



FEBRUARY 2005

NWS Agrees To Restore Training, Fill Positions

NWS has agreed to rescind cuts made last December in NWS programs that adversely impacted unit employees and the agency's ability to carry out its public service responsibilities.

NWSEO President Greaves met with NWS Director Johnson in Silver Spring, MD on February 1 to discuss a resolution of the grievance which the union had filed in January over the failure of the agency to negotiate with the union over the impact of the NWS' decision to delay filing positions, to reduce PCS moves and to cancel training. During this meeting, President Greaves stressed that certain budget cuts negatively impacted not only the welfare of NWS employees, but reduced their ability to carry out the agency's warning and forecast responsibilities. Mr. Greaves came to Washington at Director Johnson's invitation, which was extended in an effort to resolve growing misunderstandings between union and management over the union's entitlement to be consulted before decisions are made about agency operations and which impact employees' working conditions.

During the February 1 meeting, Mr. Greaves offered to withdraw both the union's grievance and its earlier bargaining demand if management agreed not to hold open vacancies in operational positions in order to save money and to restore training for bargaining unit employees cancelled earlier. Mr. Greaves argued that training for operational duties should take precedent over managerial training.

An agreement in principle was reached at the meeting, and Director Johnson also promised Mr. Greaves that the union would be regularly briefed on the impact of budget issues. The union also requested, and obtained, a commitment to promptly begin negotiations over a proposal made a year ago to establish a non-competitive career ladder progression for interns to GS-12 journeyman positions.

On February 8, Director Johnson sent a memorandum to all NWS employees promising that all warning and forecast operational vacancies will be promptly advertised and filled.

In later discussions with NWSTC Director Donna Layton, Mr. Greaves obtained a commitment to restore a number of previously cancelled training classes for bargaining unit employees – one CRS maintenance class, 3 LINUX for WFOs classes, and the AWIPS Operations Support class. The Executive Leadership Seminar will be cancelled instead to help pay for the restoration of these classes.

Regional Directors have been advised to follow the letter and spirit of the agreement to promptly advertise and fill bargaining unit positions. *It is essential that NWSEO stewards notify us immediately if management delays advertising operational positions in your office or otherwise delays filing selection for such vacancies. Please contact your Regional Chairs.*