

Robins AFB has \$3.57 billion economic impact on Georgia

News release - Robins AFB

Robins Air Force Base contributes \$3.57 billion to the Georgia economy, according to a new base report.

Robins publicized its fiscal 2022 economic impact statement, which provides general information about the economic impact the installation has on the state. The economic impact report is located on Robins AFB's website. The report is also distributed to federal, state and local officials.

The fiscal 2022 statement sizes Robins' workforce at 22,636 – a figure that is made up of 14,295 appropriated fund civilians, 5,495 military members and 2,846 other employees, including contract and non-appropriated fund employees.

The statement also notes Robins paid out \$1.67 billion in salaries. The largest portion of that money – \$1.17 billion – went to civilians working on base, while military members accounted for \$474 million. Non-federal civilians and contract employees accounted for just over \$28.8 million.

Additionally, the base awarded \$6.1 billion in contracts during fiscal 2022. In Georgia, the base awarded \$660 million. Of that amount Georgia firms in Houston and Bibb Counties accounted for 29.1 percent or \$192.31 million.

The analysis also showed the base's utility costs increased by \$4.4 million.

This fiscal year, Robins Air Force Base's financial analysis employed an updated methodology to derive its economic

RAFB's economic impact - by the numbers:

Overall workforce: 22,636

- Appropriated fund civilians: 14,295
- Military: 5,495
- Other (contract/non-appropriated funds): 2,846

Overall salaries paid: \$1.67 billion

- Civilian: \$1.17 billion
- Military: \$474 million
- Non-federal civilians/contract employees: \$28.8 million

Overall contracts awarded: \$6.1 billion

- Georgia: \$660 million
- Houston/Bibb counties: \$192.31 million

ic impact. The method used focused on dollar-based expenditures, or dollars spent, within a 50-mile radius of Robins Air Force Base, unlike the FY 2021 method, which focused on Robins' expenditures statewide.

According to Robins AFB financial experts, this methodology provides an accurate description of the installation's regional impact.

You can view the complete report at: www.robins.af.mil/Portals/59/documents/EIS/2022%20Economic%20Impact%20Statement.pdf.

Supervisors/employees

'Zero tolerance' remains blatantly disproportionate

By HENRY BROWN
Executive Vice President,
AFGE Local 987
henry.brown@afgelocal987.org

I returned to my elected position as Executive Vice President after a brief respite from our readers. It was an arduous journey back to our members, and I might add that it's great being back. I had held out hope against hope during my absence of there being a fundamental change in holding supervisors accountable.

The old reframe of: supervisors being held to a higher standard is still much to do about



Henry Brown

hyperbole and a lack of substantive change and accountability for those supervisors that are to

be held to a higher standard.

I emerged from my hiatus the same way I left: To be reminded once more that there is a toll that their behavior has on the force. That toll has become weaponized and has created an emotional exhaustion. There have been instances of supervisors verbally assaulting members of the workforce that they – the supervisors – are never held to that higher standard.

In discussing the abusive supervisor, I am talking about the abuse that can impact every part of the body without leaving a mark.

Abusive supervisors are also

viewed as toxic for organizational culture. They are responsible for disturbing the entire workflow as well as being a drain on the financial resources of an organization. They are so adept at being abusive – they may never lay a hand on your persons but, nonetheless employees are scared from the inside out. It is a systematic, diabolical, form of control, where there has been no real effort to ferret them out by holding them accountable.

How have we come to this conclusion? What metric is being used that would

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AFGE Legislative Conference

From reports

AFGE wrapped up its annual 2023 Legislative Conference the week before last. AFGE President Marion Williams, Executive Vice President Henry Brown, Treasurer Jeanette McElhaney, Vice President at Large Mike Ferguson, Vice President of Maintenance Greg Collins,

Vice President of DLA Teresa Freeman, DLA Steward and Local 987 YOUNG Coordinator Brandon Respress and Trustee Tommy Gibson attended for the Local.

The conference, according to AFGE leadership, concluded with a long list of victories "to celebrate and members energized to build our collective legislative and political power."

The conference, leadership continued, "is our union's biggest event of the year, and this year was no different. Hundreds of AFGE members gathered in Washington, D.C. to learn from one another and strategize on this year's legislative goals."

"We were honored to have members of Congress and allies at events throughout

See CONFERENCE, page 6



AFGE Local 987 was recognized at the LegCon for its work during the recent election cycle in Georgia; the main Nov. 8 election and the subsequent runoff for senator.

It was, AFGE Local 987 President Marion Williams said, in "converting Georgia from a red to a blue state. In recognition for labor making a 1.5 percent difference in the runoff

(between Sen. Raphael Warnock and Herschel Walker.)

"In less than two weeks voting was increased by 1.5 percent, which put him over the edge, so he won.

"So now, because of that effort, Georgia is now a 'swing state'." And, he continued – a direct result of that success – other elected officials are now reaching out to the local, "con-

tacting me and asking, what can we do to help you. All over the nation (an elected leader from Arizona was one example).

"Because, I think, they realize now that Labor has enough pull to swing at the grassroots level."

Austin Scott and Sanford Bishop are two examples, locally, Williams added. Scott, he said, always voted what was for Robins Air Force Base, but he

"he and Labor didn't always see eye-to-eye. Now, he's kind of changing that."

Bishop on the other hand: "They took out all the Democratic areas (in his area) and stacked it with Republican – the first time he's had to actually "campaign", Williams said – "Yet Labor got behind him and he won.

"So they're seeing the difference Labor can make."

Volunteers are still needed for the following committees:

YOUNG

Stewards

Resolution

Training and Education

Grievance/Arbitration

Publicity

Fair Practice

Retiree

Women's

Entertainment

Veterans

Call Union Hall at 478-922-5758 for more information or to sign up.

In memory ...

Guy Brant

Member since Aug. 20, 2016

An employee of the Defense Commissary Agency

MONTH

Save the date

2

Membership meeting

Local 987 will have a membership meeting March 16 at 5 p.m. Note: Per AFGE Local 987 President Marion Williams, barring any unforeseeable circumstances, it will be in person (and still via Zoom for those who prefer/choose to attend via that format, he said.) As always, membership will be verified before you are admitted into the meeting/teleconference. To that end, you must ensure you have a current email on file or you will not receive the Zoom link. You can make updates by calling Union Hall at 478-922-5758 or by emailing Linda Baxter at linda@afgelocal987.org or Jeanette McElhaney at jmac@afgelocal987.org.

AFGE Local 987 Treasurer Jeanette McElhaney, center, was recognized during the conference for her nomination as the AFGE Fred McDuff Legislative Political Coordinator of the Year Award.

It was partly in recognition, AFGE Local 987 President Marion Williams said, to the work she did during the recent elections in Georgia; the main Nov. 8 election and of particular note the runoff a couple of weeks later between

See MCELHANEY, page 6

Vice President of DLA, Teresa Freeman – fourth from the left in the picture – received a Mentorship Award, as presented by the Women's and Fair Practices Departments, during the Feb. 12-15 Legislative Conference. Here are her thoughts on the award, and the conference.

"Receiving the award was a very

humbling experience. I am truly grateful for my Union and all the circumstances that made my accomplishment possible with recognition.

"I approach the role of mentorship through raising my two daughters. I wasn't just their mother I was a mentor to them and all of their friends. The point is: The relationship between

See FREEMAN, page 7

New BACN mission begins with 18th ACCS activation

By **JOSEPH MATHER**
78th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

The 18th Airborne Command and Control Squadron activated during a ceremony at Robins Air Force Base Feb. 10.

A geographically separated unit from the 319th Reconnaissance Wing at Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota, the 18th ACCS will fly the E-11A Battlefield Airborne Communications Node aircraft out of Robins.

BACN, often pronounced "bacon," is a communications relay and gateway system that provides military commanders with a versatile means of exchanging information from multiple air, ground and maritime sources, including host nation, joint and coalition forces.

Col. Jason Dillon, 319th Operations Group commander, announced Lt. Col. Scott Sevigny as the commander of the newly activated 18th ACCS during last week's ceremony.

"Squadron commanders are selected in a highly competitive process, and Sevigny was an easy choice," said Dillon. "Scott comes to us with a wide range of experience in three different aircraft. He has flown the RC-135 aircraft, the E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System aircraft, and now the E-11A aircraft."

Dillon said they are fortunate to be handing the flag to a seasoned command pilot.

"As I hand you the guidon, the mission and our Airmen are now in your hands," he said. "I know you will get the mission done while taking care of our most valuable assets, our people. Lead by example, lead with passion, never forget your worth, and never let the men



U.S. Air Force Col. Jason Dillon, left, 319th Operations Group commander, hands the 18th Airborne Command and Control Squadron guidon to U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Scott Sevigny, 18th ACCS commander, during the 18th ACCS activation and assumption of command ceremony at Robins Air Force Base Feb. 10. The 18th ACCS is a geographically separated unit from the 319th Reconnaissance Wing at Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota, and will fly E-11A Battlefield Airborne Communications Node aircraft. (U.S. Air Force photo by Joseph Mather)

and women of the 18th ACCS forget their worth."

After accepting the guidon Sevigny said he looks forward to the opportunity to lead the newly stood up squadron.

"It is a great honor to be

selected as a commander of any Air Force unit," he said. "The Air Force puts a high level of trust in all its squadron commanders, and I hope to live up to and exceed those

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Sevigny speaks to the audience as the new commander of the 18th ACCS. Sevigny is seasoned command pilot with over 4,000 total hours, including over 1,700 combat hours and has flown the RC-135 aircraft, the E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System aircraft, and the E-11A Battlefield Airborne Communications Node aircraft. (U.S. Air Force photo by Joseph Mather)

Medal of Honor spotlight Army Tech Sgt. Russell Dunham

By **KATIE LANGE**
DoD News

Army Tech. Sgt. Russell Everett Dunham had been shot in the back and was a clear target for the Germans when he was defending a hill in France in 1945. But neither issue stopped him from single-handedly taking out three enemy machine-gun nests. His bravery and determination to stop the enemy attack earned him the Medal of Honor.

Dunham was born on Feb. 23, 1920, in East Carondelet, Illinois, just south of St. Louis. His parents, Ola and Dorothy Dunham, eventually moved the family about 40 minutes north to Fosterburg, Illinois.

Dunham was part of a large family; he had eight brothers

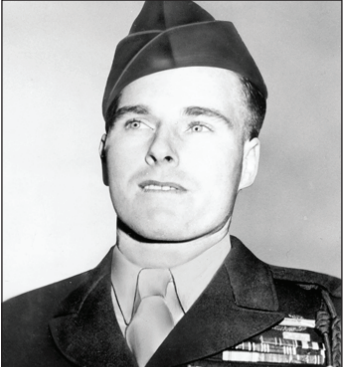


Photo courtesy defense.gov
Army Tech Sgt. Russell Dunham

and five sisters. He attended grade school but dropped out before high school to help tend to the family farm. According to a Washington Post article, Dunham moved to St. Louis with his brother, Ralph, at 16. The two young men sold soup

and tamales on the street and in bars to make ends meet during the Great Depression.

During a Library of Congress 2003 Veterans History Project interview, Dunham said that in 1940, he, Ralph and a friend went to Peoria, Illinois, to try to get a job at Caterpillar, but the company wasn't hiring. Instead, the three men signed up to join the Army. Both Dunhams were assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division when the U.S. joined World War II.

On Nov. 8, 1942, Dunham landed in North Africa, where he fought in combat until his unit was sent to Sicily in July 1943. From there they went to Italy, where Dunham was wounded in the Battle of Anzio. Soon after, the 3rd ID was sent to France, where Dunham, then a technical sergeant, would face one of the toughest fights of his life.

An uphill battle

On the afternoon of Jan. 8, 1945, Dunham was with 2nd Platoon, Company I in

See SPOTLIGHT, page 3

Grandparent scams still targeting seniors

The Better Business Bureau is still warning well-meaning seniors about "emergency" scams designed to fool them into thinking that their grandchild is hurt, has been arrested or is stranded, and in need of money.

According to recent FBI reports, the "Grandparent Scam" has been around since 2008, but they continue to plague well-meaning seniors.

Retirees are an attractive target for financial scammers since they may have more disposable income and they are less likely to report being scam victims. Emergency scams play off of peoples' emotions and strong desire to help others in need. Scammers impersonate their victims and make up an urgent situation – "I've been arrested," "I've been mugged," "I'm in the hospital" – and target friends and family with urgent pleas for help, and money.

One victim reported sending four transactions totaling \$4,400 over a two-day period. She was duped after receiving calls alleging that her grandson had been arrested after being in an accident.

The money was initially to cover fines and representation to get the grandson released. Soon, the caller needed money to cover the medical bills for a person injured in the accident. The victim claims that the scammer not only knew details about her grandson but also allowed her to briefly speak with someone that sounded like her grandson.

We also see this scam target families with loved ones deployed overseas, claiming to need the money to get back from a weekend pass. If you don't send the money, they face being arrested for being absent without leave, AWOL.

BBB offers the following tips to avoid the Grandparent Scam:

■ Communicate. Loved ones should share travel plans with family members before leaving the state or country. Also, discuss this scam with older family members so they are aware of how the scam works.

■ Share information. Loved ones should provide the cell phone number and email address of a friend they are traveling with in the



Kelvin Collins

a so-called "officer of the court". The caller explains that the grandchild has gotten into trouble and needs help, perhaps caused a car accident, or was arrested for DUI or drug possession.

The "grandchild" pleads to the grandparents not to tell his or her parents and asks that they wire thousands of dollars for reasons of posting bail, repairing the car, covering lawyer's fees, or even paying hospital bills for a person supposedly injured in a car accident.

■ Ask a personal question, but don't disclose too much information. If a grandparent receives a call from someone claiming to be their grandchild in distress, BBB advises that the grandparent not disclose any information before confirming that it really is their grandchild.

If a caller says, "It's me, Grandma!" don't respond with a name, but instead let the caller explain who he or she is.

One easy way to confirm their identity is to ask a simple question that the grandchild would know such as their middle name or what gift they gave the grandchild for Christmas.

■ Discuss with family members. Even though the scammer will plead with you to keep this a secret from the parents, discuss the situation with someone and chances are you will find that your grandchild is safe and secure at home.

For anyone victimized by this type of distressed loved-one call, BBB recommends reporting the incident immediately to your local police department and BBB Scam Tracker. For more consumer tips you can trust or to report a scam, visit bbb.org.

Spring cleaning - Don't toss that 'junk', it may be valuable

(StatePoint) It's time to hit the garage, basement, attic and closets for that age-old task of spring cleaning!

Before hauling unwanted possessions to the curb, you may be surprised to learn they might be valuable - especially if you have sports cards and memorabilia gathering dust.

With prices of sports cards rising in recent years, take time to determine if yours are valuable and how to best sell them.

"Older sports cards and memorabilia aren't just highly collectible; they can be worth lots of money. Recent sales of scarce vintage cards have topped anywhere from thousands of dollars to tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands.

"And really rare cards can go higher," says Al Crisafulli, Auction Director at Love of the Game Auctions, an internet sports auction house that helps families identify and sell valuable items.

Crisafulli has assisted people in selling such keepsakes as a grandparent's autograph collection and an uncle's childhood baseball cards, for tens of thousands of dollars. In one life-changing event, he helped a family determine that a baseball bat that spent decades protecting their home was used by Hall of Famer Lou Gehrig - and Love of the Game Auctions sold it for almost half a million dollars. Today, that bat could bring more than a million dollars.

The key is understanding what makes old sports collectibles



PHOTO SOURCE: (c) Jacoblund /iStock via Getty Images Plus

valuable. To help, Crisafulli is sharing some tips:

Older is usually pricier

Cards from the 1960s and earlier are collectible, and those from before the 1940s can be worth a lot of money, especially those depicting stars.

Do you have cards of Hall of Famers, such as Mickey Mantle, Babe Ruth, Honus Wagner or Ty Cobb?

Even non-stars from the early days of a sport can be worth big bucks, especially if the cards have no creases and retain sharp corners and original gloss.

If you have very old cards from the 1880s through the 1930s, look for tobacco, gum and candy brands, such as Old Judge, Piedmont, Sweet Caporal, Goudey or American Caramel.

If you want to sell sports items for the most money, con-

sider a specialty auction, such as Love of the Game, which has the expertise to properly research sports ephemera and maintains bidder lists of collectors specializing in sports. More information is available at loveofthegameauctions.com.

Postcards and photographs

We all have keepsakes of vacation destinations, but most aren't valuable. However, photographs and postcards depicting sports stars and ballparks can be significant.

Look for early "real photo" postcards from the 1900s through the 1940s, which are photographs printed on postcard backs.

As with sports cards, star power matters, so preserve those Babe Ruths as opposed to images of your great grandma's baby cousin once-removed.

See VALUABLE, page 3

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Army Tech Sgt. Russell Everett Dunham had been shot in the back and was a clear target for the Germans when he was defending a hill in France in 1945. But neither issue stopped him from ...

AFGE supports bill protecting retirement income of federal retirees

By AFGE Leadership

An AFGE-backed bill has been introduced in the House to protect federal retirees’ retirement income by standardizing the cost-of-living adjustment. Currently, there has been an unfair disparity between the COLA received by federal retirees under the old retirement system – the Civil Service Retirement System – and the new system – the

Federal Employee Retirement System, which covers employees hired after 1983. CSRS retirees receive a COLA equal to the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). But FERS retirees’ COLA is capped at 2 percent if the CPI-W is between 2-3 percent. FERS retirees also receive 1 full percentage point less if the CPI-W is more than 3 percent. H.R. 866, introduced by Rep. Gerry Connolly, D-Va., would make the COLA for both CSRS and FERS equivalent to CPI-W. The Equal COLA Act currently has 13 co-sponsors. “This two-tiered system fails to protect FERS retirees who are living on a fixed income,” Connolly said. “This legislation will rectify this unfair system and ensure these dedicated public servants are protected throughout their retirement.”

BALANCE

From page 1

support this accretion? One only needs to look no further than the number of grievances, arbitrations and EEO cases filed on behalf of our members and non-members. This is further evidence of how deleterious and abusive supervisors drain the life from an organization. The drain isn’t limited to lost time but it becomes an untenable fiscal drain to the taxpayers. I have intentionally stayed away from calling these abusive supervisor’s “leaders”. They are at every level of the counterproductive behavior in the workplace. They possess traits of incivility, bullying, harassment. This cadre of abusive supervision in the workplace

VALUABLE

From page 2

And when it comes to photos, look for old markings on the back, such as photographer, publication and date stamps.

Memorabilia

MISSION

From page 2

expectations. To be able to lead the men and women of a brand-new unit is a particular opportunity and challenge that I look forward to.” Sevigny said the unit’s origins started 81 years ago. “While it is a new mission for the 18th ACCS, the unit can trace its lineage back to World War II when it was originally named the 28th Troop Carrier Squadron flying C-47 aircraft,” he said. “It is inspirational to the squadron to have such a

robust history, and we will do our best to live up to it.” According to Sevigny, unit readiness is a priority as it prepares for worldwide missions. “We need to get to the point where we have established training programs here at Robins and eventually start deploying our squadron’s personnel and BACN’s capabilities to wherever the Air Force needs us to go,” he said. “It will be a gradual process as we bring in more people, aircraft and systems.” Even though the process will take time, Sevigny said the personnel assigned to the unit have already begun training with the new parent unit. “The squadron has been working with the 319th RW and 319th OG to integrate into their mission and operations,” he said. “We have been greatly looking forward to officially becoming part of the 319th family and contributing to their mission.” The 18th ACCS activation is one of four new missions coming to Robins that align better with the future Air Force design to prepare for near-peer threats. The first E-11A BACN aircraft is expected to arrive at Robins AFB in the spring of 2023 and the unit is expected be fully operational by fiscal year 2027.

SPOTLIGHT

From page 2

the Alsace-Lorraine region of France. The platoon was attacking the enemy at the base of a snow-covered hill near Kayersberg when they got pinned down between enemy artillery and machine-gun fire. The only choice they had, Dunham said, was to go up the hill. So, he camouflaged himself in a white mattress cover to blend in with the knee-deep snow and started the climb. Carrying 12 carbine magazines and a dozen hand grenades, he crawled about 75 yards under heavy direct fire toward one enemy machine-gun nest. With about 10 yards to go and his platoon about 35 yards behind him, Dunham jumped to his feet and charged the enemy emplacement. He was hit by machine-gun fire that ripped a 10-inch gash across his back and sent him spinning 15 yards back down the hill. “They said if it had been deeper, it would have split my spine in two,” Dunham recalled in the Library of Congress interview. He said he jumped right back up, though, and kept going because he didn’t want to get hit by incoming artillery. Right

then, a German grenade landed beside him. Dunham kicked it before it exploded about five yards from him. At the same time, he managed to shoot and kill the German machine gunner and his assistant. Since his carbine was out of ammo, he then jumped into the timber-covered foxhole and hauled a third member of the enemy gun crew out by the collar. Dunham was in intense pain and bleeding through his white mattress cover, making him a big target, but he kept up the fight. Dodging more bullets, he continued another 50 yards up the hill to attack a second machine-gun nest. He launched two grenades into it, which took out the gun’s crew. He then fired his carbine into nearby foxholes to get rid of any additional enemy riflemen. Despite his condition, and the heavy grenade and gunfire being launched in his direction, Dunham crawled further up the hill by himself. About 15 yards from the third and final machine-gun nest, he jumped to his feet, staggered to the hole, and killed its crew with more hand grenades. An enemy soldier fired at him at point-blank range, but miraculously missed. He took that soldier out, then drove the rest of the Germans out of their hiding spots with his carbine.

In total, Dunham’s actions killed nine Germans, wounded seven more and captured two, according to his citation. Dunham said he was initially recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross, but it was upgraded to the Medal of Honor. Before he could receive it, though, he had to make it through France. After the fight near Kayersberg, Dunham was treated by medics until he was mostly healed, but he was quickly sent back to the front. **Captured by the Germans** On Jan. 22, 1945, Dunham’s unit was surrounded by enemy tanks at Holtzwihr, France, and most of the men were forced to surrender. In an attempt to escape, Dunham said he hid in a sauerkraut barrel with a barn all night, but he was caught the next day. Dunham got lucky, though. The guards who searched him fought over the cigarettes and candy he had in his pockets, so they didn’t notice the pistol he was carrying. The guards put him in a vehicle and drove him toward German lines, but when one man stopped at a chateau for a drink, Dunham shot the other guard, then ran. A few days later, Dunham came across some U.S. engi-

neers working on a bridge over the Ill River. Dunham and his unit eventually pushed into Germany. On April 23, 1945, the 25-year-old received the Medal of Honor from Lt. Gen. Alexander M. Patch III at Zepman Stadium in Nuremberg. During the ceremony, Patch said that Dunham’s actions saved the lives of 120 pinned-down U.S. soldiers. Dunham also earned France’s Croix de Guerre and several other accolades. However, he was always quick to remind others that his brother, who also fought in the unit, received every decoration he did, except the Medal of Honor. About two weeks after the medal ceremony, the war in Europe ended and their unit was sent home. When Dunham left the Army, he returned to Illinois and got a job working as a benefits counselor for what was then called the Veterans Administration in St. Louis, helping veterans for 32 years before he retired in 1975. Dunham died of heart failure at his home in Godfrey, Illinois, on April 6, 2009, at age 89. He had moved there from nearby Jerseyville, Illinois, only a few weeks before. He was buried in the town’s Valhalla Memorial Park.

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Actions/decisions:

McDonald’s to pay nearly \$2 million to settle sexual harassment lawsuit

AMTCR, Inc., AMTCR Nevada, Inc., and AMTCR California, LLC, a Kingman, Arizona headquartered franchise owner operating approximately 18 McDonald’s restaurants in Nevada, Arizona and California, will pay \$1,997,500 to resolve a sexual harassment lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the agency has announced.

According to the lawsuit, since at least 2017, AMTCR knew about sexual harassment and allowed it to continue, unabated, by supervisors, managers, and coworkers at various of its McDonald’s restaurants. The harassing conduct, which was mainly directed at young, teenage employees, included frequent unwanted touching, offensive comments, unwelcome sexual advances, and intimidation. As AMTCR failed to adequately address the complaints of sexual harassment, many workers found the working conditions so intolerable that they had no choice but to quit.

In addition to the monetary relief, AMTCR has agreed to provide significant, franchise-wide injunctive relief aimed at preventing discrimination and harassment in the workplace. AMTCR has agreed to retain an outside third-party EEO monitor who will conduct internal audits of AMTCR’s practices in handling harassment and retaliation complaints; establish a centralized tracking system for discrimination, harassment, and retaliation complaints; and ensure accountability and appropriate disciplinary action occur.

Hiland Dairy Foods to pay \$140,000 to settle disability discrimination suit

Hiland Dairy Foods, a Springfield, Missouri-based producer and distributor of dairy products, will pay \$140,000 to resolve a disability discrimination lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the federal agency has announced.

According to the suit, Hiland refused to hire a man to work at its Norman, Oklahoma, dairy plant because of his vision impairment. Hiland initially offered the applicant a dairy plant worker position knowing he had a disability, but then withdrew the offer after a standard pre-employment medical exam. The doctor responsible for the exam claimed the man was a “safety concern” because he was “legally blind”, even though the doctor never personally met or examined the man and based his opinion solely on a simple vision test. Neither Hiland nor the doctor considered whether any assistive devices or other reasonable accommodations could have mitigated the potential safety concerns.

National Labor Relations Board

Actions/decisions:

Injunction requires Starbucks to rehire unlawfully fired worker

U.S. District Judge Mark A. Goldsmith of the District Court of Eastern Michigan issued an injunction recently requiring Starbucks to reinstate an unlawfully fired worker, post and read the Court’s Order, and cease and desist from unlawful activities nationwide.

“The District Court’s ruling confirms that Starbucks continues to violate the law in egregious ways, thus requiring a nationwide cease and desist order. Specifically, in addition to ordering reinstatement of an unlawfully fired union supporter, the judge appropriately ordered Starbucks to stop discharging and otherwise interfering with workers’ rights to organize at all its stores around the country,” said General Counsel Jennifer Abruzzo. “We will continue to vigorously pursue swift and full remedies for workers whose rights are violated.”

The injunction was issued based on a petition filed by Region 7-Detroit Regional Director Elizabeth K. Kerwin in November. Section 10(j) of the National Labor Relations Act authorizes the National Labor Relations Board to seek injunctions against employers and unions in federal district courts to stop unfair labor practices where, due to the passage of time, the normal Board processes are likely to be inadequate to effectively remedy the alleged violations.

The petition explained that Starbucks unlawfully discharged its employee, who was at the time the lead organizer for the union and engaged in protected activities, to discourage its employees from engaging in these activities.

Board rules against severance agreements that affect labor law rights

Recently, the Board issued a decision in McLaren Macomb, returning to a longstanding precedent holding that employers may not offer employees severance agreements that require employees to broadly waive their rights under the National Labor Relations Act. The decision involved severance agreements offered to furloughed employees that prohibited them from making statements that could disparage the employer and from disclosing the terms of the agreement itself.

The decision reverses the previous Board’s decisions in Baylor University Medical Center and IGT d/b/a International Game Technology, issued in 2020, which abandoned prior precedent in finding that offering similar severance agreements to employees was not unlawful, by itself.

The decision, in contrast, explains that simply offering employees a severance agreement that requires them to broadly give up their rights under Section 7 of the Act violates Section 8(a)(1) of the Act. The Board observed that the employer’s offer is itself an attempt to deter employees from exercising their statutory rights, at a time when employees may feel they must give up their rights in order to get the benefits provided in the agreement.

YOUNG

Young Organizing Unionists for the Next Generation

The AFGE Young Organizing Unionists for the Next Generation program seeks to mobilize young union members to become leaders and activists for social change within AFGE and the Labor Movement. AFGE members who are under the age of 40 and those mentors that are over 40 will work together to include younger workers into the union structure and keep them engaged in what’s at stake for working class Americans. AFGE YOUNG intends to provide young members with networking opportunities and resources to engage in mobilizing other young workers into AFGE, union training to promote leadership skills, innovative social gatherings, AFGE conference meetings, and other engaging events. In doing so, AFGE YOUNG participants work to build lasting labor solidarity, advance issues of social and economic justice, and find more inclusive ways to engage the current and future generations in the Labor Movement. **For more information, or to get involved at the Local 987 level, contact Brandon Respress at brandon.respress@afgelocal987.org.**

What Women Need to Know About Stroke Risks

FAMILY FEATURES

It may not be widely known that women face unique risk factors for stroke throughout their lifetime. Things like pregnancy, preeclampsia and chronic stress can increase the risk for high blood pressure, a leading cause of stroke.

Cardiovascular disease, including stroke, is the leading cause of death among women, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and 1 in 5 women will have a stroke. However, a large majority of strokes can be prevented.

Caring for yourself by understanding your risk factors can help reduce your risk for stroke and provide a better quality of life. Start managing your stroke risk with these tips from the American Stroke Association, a division of the American Heart Association:

Monitor Your Blood Pressure

The first step you can take in reducing your risk for stroke is knowing your blood pressure and keeping it in a healthy range. High blood pressure is the No. 1 preventable cause of stroke, according to the American Heart Association.

The best way to know your blood pressure is to have it measured at least once per year by a health care professional and regularly monitor it at home then discuss the numbers with a doctor. For most people, a normal blood pressure should be 120/80 mm HG or less.

In addition to properly monitoring blood pressure, maintaining a healthy weight, being physically active, eating healthfully and reducing or eliminating alcohol and tobacco usage can help control blood pressure. If you do develop high blood pressure, work with a health care professional on a plan to help manage it.

Plan for Pregnancy

In the United States, high blood pressure during pregnancy is becoming more common, according to the CDC, and medical conditions including preeclampsia, gestational diabetes and blood clots during pregnancy all increase stroke risk during and immediately following a pregnancy.

Managing conditions like high blood pressure before getting pregnant helps keep you and your baby healthy during pregnancy and beyond. In addition, your health during and immediately after a pregnancy can shape the lifelong health of you and your child. If you're planning to become pregnant or are currently pregnant, it's important to regularly monitor your blood pressure.



Photos courtesy of Getty Images

Take Care of Your Mental Health

Some stress is unavoidable but constant stress is not healthy. Chronic or constant stress may lead to high blood pressure and other unhealthy behavior choices, which can increase risk for stroke.

Based on findings in a Stress in America 2020 survey conducted by the American Psychological Association, the top sources of stress are money, work, family responsibilities and health concerns. Managing your stress and blood pressure can improve your overall health and well-being. Reclaim control of your schedule and build in time to invest in your health. Find 10 minutes every day to do something for you, like listening to music, meditating or going for a walk.

Learn the Warning Signs

A stroke can happen to anyone at any point in life. Immediate treatment may help minimize the long-term effects of a stroke and even prevent death.






Learn how to spot a stroke F.A.S.T:

- **Face drooping** – Does one side of the face droop or is it numb? Ask the person to smile. Is the person's smile uneven?
- **Arm weakness** – Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
- **Speech difficulty** – Is speech slurred? Is the person unable to speak or hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence like "The sky is blue."
- **Time to call 911** – If someone shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 911 and get to a hospital immediately. Check the time so you'll know when the first symptoms appeared.

Talk to your doctor about ways to improve your well-being and help prevent stroke. Find more wellness tips at [stroke.org](https://www.stroke.org).



Your Union Insurance Benefits

-  **Life:** Permanent, Portable, Cash Value, Living Benefits. A Much Better Plan than FEGLI.
-  **Dental & Vision:** 3 Plans to choose from, dependent children covered to age 26, extended family is eligible for their own plan.
-  **Aflac Accident:** Pays over fifty Benefits for on or off-the-job accidents.
-  **Aflac Hospital Indemnity:** Pays Benefits for on and off-the-job accidents and sickness/surgery/maternity.
-  **Aflac Critical Illness:** Pays Benefits up to \$30,000 upon the occurrence of cancer, heart attack, stroke, and many other Critical Illnesses.

NEW AFLAC DISABILITY

- Pays benefits for off-job accidents, sickness (covid included), surgery, & maternity.
- No health questions asked to enroll.
- Benefit amounts up to *\$6,000 per month.
- It can be used with leave, or independently.

*Max Benefit of \$6,000 per month.

Nick Wells
Cell: (478) 538-1652
Email: NWells@Benefitarchitects.com

ENROLL



MORE INFO



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			5		9		1	
8			4				6	
5			1			8		
					7			1
9	7		3		8		4	5
6			9					
		8			4			9
	9				1			3
	4		7		5			

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

What happened to the overconfident lion tamer? He was consumed by his own pride!

Why did the wine maker have a nervous breakdown? He just couldn't bottle it up any longer.

Mathematics

G P S U L U C L A C J O K J J V Y B A Y W Y
R D G K G C O B K V N J Y M U W G R Z E N V
L E R W I I D M G O K O W H S J R S Q O P K
S C A N R Q E N I S P X A C Y S F U I H D B
K I P F T A I T S E M K I R E I A T Y I D F
E M H H S T I E R I T T T P Z T C S V V A R
I A S U N D M A N M S E A Q I A I I A R T A
N L R U D U T T U I M H N O R C S M B J O C
K E O A L I E L G O S U N T S I G E S W T T
C C R O O R T O N D M S B X O U G P X E A I
X J V N G I L O G B B U B N R L H R U N L O
E C S E P W E A E K S B E R A G D L Y U I N
R J R L D G D R I L F O R M U L A S G U J S
C S Y N M P S D N U K Q D G O V Y B G T A I

ADDITION
COUNTING
EQUATIONS
GEONOMETRY
LOGISTICS
NUMBERS
SHAPES
TRIG

ALGEBRA
DECIMAL
FORMULAS
GRAPHS
MEASURE
OPERATIONS
SUBTRACTION
VALUE

CALCULUS
DIVISION
FRACTIONS
INTERGERS
MULTIPLY
PHYSICS
TOTAL
VOLUMES

A little humor ...

Two barbershops were in red-hot competition.

One put up a sign advertising haircuts for seven dollars.

His competitor put up one that read, WE REPAIR SEVEN-DOLLAR HAIRCUTS.

During a training exercise, an army unit was late for afternoon inspection.

"Where are those camouflage trucks?" the irate colonel barked.

"They're here somewhere," replied the sergeant, "but we can't find 'em."

Why did the farmer receive an award? Because he was outstanding in his field.

On the way to preschool, the doctor let his daughter look at his stethoscope.

His little daughter picked it

STATEPOINT
CROSSWORD

THEME: THE OSCARS

ACROSS

1. Adam and Eve's son
5. Blink of an eye, for short
8. Tricep location
11. Laughing on the inside, in text
12. ____ bowl, frozen dish
13. Bid on a house, e.g.
15. Show off
16. Actor's role
17. Nostrils
18. "Everything Everywhere All At Once" or "The Fablemans" nominee
20. Trampled
21. Humpty without t
22. *Cate Blanchett's 6-time nominated movie
23. Store in a silo
26. Tiny crustacean
30. Chop off
31. Not digital
34. Cut with a beam
35. Empty spaces
37. Not good
38. Relating to pond scum
39. Capri or Catalina
40. Lament
42. ____ Khan
43. Full event
45. *He's won the most academy awards
47. Jump key
48. Not yes, nor no
50. Male sibs
52. "The Fablemans" composer John ____, 53-time nominee
55. Resin-producing tree
56. Call to Mary
57. Get-out-of-jail money
59. Bye, in Castile
60. Ages and ages
61. Competitive advantage
62. Appetite
63. Farm female
64. Fender-bender damage

DOWN

1. Key often used with ctrl
2. Gold rush, e.g.
3. Purse with notions
4. Leechee, alt. sp.
5. Dandruff locale
6. This bird gets the worm?
7. Give a traffic ticket
8. Big do
9. Cattail, e.g.
10. "____ Harris Goes to Paris," Best Costume Design nominee
12. Tarzan and such
13. Like beer at a kegger (2 words)
14. "The Banshees of Inisherin" nominee
19. Polynesian dance, pl.
22. Dress like Ancient Greeks
23. *Austin Butler's gyrating character
24. Gallows loop
25. Oil crisis
26. *Last year's Best Picture winner
27. Like a Druid, e.g.
28. Missouri River tributary
29. Flying nuisance
32. Lend a hand in crime
33. Order's partner
36. "Guillermo ____'s Pinocchio"
38. "My wife can vouch for me," e.g.
40. Address to a boy, slangily
41. Bucolics
44. Desert traveler's hope
46. Bikini Bottom locale
48. Variation of meow
49. Skirt shape
50. Past tense of bid
51. Roman remain, e.g.
52. Cry of glee
53. Like a full-fledged Mafia man
54. Leo or Libra
55. Jared's competitor
58. Allow

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10
11					12				13	14	
15					16				17		
	18			19					20		
		21					22				
23	24	25				26			27	28	29
30				31	32	33			34		
35		36			37			38			
39				40				41		42	
43			44				45		46		
		47				48	49				
	50	51			52				53	54	
55					56				57		58
59					60				61		
62					63				64		

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STR8TS

No. 627 Medium

				4				1
	8							
4								
						2		4
		9		6				5
			1		6			
		1			5	6	7	
		3						
5				2				7

Previous solution - Easy

2	1	3	6	7				
2	3		1	7	5	8	6	
3	1	6	8	2	4	9	7	5
1		8	9	6	7		5	4
6	8	7		3		5	4	
8	7		4	5	2	3	9	1
9	6	5	7	8	1	4	2	3
7	5	3	6	4			1	2
	4	5			2	3	8	

How to beat Str8ts

Like Sudoku, no single number can repeat in any row or column. But... rows and columns are divided by black squares into compartments. These need to be filled in with numbers that complete a 'straight'. A straight is a set of numbers with no gaps but can be in any order, eg [4,2,3,5]. Clues in black cells remove that number as an option in that row and column, and are not part of any straight. Glance at the solution to see how 'straights' are formed.

A man asked the barber, "How much for a haircut?" "Eight dollars," said the barber. "And how much for a shave?" "Six dollars." "Okay, then, shave my head."

Passenger: Say, this is the worst steak I've ever had. Don't you flight attendants

9	8	2	5	6	7	3	4	1
3	7	4	1	9	8	5	6	2
6	5	1	4	3	2	8	9	7
8	3	7	2	4	9	1	5	6
5	4	9	8	1	3	2	7	6
1	2	9	7	5	6	4	8	3
4	9	8	9	2	1	7	3	5
2	9	5	3	7	4	6	1	8
7	1	3	9	8	5	9	2	4



McELHANEY

From page 1

Sen. Raphael Warnock and Herschel Walker. (See the award the Local received for more.)

McElhaney, Williams said, coordinated the efforts of approximately 10-14 volunteers, as well as worked with organizations such as Black Lives Matter, the AFL-CIO and the City of Warner Robins, to mobilize voters. (Read about the results of those efforts in the Local 987 award story back on page 1.)

Her recognition plaque read: “We applaud and thank you for your outstanding and continued contribution to building AFGE’s Legislative and Political Mobilization Program.”

This was the first year for the award. There were approximately 14 competing or it, Williams said. Melissa Schardine from AFGE SSA Local 3448 was the overall winner.



FREEMAN

From page 1

a mentor and mentee can look different depending on the context and goals an individual wants in life. As a ‘Good Shepherd’ I’ve even been allowed to do prison ministry - helping the helpless and saving souls at the same time.

“When I look at our young brothers and sisters at Robins Air Force Base I encourage connections between new employees, to understand they have a ‘voice’ within their Union leaders. Many think the Union is adversarial when it’s not. The Union is about helping as much as we can. Mentorship is essential to employee development. Peer mentorship offers compelling advantages both for employees hungry to grow. Especially working with the

team I have: Chief Steward Brandon Respress, Chief Steward Gwendolyn King and Deputy Chief Stewart Romona Higgins.

“My mentoring relationship is more than just a work friendship or community relationship. It’s focused on mutual growth. It’s likely that it will lead to a friendship, but at the start it’s an intentional relationship where we support each other through encouragement, discussing your goals – our goals - and holding each other accountable to grow.

“LegCon has always been one of my top priorities, especially going on Capitol visits and talking to Congressional leaders. Asking, for instance, their support for AFGE in seeking an 8.7 percent raise for federal workers in 2024 to help close the double-digit pay gap between federal- and private-sector employ-

ees.

“According to our National President Everett Kelley, National Secretary Treasure Eric Bunn and National Vice President Jeremy Lannan: “The latest report of the Federal Salary Council shows that federal worker pay lags behind the private sector by over 23 percent – making it difficult for agencies to recruit, hire, and retain top talent and hurting the quality of services Americans receive.”

“I just want the Government Employees at Robins Air Force Base and all around to know our Union focus: “We have big goals (and put in the work on Capitol Hill for bigger actions to come with that 8.7 percent raise.

“The work didn’t stop there because we will continue to work. We start here in Warner Robins with our local government officials.



CONFERENCE

From page 1

the week voicing their support for government workers.”

Here are but five takeaways:
1. Rally to call for an 8.7 percent pay raise
AFGE’s demand for an 8.7 percent pay adjustment for federal workers to help close the 23 percent pay gap between the public and private sectors and keep up with inflation was echoed throughout the conference and supported by members of Congress who attended in person and sent virtual remarks.

AFGE’s Valentine’s Day rally held on Capitol Hill was aimed at urging Congress to pass the Federal Adjustment of Income Rates Act, which calls for the 8.7% raise for federal workers next year.

“Fair pay, FAIR ACT. 8.7 is where it’s at! Eight point seven!” the crowd chanted as speakers took turns demanding Congress do the right thing.

Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, R-Pa., has been a staunch supporter of federal workers. The House is not in session, but his presence at the rally made it clear whose side he’s on.

“What you all are asking for, an 8.7 percent pay increase across the board, which by the way is not an increase – it’s keeping track with inflation, so let’s be real about that, okay?” said the congressman to loud applause. “It shouldn’t be an issue for anybody to get behind. It’s fair pay.”

The FAIR Act was introduced in the House and Senate by Rep. Gerry Connolly, D-Va., and Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, last month. Connolly reiterated the need for the 8.7% raise as he addressed AFGE members during the general session Feb. 13.

2. AFGE President Everett Kelley urged AFGE members to rise up and prepare for new battles

AFGE President Everett Kelley presented AFGE members with a long list of victories we’ve accomplished together,

from defunding the VA’s Air Commission to restoring a one-year probationary period instead of two years at the Department of Defense. But because of the new makeup of Congress with some new House members vowing to destroy unions and federal workers, Kelley urged AFGE members to rise up and fight back against new attacks that are coming our way and the ones that are already here, including the anti-telework SHOW Up Act recently introduced.

“We’re in strong shape. But we are not where I want to be yet. Not where we NEED TO BE to win the battles in front of us. We have so much more to do ... so many more members to organize, so many more members to mobilize, so many more gains to make in Congress and at the bargaining table,” he told the crowd.

3. Bipartisan members of Congress introduced bill to prevent Schedule F

Federal workers received some love on Valentine’s Day as a group of lawmakers introduced legislation that would prevent a return of a system in which government workers could be fired for political reasons and without due process. The Senate version of the Saving the Civil Service Act was introduced by Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va. The House version was introduced by Rep. Gerry Connolly, D-Va., and Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, R-Pa.

The merit system is the backbone of public service, but at the end of his term, former President Trump issued an executive order creating a new service classification called Schedule F for any career federal employee whose job is in any way connected to federal policy.

This new classification put tens of thousands of current and future federal workers in “policymaking” positions and stripped them of important workplace protections against mistreatment or discrimination, such as unfair removal. It politicized the civil service, allowing the administration to hire and fire for political reasons.

“It’s designed to reintroduce

the spoils system,” said Rep. Connolly at the AFGE legislative conference, adding our civil service shouldn’t be politicized.

“We have to make sure that for future administrations nobody’s using this Schedule F scam to destroy the civil service,” Sen. Kaine told AFGE members at the Feb. 14 rally. He said he would try to get the Save the Civil Service Act passed as part of the Defense bill this year.

4. Enormous support from union allies

This year AFGE members were honored to have so many labor allies at the conference and the rallies. Our union was honored to hear from Baltimore CLC President Courtney Jenkins and DC CLC President Dyan Forester during the general session.

Forester spoke again at the civil rights luncheon. She was joined by AFT National Secretary-Treasurer Fredrick Ingram.

At the 8.7% raise rally we had representatives from the Machinists, NFFE, Working America, SMART, Northern VA CLC, IBEW, IFPTE, PASS, APWU, and the AFL-CIO.

5. Younger generation addressed the conference

It was a nice surprise to hear from two students who know so much about the labor movement!

Olivia Flynn and Savannah Strong drew huge applause from the crowd as they detailed how they were introduced to unions. Olivia is daughter of HUD Local 3972 President Jim Flynn. Savannah’s father Keith works at the Anniston Army Depot.

Olivia recounted the day her father was sworn in as president of AFGE Local 2032 in Philadelphia when she was 2 years old. Shortly after that, her father attended his first AFGE Legislative Conference in 2013. But the labor movement had an impact on her life way before that – she’s the grandchild of Polish workers who played their part in fighting for workers’ rights and social justice during the Solidarity Movement of the 1980s in Poland.

