig Strong	X8170
Deputy HRO	Lt Col Nicole Nuss	X8144
Occupational Health Nurse	Mr. Josiah Unger	X1832

TECHNICIAN PERSONNEL

Staff		
Supv HR Spec (Classification/Staffing)	Ms. Deb Burling	X8187
Classification/Manpower	Mr. John Winterfeld	X8186
Recruitment, Staffing & Pay	Advertised	X8182
Classification/Staffing	SSgt Melanie Petersen	X8324
Benefits & Services	Mr. Devin Alt	X8189
	Mr. Jon Sronce	X8173
	Advertised	X8190
Supv HR Spec (Labor)	Mr. Stephen Oppliger	X8185
Information Systems	Ms. Denise Anderson	X8177
Management Analyst	Ms. Desirae Dockter	X8155
Employee Development	Ms. Jessica Pan	X8184

Website: <https://ne.ng.mil/Resource/Pages/Technician-Title-5-Branch.aspx>

LEAVE WITHOUT PAY (LWOP).

Technicians on Leave without Pay (LWOP) for Military Duty for One (1) Day or more:

LWOP-US under 30 Days

Technicians requesting leave without pay (LWOP) for military duty for one (1) to twenty-nine (29) days are required to submit a SF52, Request for Personnel Action, and a copy of their military orders. The employee requesting the action must sign the SF52 in Block 5 (Action Requested by) and the supervisor must sign in Block 6 (Action Authorized By). Part D, Remarks, should state the period of time requested. The paperwork will need to be routed through their appropriate chain of command to HRO prior to departure.

LWOP-US over 30 Days

Technicians requesting leave without pay (LWOP) for military duty for over thirty (30) are required to submit a SF52, a copy of their orders and Elections/Acknowledgement of USERRA Entering Military Duty located at: <https://ne.ng.mil/Resource/Documents/Election-Doc.pdf>.

The employee requesting the action must sign the SF52 in Block 5 (Action Requested by), the supervisor must sign in Block 6 (Action Authorized By) and Part D, Remarks, should state the period of time requested. The paperwork will need to be routed through their appropriate chain of command to HRO prior to their departure. Upon Return to Duty, Technicians must contact HRO and complete the Return to Civilian Federal Employment from Military Duty Form located at: <https://ne.ng.mil/Resource/Documents/RTD-Doc.pdf>

Supervisors will need to code the above mentioned employees in ATAAPS as a 5/8 hour work schedule while on those military orders. Individuals on military duty for over 30 days and currently on a Maxi-flex Work Schedule must complete a NE TAG 444-R, Request for Alternate Work Schedule (AWS) to change to a 5/8 Work schedule and send the form to the appropriate Finance Office (i.e. ARNG-USPFO and ANG-155CPTF) prior to their departure.

FAILURE TO COMPLETE THE SF52 COULD IMPACT YOUR RETIREMENT EFFECTIVE DATE.

Technicians on personal LWOP must also complete a SF52.

The employee should contact HRO Benefits & Services at 309-8189/8173 for questions or completing the various documents.

MILITARY DEPOSITS.

Do you have Title 10 Active Duty service before you became a Federal Employee? Have you been LWOP-US since you became a Federal Employee? If you answered YES to either of these questions, you should consider buying back this time towards your retirement. This can directly impact your retirement date (see Retirement Time Line article below).

Your LES block 20 will show how much you paid and how much you owe only if you have provided HR your DD214's or the Title 10 orders. We will then send to DFAS for an estimate earnings determination, which will take at least 45 days. Then HR will provide you the amount due and the options on how to pay. Once your service period has been paid, you will receive a paid in full letter, you must provide to HR for processing your retirement package as it is required by OPM.

RETIREMENT TIME LINES.

Retirement is something you should start planning for early in your career. Below is a recommended time line for ensuring your retirement goes as smoothly as possible.

1. 5 years from retirement you should meet with an HR Benefits Specialist to have your retirement calculated. At this time you will get an estimated retirement earnings and a review of your paid military deposits (see LWOP Article above). You can also ask Army Benefits Center to run a retirement package for you which they will only do once you are 5 years from retiring and once a year after that.

2. If you have not bought your military time towards your retirement now is the time to do so. The sooner you buy it the better. There is no interest charged if bought within 3 years of the service performed or appointment in to the federal Government.

a. If you are going to receive a 20 year full-time Active Duty retirement this time cannot count towards your technician retirement. This is not your Traditional Drill Status age 60 retirement.

3. At least 90 days prior to retirement, 6 months is preferred, talk with your benefits specialist about retirement. You will receive an estimated retirement earnings and a review of your file to ensure all documents are complete and meet the OPM guidelines. (DoDI 1400.25 Vol 840 Enclosure 3 2 a)

a. OPM has a timeliness standard which states they must receive the completed retirement package within 32 calendar days of retirement. Delaying in sending the paperwork will delay your first retirement payment.

b. Army Benefits Center wants the paperwork at least 60 days in advance but will accept up to 1 year in advance. Once again I would recommend 6 months.

4. 30 days out follow up with your local benefits specialist to ensure your package has been forwarded to OPM.

5. Once you receive your CSA number from OPM please contact your benefits specialist as we will keep it in your retirement file (This is as important as your DD 214 so keep it in a safe place). Set back and enjoy your retirement, remember your HR Benefits Specialist is always available to answer questions.

The Army Benefit Center offers retirement training at least twice a year it is highly encourage you set through this early in your career again at mid-career and then at 5 years from retirement. There is no limit on the amount of times you can participate.

2019 TSP LIMITS.

With the retroactive pay adjustment please check to ensure you will not exceed the TSP limit for 2019.

ELECTIVE DEFERRAL LIMIT – \$19,000.

Elective Deferral Limit of \$19,000 applies to combined total of traditional and Roth contributions. For members of the uniformed services, it includes all traditional and Roth contributions from taxable **basic pay, incentive pay, special pay**, and **bonus pay**, but does not apply to traditional contributions made from tax-exempt pay earned in a combat zone. **If you are a member of the Ready Reserve** and you are contributing to both a uniformed services and a civilian TSP account the elective deferral and catch-up contribution limits apply to the total amount of employee contributions you make in a calendar year to both accounts.

CATCH-UP CONTRIBUTION LIMIT- \$6,000.

The maximum amount of **catch-up contributions** that can be contributed in a given year by participants age 50 and older. It is separate from the elective deferral and annual addition limit imposed on regular employee contributions. This can only be done after you have contributed the Elective Deferral Limit of \$19,000.

If you are a member of the uniformed services, you should know that Roth contributions are subject to the elective deferral limit (\$19,000 for 2019) even if they are contributed from tax-exempt pay. If you want to contribute tax-exempt pay toward the annual additions limit, you will have to elect traditional contributions for any amount over the elective deferral limit.

In addition, if you are eligible to make catch-up contributions and you are deployed to a designated combat zone, you will not be able to make any traditional catch-up contributions from your tax-exempt pay. However, Roth catch-up contributions from tax-exempt pay are allowed.

If you are called to active duty and make tax-exempt contributions to the TSP while deployed in a designated combat zone, the sum of the employee and agency contributions to your civilian account as well as the tax-exempt contributions made to your uniformed services account cannot exceed the annual addition limit.

APRIL IS FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH.

**Retirement Planning by Mr. Brett Shunkwiler
April 23rd 0900-1100 and 1330-1530**

April 24th 0900-1100
JFHQ 4th floor conference room

HRO welcomes Mr. Brett A. Shunkwiler who will provide a 2 hour presentation in the matter of financial planning to employees of the federal government. Mr. Shunkwiler provides assistance with overall retirement preparedness and can help with a variety of financial concerns pertaining to TSP, FEGLI, FERS & CSRS benefits, along with normal retirement plans such as IRA's and 401(k)'s. He will cover topics such as: Social Security, 401(k), IRA's (TSP), Tax Planning, CSRS and FERS, Legacy Planning

SF182, AUTHORIZATION, AGREEMENT AND CERTIFICATION OF TRAINING.

For ARNG & ANG Employees, the SF182 is required for TRAINING that is 8 hours (or the majority of the day) or longer in technician status. It is normally not required for annual conferences unless there is a tuition/registration fee that needs to be charged to one of our Government Purchase Cards (GPC).

For ARNG only, HRO only needs the first 2 pages completed on the form. Please use the form located at: <https://ne.ng.mil/Resource/Documents/SF182.pdf> since it has the HRO signature blocks preprinted.

Current ARNG point of contact for SF182s is Ms. Desirae Dockter at 402-309-8155 or desirae.t.dockter.civ@mail.mil. For ANG, point of contact is MSgt Megan Brozovsky at 402-309-1114 or megan.l.brozovsky.mil@mail.mil.

Please Note: Block 5 in the Training Course Section B is the number of duties hours and not the class hours. For example if you went to training 7-11 January. You would put 40 hours in Block 5.

The HR Training Section needs the SF182 signed by the supervisor BEFORE the DTS authorization when possible. After the training is completed, send a copy of the training certificate to HRO for input into DCPDS.

I would also like to add a reminder that both SF 182 and DTS authorizations need to be submitted at least 30 days out.

STATE PERSONNEL

STAFF		
HR Manager	Ms. Polly Putney	X8172
HR Assistant / Benefits	Mr. Tim Diedrichsen	X8180
HR Assistant / Payroll	Ms. Miranda Kaderly/Ms. Sue Spence	X8178

Website: <https://gko.portal.ng.mil/states/NE/Directorates/J1/Pages/State-HR.aspx>

BENEFITS INFORMATIONAL MEETING AND OPEN ENROLLMENT.

Human Resources has scheduled the annual DAS Benefits presentation for May 1st from 1:00 to 3:00 pm in the JFHQ, 3rd Floor Conference Room. HR will try to obtain information regarding the upcoming benefit changes prior to the meeting, so you will have time to formulate specific questions to ask at the meeting.

Open Enrollment event will begin May 7th and ends May 21 (at 5:00 pm CST). Please take time to locate or reset your password, so you can login to the Employee Work Center (Workday) when open enrollment begins. If you need to reset your password please review the instructions on the Employee Work Center login screen. If you know your username and the email address is in Workday, you can reset your own password without contacting the AS Link help desk for assistance.

ALL EMPLOYEES (except new employees that start employment after **May 2nd** or employees that are on long term absences for military duty) MUST complete the open enrollment (OE) process. ALL employees should print out their confirmation statement before they complete the OE process. There will be a print button that employees can use to print their confirmation statement. Review ALL information on ALL screens of the OE process. SCROLL DOWN on EACH screen. If employees do not have a printer available when finishing the OE process they should save an electronic copy of the confirmation statement on their computer.

CHECK and UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS and the address of your dependents in the OE process.

CHECK and UPDATE YOUR PHONE NUMBERS in the OE process.

Reminder - in order to be eligible to elect the WellNebraska Health Plan in the upcoming open enrollment, you and your spouse (if applicable) had to be enrolled in the State of Nebraska medical coverage with UHC (before March 31), and you must have completed the Rally Health Survey by March 31, 2019. If you were not enrolled in any State Health insurance, you and your spouse (if applicable) must have completed a paper copy of the Rally survey and submitted it to UHC by March 31, 2019 to be eligible. If the Rally Survey requirement was not completed, employees will only be able to choose from the other health plans available in open enrollment.

RETIREMENT BENEFICIARIES.

If you need to update beneficiaries or an address for beneficiaries that you have on your retirement account, you must fill out a new beneficiary form (have it notarized) and send it to the retirement office. The website for the retirement office is: <https://npers.ne.gov/SelfService/> (you can copy this link into your internet browser). Forms are located on the left side of the page. When in Forms, go to the Beneficiary Designation link under Member Forms. The completed form can be sent directly to the retirement office (address at top of form). Enter Military Department for the employer name.

If you update your beneficiaries for any State life insurance coverage, that change does NOT update your retirement account beneficiaries. Please send a Beneficiary Designation form directly to the retirement office to change retirement beneficiaries.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP).

Crisis events and natural disasters such as wildfires, tornadoes, hurricanes, and floods can be devastating. You may be directly affected: your home, family, lifestyle, community or you may be concerned for the well-being of others.

If a natural disaster or other emergency has impacted you, your employee assistance program can provide resources, referrals, and assistance for these and other topics: disaster preparedness and evacuation procedures; state and national relief organizations: relocation and housing; and coping with crisis.

During times of change and disaster, most people experience an increased level of stress. Sometimes the stress reaction appears after a few hours or days following the event. Other times, signs and symptoms will appear after a few weeks or even months.

Stress affects us all a little differently, but you may notice some of these reactions:

- Physical: fatigue, difficulty sleeping, changes in appetite
- Behavioral: restlessness, changes in behavior/habits, difficulty getting things done
- Cognitive: easily distracted, difficulty concentrating, difficulty making decisions
- Emotional: depression, anger, sudden mood changes, confusion, feeling overwhelmed

Be Your Own First Responder

There are steps you can take to help you cope with this stress:

- Get extra rest
- Eat well
- Exercise
- Meditate
- Get support: talk to family, friends and coworkers
- Talk to a professional

Services Available through your EAP

Getting help when you need it is a good way to take control of your life. Deer Oaks, your EAP, is here to provide free, confidential guidance and resources when you need it most.

In-the-moment telephonic support
Short-term counseling
Family counseling
Referrals to local resources and support groups
Online articles and information

Call your EAP today for 24/7 confidential assistance at 1-866-792-3616. To review information and services available, go to www.deeroakseap.com and click on the Member Login toward the upper right-hand corner. Enter the letters

"SON" in both the User Name and the Password fields and click on Login.

ACTIVE GUARD RESERVE PERSONNEL

STAFF		
HRO XO	CW4 Jeffrey Thomas	x8171
AGR Branch SGM	SGM Lucas Poppe	x8175
SR HR NCO	SFC Eric Martin	x8183
HR NCO	SSG Benjamin Schall	x8181
HR SPC	SPC Richard Piper	X8199

Website: <https://gko.portal.ng.mil/states/NE/Directorates/J1/AGR-Branch/Pages/default.aspx>

BLENDING RETIREMENT SYSTEM (BRS) CONTINUATION PAY CALENDAR YEAR (CY) 2019.

AGR members who opted into BRS and will complete 12 years of service (PEBD from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2007) during CY19 are eligible to request Continuation Pay prior to 11 years and 11 months.

Point of contacts are ARNG SFC Dennis Hartman at (402) 309-8162 or dennis.j.hartman.mil@mail.mil and ANG SrA Stephanie Patterson at (402) 309-1448 or stephanie.l.patterson23.mil@mail.mil.

ANNUAL BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING (BAH) RECERTIFICATION.

ARNG AGR members' BAH must be annually recertified at their unit of assignment by completing a DA Form 5960. Members with changes need to submit their DA Form 5960 to SSG Benjamin Schall in the AGR Branch for processing to finance. Please ensure all supporting documents are in your IPERMS.

Point of contact is SSG Benjamin Schall at (402) 309-8181, or benjamin.j.schall.mil@mail.mil.

TRICARE.

When enrolled in Tricare Prime or Prime Remote your provider will file claims for you. Network providers will file claims for Tricare Select as well. If you receive care from a non-network provider, you may have to file your own claims. For stateside claims, submit a DD Form 2642 (<https://tricare.mil/FormsClaims/Forms>) with supporting information to your Tricare West Region Claims Department. It is important to do this as soon as possible after care, all claims must be filed within 1 year of medical services.

Tricare West Region
Claims Department
P.O. Box 202112
Florence, SC 29502-2112
www.tricare-west.com

Getting Care When Traveling <https://tricare.mil/findDoctor/Traveling> and the rules depend on your plan and destination. For Prime and Prime Remote, go to an emergency room or call 911 if needed. Call your PCM or Tricare West within 24 hours. For urgent care use a Tricare authorized urgent care center without a referral. For Tricare Select visit a Tricare authorized provider. Keep a copy of all receipts and you may have to pay up front for care and file a claim for reimbursement.

AGR BRANCH PERSONNEL.

To better assist you with your specific AGR topic, please contact the following individual(s):

CW4 Jeff Thomas – AGR Branch Manager, 402 309-8171, jeffrey.r.thomas20.mil@mail.mil
SGM Lucas Poppe – AGR Branch SGM, 402 309-8175, lucas.l.poppe.mil@mail.mil
SFC Eric Martin – ANG and ARNG Announcements, Accessions, Retirements, and ITCB, 402 309-8183, eric.j.martin28.mil@mail.mil

SSG Benjamin Schall – ANG and ARNG Personnel, Finance Actions, Orders, and ACB, 402 309-8181, benjamin.j.schall.mil@mail.mil

SPC Richard Piper – ANG and ARNG Support and Tricare, 402 309-8199, richard.n.piper.mil@mail.mil

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OFFICE/DIVERSITY

STAFF		
EEO	Mr. Kevin Rose	X8111