

The Federal Employee 411

1ST QUARTER NEWSLETTER • 2015



FEDERAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS
Serving Civil Service and Military Members

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Benefits Seminar February 05, 2015

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Active Duty, Act Now

Effective January 1, 2015, Roth contributions to TSP for active duty military members must be designated by percentages and NOT by dollar amounts.

You have until January 31 to make the change. If the change is not made by then, DFAS will not process your dollar amount Roth contributions until you update them.

To avoid your contributions being stopped, act now and make the change in myPay.

This applies only to Roth contributions, traditional contributions are not affected

A Granted Wish at the Army Navy Game

December 13th was the big day! SGT Jonathan Thompson came home from Afghanistan and was hiding in his brand new Chevrolet Truck on the field at the Army Navy game. His wife and 4 year old daughter had been invited onto the field to receive the new truck. They didn't know they'd also be welcoming home their husband



and father until SGT Thompson popped out of the truck with a giant teddy bear for his little girl. Surprise and happy amazement welled in Mrs. Thompson's eyes as she turned and saw him. There wasn't a dry eye in the stadium as the Thompson family embraced after his tour of duty in Afghanistan and this unexpected reunion. Both Army and Navy forgot their current rivalry and exploded into joyful shouts of support: U-S-A , U-S-A , U-S-A!!!

Federal Employee Benefits is so proud to be involved with Wish for our Heroes, a non-profit organization that grants wishes for active-duty military families in times of hardship. It



Pictured left to right: Brad Tobler - W4OH Director Texas, SGT Thompson (W4OH recipient), and Jeff Wells - W4OH Founder and President.

is so rewarding to see the joy that comes to these families when a wish is fulfilled. Wish for our Heroes was thrilled to partner with Chevrolet to bring SGT Thompson home early, in time for Christmas, and present him with a brand new truck.

To read more about Wish for Our Heroes and the Thompson's story, or to find out how you can help grant future wishes to military families, visit Wish for our Heroes Inc. on facebook, or visit the website at www.wish4ourheroes.org.

Check out this video to see what we do:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNTIDzVJEZE&feature=youtube_gdata_player

DFAS Adds Extra Pay Date

If DFAS handles your agency's payroll, you will have 27 pay days in 2015. This will impact FERS employees who maximize their TSP contributions. In order to receive agency matching contributions in each pay period of the year, you must distribute your contributions over the entire year. If you reach your contribution limit before the last pay period, you will not receive any matching contribution for the pay period(s) in which you do not contribute. In other words, you are giving up FREE MONEY!

For agencies where DFAS is the payroll processor, the first pay period of 2015 is December 27, 2014 through January 2, 2015. The last pay period of 2015 is December 26-31, 2015. The last pay date would normally land on January 1, 2016, but employees will be paid one day early. DFAS Benefits Bulletin 2014-7 transmitted this information to agencies that use their services. What is important in allocating your TSP contributions is the day you (and therefore the TSP) get paid, not when the pay period itself begins or ends.

The TSP elective deferral limit in 2015 has risen from \$17,500 to \$18,000. To have an equal amount taken out of each pay period, choose an amount of \$667 per pay period if you have 27 pay days in the year. If the year contained only 26 pay days, the bi-weekly amount would be \$693. **The catch up contribution limit in 2015 has risen from \$5,500 to \$6,000.** If you want to spread out your catch up contributions (there is no matching for these contributions), you will need to choose \$223 for 27 pay periods or \$231 for 26 pay periods. It is NOT required for matching to spread out your catch up contributions.

5 Things to Know About Phased Retirement

by Katherine Archuleta, Director of OPM

- 1** *What is it?* Under Phased Retirement, a full-time employee will be able to work part-time and start collecting retirement benefits. Phased retirees must also spend 20 percent of their time mentoring their fellow employees as a way for them to pass on their knowledge and skills to their colleagues. OPM will begin accepting Phased Retirement applications on Nov 6.
- 2** *Who can participate?* This is not a one-size-fits-all program. Whether you are eligible will depend on which retirement system you belong to and how many years of service you have.
- 3** *What do I do if I want to participate?* If you are interested, the first thing to do is to talk to your manager and /or your Human Resources office to see if this is an option for you. Assuming you are eligible, you can fill out an application. Once your agency approves it, OPM will process it.
- 4** *How are my benefits handled during Phased Retirement?* Phased retirees will still get health benefits under the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) and will still be enrolled in the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FGLI) program. You and your agency will continue to pay the same shares of the premiums. But in the case of benefits such as pay and leave, a phased retiree will be treated like a part-time employee.
- 5** *If I am participating in Phased Retirement, what are my options to end Phased Retirement?* You and your agency will decide together how long you want to continue as a phased retiree, the timing of your full retirement and whether you want to ask to return to work full time.

Remember, if you think Phased Retirement is for you, talk to your manager. Many more details about the plan can be found on OPM.gov.

This article can be found at <https://www.opm.gov/blogs/Director/2014/8/7/Five-Things-To-Know-About-Phased-Retirement>.

Am I investing enough into my TSP?

How much money will I get back when I retire?

Why should I buy back my active duty military time?



To learn more, attend our San Antonio

Benefits Seminar

Thursday, 05 February 2015 ~ 6:00-8:00pm

16845 Blanco Road, Suite 104
San Antonio, TX 78232

TO REGISTER: Call our office at (210) 349-6987 or visit our website at www.federalemployeebenefits.com

About Us

We are an Independent Federal Employee Benefits Group who follow the Federal Employee News Digest. Our expertise in the civil service industry, as well as active military has led us to a committed career with emphasis on coordinating government benefits and retirement planning.

Our organization has conducted civil service workshops at various locations including Randolph Air Force Base, Wilford Hall Hospital, Lackland Air Force Base, VA hospitals, Social Security Administration, Brooke Army Medical Center, Department of Labor, DCMA, DEA, FBI, FDA, FAA, USDA, IRS, GSA, SBA, HUD, Secret Service, CBP, TSA, Probation and the USPS.

We also conduct onsite and offsite briefings (TSP, CSRS/FERS Retirement and Disability) which are open to all employees, including military personnel from new hire to retirement eligible. There is no cost to have us provide these briefings to your staff.

We dedicate our efforts towards helping Civil Service and Military employees maximize their benefits amid the ever changing rules and regulations. This enables you to make better decisions about today's issues and tomorrow's retirement.

Our coordinators understand the importance of ensuring you have a complete understanding of your benefits and options associated with your financial situation. This allows you to choose the most appropriate decisions to achieve the greatest retirement benefits for you and your family.

Of all of our accomplishments and successes, we take greatest pride in our educational approach which allows employees to retire with dignity and, most importantly, peace of mind.

Our Benefit Coordinators



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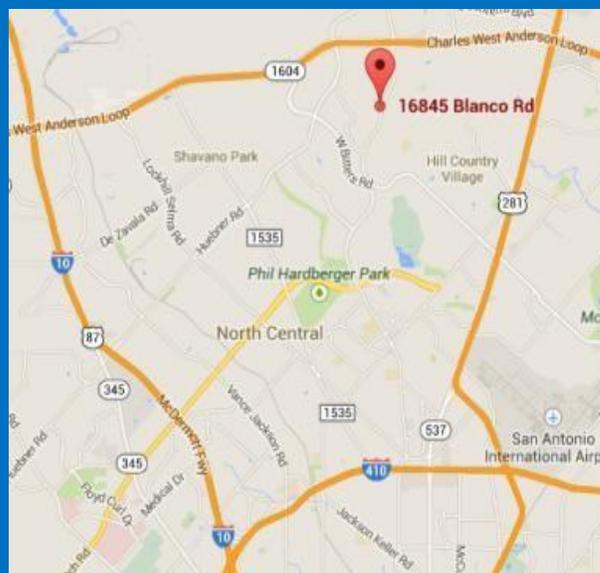
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Visit our website to request a personalized retirement packet or a one-on-one with a benefit coordinator.

www.federalemployeebenefits.com