



**National Federation of Federal Employees**

**NFFE - IAM**

**Pride - Unity - Strength**

**Federal District 1, IAMAW, AFL-CIO**



# Forest Service Council (FSC) Voice

## SPECIAL ISSUE: "Change"

May 2007

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**Forest Service Council  
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2004-2008**

#### *FS Partnership Council*

Dan Duefrene  
Betsy Evans  
Melissa Baumann  
Ron Thatcher

#### *Auditing Committee*

Barry McDonald  
Mary Coughlin  
Lillian Altman

#### *Budget and Finance*

Barry McDonald

#### *Bylaws*

Eric Plimmer

#### *Civil Rights*

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#### *Communications*

Jennifer Hickenbottom

#### *Competitive Sourcing*

Mark Davis

#### *Downsizing*

Eric Plimmer

#### *Grievance*

Lonnie Lewis

#### *LE&I*

Brian Webb

#### *Legislative*

Ron Thatcher/Mark Davis

#### *Negotiations*

Eric Plimmer (acting)

#### *Recruitment*

Joe Drozdowski

#### *Resolutions*

Gilda Dixon

#### *Temporary Employees*

Dan Duefrene

#### *Training*

Melissa Baumann

#### *Veterans*

David Chevalier

#### *Health & Safety Workgroup*

David Ensign

**2007 Legislative  
Week**

**May 14-18, 2007  
Washington, DC**

## Legislative Week Coming Up!

Working off the steam built by the earlier successful visit to the Hill this year, Mark Davis and Ron Thatcher will be leading 22 union members to Washington, DC the week of May 14. They will be attending IAM's Legislative Conference and visiting Congressional representatives and staffers. The top priorities this year are addressing competitive sourcing and liability concerns faced by firefighters. Position papers on these issues are posted on the FSC website at <http://www.nffe-fsc.org/> -- click on "New! Comp Sourcing."

Other topics to be discussed with staffers include:

- The retirement issue of increasing the date that Federal employees can buy back their seasonal time;
- Recreation dollars going down while public use is up; and
- Problem-solving about what to do about the ever increasing fire costs (this is an issue in which Congress is very interested and engaged).

This year's trip comes at exactly the right time. Congress has one opportunity per year to address competitive sourcing using the power of the purse, and that is during development of the appropriations bills that fund the government. **THAT TIME IS NOW:** the Interior bill, which funds the Forest Service, is being drafted right now – scheduled for completion in the House late in May.

Over the years, the Council has developed a good reputation on the Hill as purveyors of credible information. However, that is only half the battle – we are told on many occasions that this is not a priority issue for

a particular representative because they haven't heard from constituents on it.

As US citizens, you have the right to communicate with your Congressional representatives on matters of importance to you. However, it is important that you **do not do so on official time or using government equipment** – use your own dime on your own time if you feel so moved. Also, if you indicate you are an agency employee, you need to make clear you are speaking as a private citizen and not on behalf of the agency.

"We have been working hard to increase the professionalism and effectiveness of our Legislative efforts," said Mark Davis, Co-Chair with Ron Thatcher of the FSC Legislative Committee. "We have already made over 100 appointments with staffers strategically selected by Congressional committee assignments. To take it to the next level, we need each Local to appoint a Legislative Officer. Our geographical dispersion is potentially a great advantage in our dealings with Congress, but it is one we are not using as we should." Mark urges anyone interested in getting involved in this way to email him at [mwdavis01@fs.fed.us](mailto:mwdavis01@fs.fed.us) (Mark W Davis/FPL/USDAFS).

*Mark and Ron*

## Farewell from Bill Dougan

My time as your Forest Service Council President is over. As of April 30, Ron Thatcher is your new President. It has been an honor to serve as your Council President for the last four and a half years.

As I look back on my term in office, I am awestruck by all we have accomplished together. At our last Convention in the fall of 2004, the delegates set the priorities for

our Council for the next four years: recruiting, training for our Union officials, and lobbying/ legislative activity. I am proud to say that we have made great progress in each of these areas, and the fact of the matter is that our lobbying efforts set the standard for lobbying by Unions in the federal sector.

Leadership is about surrounding yourself with good, competent, enthusiastic, and supportive people who believe in what we are trying to accomplish; you cannot be a successful leader going it alone, it truly does "take a village" to be successful and effective in today's world. I was blessed by having so many of you offer to help out along the journey.

All that has been achieved has occurred because of the tireless dedication and work of our Executive Board, our FSC Committee Chairs and their Committee members, and our Local Officers and members. Without the orchestrated efforts of all of you, none of this would have been possible. I want to personally thank each of you for all of the hard work and tireless dedication you have given to our Union and the employees we represent. I know it is not easy work, nor do you receive proper recognition or thanks for all that you do. Please accept my heartfelt thanks and know that you are making a difference in all of our lives through your efforts.

I think most of you know I am going to be retiring from the Forest Service, effective June 9. I will be running to be the National Secretary/Treasurer of our Union (NFFE), and my wife Libby and I will be moving soon to Washington DC as I hope to start a new career.

I've worked for the agency for 30 years, and I have to tell you that I've had a great time and have been fortunate to have had

interesting jobs (firefighter, tree planter, thinner, timber sale layout, timber cruiser, reforestation tech and program manager, forester/silviculturist), and great supervisors who mentored and supported me along the way. I was able to wake up every morning, looking forward to the challenges and opportunities that the job would bring that day. There are not a lot of jobs out there that you can say that about.

I have enjoyed my past 28 years working in various Union positions as well; it provided me an opportunity to learn important skills that will serve me the rest of my days. And as the FSC President, I held the only job in the agency that has 2000+ bosses (each of our members). I've been fortunate to meet, get to know, interact with, dialogue with, and debate a wide variety of people--including you--the leaders and members of our Union. And in all of my travels around the country, I've found that it is my Union brothers and sisters whom I continually draw strength from and find true kinship with.

Libby and I are looking forward to this next adventure. Sitka, where we now live and work, a town of 9,000 people, is the largest town we have lived in since we were in college at Humboldt State University in Arcata, CA, about 32 years ago. We love Alaska, but we are admittedly looking forward to the cultural and historical opportunities living in DC will provide for us. We're ready to take the leap into big city living and experience whatever life has to offer us. I find myself experiencing what it must have felt like as a five year old on my first day of kindergarten (though I'm old enough that I've forgotten the specifics of that memory, I'm pretty sure it involved simultaneous feelings of anticipation, excitement, fear and wonder). I hope they

offer milk and cookies and an afternoon nap time....

For me, Margaret Mead, the noted anthropologist, best stated what we are about as a Union:

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*

I've enjoyed our time we had together, and hope to continue to serve each of you and all of our members as your NFFE National Secretary Treasurer. I wish each of you well in your endeavors. Keep committed to changing the world. You are making a difference.

In solidarity,

*Bill*

## Welcome to Ron Thatcher



After a full week of serving as your council president, I can say our union is strong and we are better because of the leadership of Bill Dougan. We are thankful that Bill did all that he did. As I take the responsibilities on as your council President, my priorities will be to continue to build on the work Bill set out to accomplish as identified from the 2004 convention. These priorities include building the membership, training of our

union officials, and continuing our lobbying and legislative activities.

If its true that to be a successful leader you must surround yourself with good, competent, enthusiastic, and supportive people who believe in what we are trying to accomplish, I am in good hands.

You and I are truly blessed with the many dedicated, hard-working brothers and sisters of our executive board, FSC committee chairs and their members, and our local officers and members who are as dedicated as I am to making a difference in all our lives, as well as making the Forest Service better for not only ourselves, but future generations of employees.

I cannot, nor will I be, a successful leader going it alone. It will truly take all of us continuing to work together for us to be successful and effective with the many issues we, as well as our agency, are facing today. I am truly thankful to all of you for your offers of encouragement as well as your commitment to help out in anyway possible as I begin work as your council President.

I'm confident that together we will be successful in our endeavors because of the tireless dedication you give to our Union and the employees we represent everyday. As Bill said, we all know our work is never easy work, nor will you receive proper recognition or thanks for all that you do.

Please accept my thanks and know that you are making a difference in all of our lives through your efforts and I'll do everything I can as your president of our great union to continue the good fight.

*Ron*

## Congratulations to Lonnie Lewis!

As of early March 2007, Lonnie celebrated over 50 years of service – all with the Forest Service.

Lonnie started on the Umpqua National Forest in Region 6 as a lookout. The interesting thing was that the lookout tower was six miles from the nearest road! That in itself is a feat; however, at that time Lonnie was on crutches from an earlier sawmill accident. He was on crutches for another year and then used a cane, all while being at the lookout tower.

His next job was as a “Recreation Guard,” and then went to engineering doing design work (all on-the-job training). In 1980, as the head of the negotiating committee Lonnie went full-time Union, the first in the Forest Service to do that.

Lonnie has been on the Umpqua, Winema, and Modoc National Forests during his career. He’s been on the Modoc since the late 1960s.

Lonnie, when asked about his life, said “It’s been an interesting 50 years. I’ve seen a lot of changes. Some good, some I greatly regret....”

What words of wisdom would Lonnie give to a new Union steward? “Get contacts – people you can call up. First, there’s a tremendous amount of experience in our organization; why re-invent the wheel? Call and get the information to help you. Second, all Union stewards need to remember that they are equal to who they are dealing with...don’t feel cowed. Resolve to resolve the issue; don’t fight if you don’t have to. However, keep your eyes open and, if you have to fight, make it a good one.”

Again, congratulations to Lonnie! Here’s to the next 50 years!

## New/Acting Regional VPs

### Region 1

Chris Feutrier (*to pronounce his last name, pretend you are from Canada, and say: ‘few-tree, eh?’*) has stepped up to help out Doug Law, as Acting Region 1 Vice President. Chris, the President of Local 1521 on the Lincoln Ranger District of the Helena National Forest, is excited to be able to help out Doug, as well as other brothers and sisters of Region 1.

Now working out of the Regional Office in Missoula, Chris is busy filling in behind Doug Law who is working on the new Transitions Team.

Chris is working on a number of initiatives, and one of those will be an “accountability workshop” mandatory for all employees and supervisors. The Union will be rolling it out this fall with management’s help and blessing. “This workshop will cover master agreement, positive work environment, employee relations skills (conduct and performance) for supervisors, a pay and leave section, the new performance management plan. It will also present a critical component about the union who, whats, whys, and hows that should help us to double if not triple the membership as well as the number of active union officers and stewards for all of your locals here in Region 1.”

Chris’ enthusiasm is infectious and Region 1 is lucky to have such a dedicated RVP!

## Region 6



Jim Campbell (*seated at Gifford's desk in Washington*) was recently elected by acclimation to be the new Region 6 Vice President, replacing Dennis Reichelt. Jim is based out of Hines, Oregon, on the Malheur NF. "I am having the time of my life! I am behind in everything; don't know half of what I should; but am having fun." He is using the skill gained as a range conservationist (administering permits, which are the same idea as our contract, the Master Agreement; learning to deal with people having diverse points of view, etc.).

He is a big proponent of Labor-Management partnership at all levels, and is a big supporter of Region 6 Partnership. He wants to help out the Locals in Region 6, and is planning on traveling throughout the Region (just don't ask him how to use his new cell phone...he admits he is 'technologically challenged'...!)

## Region 8

Joyce Sizemore retired at the end of 2006, and David Stamey is now the Acting Regional Vice President:

"I want to take a few minutes to introduce myself. I am currently the President of Local 1563 in North Carolina and Local 913 in the Cherokee NF. I enjoy working closely with these Forests on a whole host of matters. As Joyce Sizemore has retired, I have been

asked to serve as the Acting Region 8 Regional Vice President. In this role, I look forward to working with each Local and Forest in Region 8 and hope we can all meet at some point in the future.

My philosophy concerning union work and where we should be heading is good service to our members and building relationships with our management partners. I believe that the union provides an important service to Forest Service employees. Through our membership, we provide a voice to the discussions with management.

"I also believe strongly in building relationships with fellow employees and management. The best means for this is through strong Partnership Councils on each Forest and Locations. By using collaborative decision-making processes and being pre-decisionally involved with issues and concerns, we are able to meet the needs of employees as well as the agency.

We can provide a voice for many employees through our communications with management. Of course, I believe that the union should use all appropriate tools to best represent the employees in our bargaining unit, so there may be times when partnership will not resolve an issue, and we will need to use traditional processes."

### **Federal Employee Training at Winpisinger**

The Winpisinger Training Center in Hollywood, Maryland, is an excellent source of union training. In March, they recently held a Federal Employee Training and we were fortunate to have eight Forest Service employees attend.



Back, left to right: **Lillian Altman** (FL2197-Albuquerque Service Center, ASC), **Loa Collins** (FL1950-Rocky Mountain Research Station, RMRS), **Karen Mora** (FL1950-RMRS), **Rhinda Wolfe** (FL1156-Colville NF), **Richard Schmid** (FL1156-Colville NF), and **Lance Hamann** (FL1800-Job Corps).  
Front: **Kellie Mills** (FL2197-ASC) and **Gail Dattilo** (FL2197-ASC).

## NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

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[www.nffe-fsc.org](http://www.nffe-fsc.org)

To see other FSC newsletters, go to:

<http://www.nffe-fsc.org/WebPages/news.html>

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