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HRO Leadership

Human Resources Officer	COL Craig Strong	x8170
Deputy HRO	Lt Col Nicole Nuss	x8144
EEO	Mr. Kevin Rose	x8111
Occupational Health Nurse	Mr. Josiah Unger	X1832

Technician Personnel

Staff		
Supv Human Resource Spec	Mrs. Deb Burling	X8187
Classification/Manpower	Mr. John Winterfeld	X8186
Recruitment, Staffing & Pay	Mrs. Jessica Pan	X8182
Benefits & Services	Ms. Jody Kouma	X8190
	Mr. Devin Alt	X8189
	Mr. Jon Sronce	X8173
Management Analyst	Ms Desirae Dockter	X8155
Labor Relations	Mr. Stephen Oppliger	X8185
Supv HR Spec-HR Development	Mrs. Diane Voichoski	X8184
Information Systems	Mrs. Denise Anderson	X8177

Website: <http://ne.ng.mil/Resource/Pages/Technician-Branch.aspx>

1. HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER - COL CRAIG STRONG.

I look forward to the opportunity and privilege of serving as your Human Resources Officer. It is truly an exciting time in HR as we convert many of our federal technician positions from Title 32 to Title 5 as well as convert to a new federal technician appraisal system. All the while, we remain committed to helping facilitate reasonable manpower solutions in order to meet critical needs, support professional development opportunities and ensure a positive and rewarding workplace environment. Our goal is to put our mission first, which is to "prepare and deliver combat ready forces in defense of our nation and stand ready to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the state" while always taking care of our people.

2. TITLE 32 TO TITLE 5 CONVERSION.

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) 2018 modified the percentage of dual status technicians who will convert from Title 32 status to Title 5 status from 20% to 12.6%. Title 5 status is a civilian status that does not require military membership and is governed by 5 USC. The conversion of the 12.6% dual status technicians has occurred and our last group converted on 1 April 2018.

Any questions on Title 5 positions may be address to Lt Col Nicole Nuss at 309-8144 or Ms. Deb Burling at 309-8187.

3. VETERAN'S PREFERENCE.

Our Title 5 positions will be accepting veteran's preference as part of the application process.

There are many different types and rules which apply to veteran's preference. All the guidance on the various types is located at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/veterans-services/vet-guide-for-hr-professionals/#2>

You can contact HR for specific questions at 402-309-8182/8186/8187.

4. APRIL IS FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH (REVIEW YOUR BENEFICIARY FORMS).

Are your Designation of Beneficiary Form(s) filled out and up-to-date? Are they uploaded in your electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF)?

Visit the ABC-C Website at <https://www.abc.army.mil> for links to the beneficiary forms. This will ensure your loved ones will be taken care of.

5. THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN (TSP).

If you are in the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), contributing 5% to your TSP account takes full advantage of employer matching money.

Visit the Army Benefits Center-Civilian (ABC-C) Website at <https://www.abc.army.mil> to make or change your TSP election and the TSP Website at www.tsp.gov to make a contribution allocation or interfund transfer. TSP is a critical element in the FERS retirement plan.

6. TAX LAW CHANGES.

Did you review the impact to your taxes this year? The IRS has provided a calculator at <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/irs-withholding-calculator> to help you determine what withholding levels are recommended for you on your W-4?

If you received a bonus or incentive, how does this impact my taxes? You will need to ensure enough taxes are taken out (the amount received could put you in a new tax bracket) or you will have to pay into IRS. Remember, the TSP limit for 2018 is \$18,500. It is always good to check with a Financial Manager/Planner if you have questions or concerns.

7. RETIREMENT PLANNING.

ABC-C will be conducting a FERS Retirement Briefing on 17 April 2018 at 1300 CST on DCS. The link to the briefing is <https://conference.apps.mil/webconf/1553>

You can download the slides ahead of time at <https://www.abc.army.mil/retirements/RetDCS.html>

Once selected go to the third column that says, "National Guard" and click on the NG-FERS Benefits Overview. You will also be able to download the slides from the presentation.

8. TELEWORK.

With this being severe weather season just a reminder when on telework, you must input the correct telework code into ATAAPS. We have been informed this is one of the areas subject to auditing at the national level.

TELEWORK CODES ARE:

TM -Telework Medical

TS - Telework Ad Hoc/Situational (use this for weather related telework)

TW- Telework Regular

Telework reason codes are reported in the HZ/OTH field for the applicable and regular and premium type hour codes.

For questions, please contact your local CSR (Technician Pay Representative) or HR at 402-309-8187.

9. TECHNICIAN PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT COURSE APRIL 2018.

The next Technician Personnel Management Course is scheduled for 24-26 April 2018. New National Guard (NG) employee supervisors will get an e-mail invitation. Supervisors who wish to attend the course again as a refresher may send an e-mail to diane.s.voichoski.civ@mail.mil to request a seat.

10. NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION TRAINING.

Human Resources will be conducting a New Employee Orientation course. This course is for technicians who were appointed between 1 January 2017 and 5 August 2017. ARNG training will be on 2 May 2018 and ANG training will be on 3 May 2018. Employees received an e-mail invitation in mid-March 2018. Note that this course was rescheduled from January 2018.

Point of Contact is Ms. Diane Voichoski at 309-8184 or diane.s.voichoski.civ@mail.mil

11. INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP).

Have you seen those technician vacancy announcements that advertise a lower grade "with promotion potential" to a higher grade? One of the requirements for promotion is "completion of an IDP."

When a position is filled with a technician who is qualified at the lower or trainee level we establish an IDP for that technician. The IDP is designed by the supervisor and may include formal courses as well as on-the-job training (OJT) tasks that are necessary to give the technician the knowledge and skills necessary to perform at the higher grade level. An IDP also gives an estimated length of time it will take for the technician to gain the knowledge and skills required to perform at the higher grade.

The supervisor discusses the IDP with the technician and both sign the plan before forwarding to the HR office.

When the tasks and courses on the IDP are complete and the minimum length of time required at the lower grade level is past, the supervisor submits an SF52 requesting a Desk Audit/Promotion to the HR Office. The request for Desk Audit/Promotion SF52 notifies our HR Classification Specialist to schedule a desk audit with the technician. If the technician is performing the higher-graded duties the technician is promoted.

Point of Contact for IDPs is Ms Diane Voichoski at diane.s.voichoski.civ@mail.mil or 402 309 8184.

12. DEFENSE TRAVEL SYSTEM (DTS) AUTHORIZATION TRIP DESCRIPTION BOX (FROM THE USPFO COMPTROLLER OFFICE.

Travelers completing authorizations need to have more/better/clearer information in the Trip Description box.

Reviewers and Approvers should be able to tell from the description exactly what the traveler will be doing without further inquiries. Travelers should avoid excessive acronyms unless those acronyms would be known by almost everyone in the Guard. Don't state something like "Attending BLC-SAA training for SPT-DIAA at AAC-EU." It's a big box--please spell it out and make it clear.

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State Personnel

STAFF		
HR Manager	Ms. Polly Putney	X8172
HR Assistant / Benefits	Mr. Tim Diedrichsen	X8180
HR Assistant / Payroll	Ms. Bonnie Shipley	X8178

1. WELLNESS HEALTH PLAN – HEALTH FITNESS ENDING.

The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) sent out information by e-mail earlier this year about the Wellness vendor Health Fitness and the Wellness Health Plan. Below is the information contained in that e-mail:

In order to provide you the most cost efficient and customer-focused health plan we made the difficult decision to terminate the wellness vendor's (Health Fitness) contract following the end of this year's program.

The State of Nebraska will still maintain the Well Nebraska Health Plan with incentives through June 30, 2019 and continue to offer wellness related opportunities through United Health Care.

Throughout this transition we are committed to providing you updates as they become available.

What does this mean for you?

*We will retain the Well Nebraska plan with incentives for one additional plan year from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. Eligibility info for those that have already met the requirements will be given to DAS from Health Fitness. If you have not met the eligibility you will have to choose the Regular plan or the Consumer Focused Plan in Open Enrollment. Health plans elected in Open Enrollment would begin July 1, 2018.

*In order to be eligible for the Well Nebraska Plan with incentives for July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019 plan year, you should have completed:

- Completion of a Screening and the Health Assessment (should have been completed by May 31, 2017)
- Enrolling in a program (should have been completed by May 31, 2017)
- Completion of that program by March 31, 2018

*Effective April 1st, 2018 United Health Care will be providing Disease Management programs (including Congestive Heart Failure, Asthma, and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease). A representative with United Health Care will be contacting members that will benefit from these programs with additional information. As of April 1st, if you have questions about the Disease Management programs, please call the customer service phone number on the back of your ID card and ask to speak with a nurse who can connect you with the appropriate resources and programs.

After March 31, 2018 the wellness programs offered by the current vendor (including Walk this Way, Cardio/Strength Tracker, Coaching, Right this Weigh, etc.) will no longer be available. However, in the upcoming months we will be providing additional information on how to sign up for new wellness opportunities offered through UnitedHealth Care, including RallySM which is available to you right now and Real Appeal[®] starting April 1, 2018.

2. RALLYSM.

The RallySM Program is available immediately through your myuhc online account. RallySM is designed to help you get healthier, one small step at a time. RallySM shows you how to make simple changes to your daily routine, set smart goals and stay on target. You'll get personalized recommendations on how to move more, eat better and feel great—and have fun doing it.

Start with the quick Health Survey and get your Rally AgeSM to help you assess your overall health. RallySM will then recommend missions for you: simple activities designed to help you to improve your diet, fitness and mood. Start easy, and level up when you're ready.

3. REAL APPEAL[®]

Effective April 1, 2018, your United Health Care medical plan option will offer a new benefit: Real Appeal[®]. Real Appeal[®] is an online weight loss and healthy lifestyle program based on the science of what really works to help people lose weight and keep it off. It will be available at no cost to all eligible State of Nebraska teammates and their family members age 18 and older who are enrolled in State of Nebraska medical coverage through United Health Care.

Real Appeal[®] helps you lose weight and reduces your risk of developing certain diseases like diabetes and cardiovascular disease as it's based on decades of proven clinical research. Most members lose an average of 10 pounds after completing only four sessions of the program. Enrollment in the program includes:

- *52 weeks of access to a Transformation Coach. Your coach guides you through the program and develops a simple, customized plan that fits your needs, preferences and goals.
- *24/7 access to digital tools and dashboards that help you track your food, activity, and weight.
- *A success kit full of healthy weight management tools including fitness guides, recipe book (including quick family meal ideas and fast-food eating tips), weight scale, and more.
- *Support from weekly online group classes to learn healthy ideas from your coach and other members who share what's helped them achieve success.

Real Appeal[®] is a fun and engaging plan that helps you learn simple steps for a healthier life so you can spark your transformation. More information will be coming soon. You may also visit their website at: <https://realappeal.com/>.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Benefits Office at 402-471-4443/877-721-2228 or as.employeebenefits@nebraska.gov

4. OPEN ENROLLMENT.

This year's Open Enrollment for insurance will be from May 8, 2018 through May 22, 2018. Employees can make changes to their medical, dental and vision insurance plans and sign up for the Flexible Spending Plans.

Employees can also make changes for Life insurance and Long-Term Disability (LTD). Applications for Life and Long-Term Disability can be made at any time during the year. Many changes during Open Enrollment for Life and LTD, and all changes outside of Open Enrollment, require an employee to complete an Evidence of Insurability form. This form, an application which asks employees health questions, needs to be completed and submitted to the State Human Resources Office on the 2nd floor of the Joint Forces Headquarters. It will be forwarded to the appropriate insurance company and they will approve or deny the application. Employees will be notified of an approval or denial. Insurance for approved applications will be effective the first of the month following the approval.

5. REMINDER ON SALARY INCREASES.

According to the NAPE/AFSCME Labor Contract, which is in effect for 2017-2019, there will be no across-the-board salary increases in July, 2018. Employees under the NAPE contract will receive an increase of 1.5% in January, 2019.

However, any bargaining unit member who attains one of the following continuous service anniversary dates during the fiscal year preceding July 1, 2018, and is considered by the employing agency to have had at least satisfactory performance during the preceding five year period will receive a longevity pay increase. The teammate shall have his/her annual full-time equivalent salary base increased by one quarter of one percent on July 1, 2018. This amount shall be added to his/her annual full-time equivalent salary base.

5 years	10 years	15 years	20 years	25 years	30 years
35 years	40 years	45 years	50 years	55 years	60 years

6. OCIO MANDATORY ON-LINE TRAINING – SECURITY MENTOR TRAINING SERIES FOR 2018.

The OCIO Security Awareness training was assigned to teammates on March 19, 2018 in the Employee Development Center (EDC). This interactive training lasts between 10 and 15 minutes and covers a relevant and timely topic concerning Cyber Security. Training modules will be released every other month and all employees are **REQUIRED** to take this training. If you have already completed a course, you do not need to retake it.

The core topics you will receive through December are:

- *Social Engineering
- *Insider Threat
- *Internet of Things
- *Privacy
- *Cloud Security

DAS has prepared a user guide to show you how to access the training. The user guide may be found at: http://das.nebraska.gov/personnel/user_guides/edc/SecurityMentor.pdf

State of Nebraska Employees may contact the AS LINK Help Desk: as.linkhelp@nebraska.gov at 402-471-6234 if you have any questions or issues regarding the Employee Development Center (EDC).

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Active Guard Reserve Personnel

STAFF		
HRO XO	CW4 Jeffrey Thomas	x8171
AGR Branch SGM	SGM Daniel Mitchell	x8175
SR HR NCO	SFC Eric Martin	x8183
HR NCO	SSG Rosalba Amezcua	x8181
HR TRICARE NCO	MSG Cecilio T. Roman	x8167

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

1. BLENDED RETIREMENT SYSTEM (BRS).

The Blended Retirement System (BRS) began on 1 January 2018 and service members may have a choice to opting into this new system (1 year). Service members are encouraged to take a look at their retirement plans and educate themselves on their options to stay with the current retirement system or opt into the BRS.

Options for Retirement

Before 1 January 2006 or earned 4,320 retirement or more points will stay in current retirement system.

Between 2006 and 2017 or earned less than 4,320 points have the choice in BRS or current retirement system. (*You have to elect to opt in or you will remain in the current system) 2018 or later you will be in the BRS.

Visit Joint Knowledge Online, Military One Source and at <http://militarypay.defense.gov/BlendedRetirement> for the Opt-In video and also for the Blended Retirement System Leaders Course.

2. TRICARE.

MSG Cecilio Roman is the new Tricare NCO, you may contact MSG Roman at (402) 309-8167, or cecilio.t.roman.mil@mial.mil. The new insurance provider is Health Net Federal Services (844) 866-9378 or <https://www.tricare-west.com>

The Military Health System has made some significant changes since 1 January 2018 for the betterment of service members and their families- www.tricare.mil/About/Changes. It all starts with verifying your coverage in the Beneficiary Web Enrollment at <https://pki.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/bwe/indexAction.do>

Sign up for TRICARE e-mail updates at www.tricare.mil/subscriptions

3. ACTIVE GUARD RESERVE (AGR) CONTINUATION BOARD.

The Active Guard Reserve Continuation Board for the Air National Guard will be conducted on 18 April 2018. Members whose records are scheduled to appear before the ACB have been notified.

Point of contact is CW4 Jeff Thomas at (402) 309-8171 or jeffrey.r.thomas20.mil@mail.mil

4. NEW ACTIVE GUARD RESERVE (AGR) EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION TRAINING.

The HRO will be conducting a New Employee Orientation course. This course is for AGRs who were appointed between 1 January 2017 and 5 August 2017. ARNG AGR training will be on 2 May 2018 and ANG AGR training will be on 3 May 2018. Employees required to attend will be getting an e-mail invitation in early April 2018.

Point of contact is CW4 Jeff Thomas at (402) 309-8171 or jeffrey.r.thomas20.mil@mail.mil

5. ARMY ACTIVE SERVICE MANAGEMENT BOARD (ASMB).

The Nebraska Army National Guard will not conduct a CY2018 Officer, Warrant Officer, or Enlisted ASMB. Over the past year we have continued to manage our full time force within regulatory guidance and authorizations. Annually, we will continue to analyze the need for future ASMB's using regulatory guidance.

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