



## **NWSEO Saves ITO Positions and Reaches Favorable Settlements on Multiple Union Grievances and Unfair Labor Charges**

(August 30, 2012) The National Weather Service Employees Organization reached successful agreements on multiple union grievances and unfair labor charges. This includes clarifying the Gainsharing Agreement which entitles employees in all regions to earn cash awards when they save the NWS money by purchasing a cheaper airfare. NWSEO also reached agreements with the NWS on Impact and Implementation bargaining regarding AWIPS 2.

### **Gainsharing Agreement**

If you choose the lower cost non-fundable airfare when traveling for work, you may be eligible for a Gainsharing Award equal to 50 percent of the savings of the higher cost ticket. The award is an incentive to save money for your local office's travel budget – and is a win-win situation for both employee and NWS. When you book your flight, please make sure you follow the procedures below in order to receive the Gainsharing Award.

In order for an employee to be eligible for a Gainsharing award:

- The employee, at their sole option, will research cheaper flights and call ADTRAV and identify the flight options.

Employees who obtain a nonrefundable, non-contract fare are eligible for the travel savings program only after first considering a city-pair fare where available. Savings will be measured against the lowest city-pair fare (YCA or -CA) available at the time of ticketing. If there is no city-pair fare available, then the lowest non-restricted coach fare available at the time of ticketing will be used as the basis for measurement of the savings.

(If an employee elects not to research flights and/or not call ADTRAV, the employee will not be eligible for Gainsharing.)

- These options will be presented to the employee's supervisor for a decision.
- The supervisor has the authority to direct the use of contract or refundable fares, which may nullify the Gainsharing eligibility.
- The employee will make the reservation based on the approval of the supervisor.
- After returning from travel, the employee will apply for the award in accordance with NWSI 1-407.
- When you return home, file a form [CD-326](#) with your travel voucher.

NWSEO encourages you to utilize lower cost non-refundable airfares when it makes sense to do so. **However, if you choose a non-refundable ticket, be aware of the responsibilities if your travel plans change:**

In the event of an unanticipated change/cancellation in schedule made for official reasons, or necessitated by circumstances beyond the employees control, or of an emergency nature, the government is responsible for all cost associated with the ticket, and the approving official must specifically authorize these costs on either an amended travel authorization or on the travel voucher.

**In the event of a change/cancellation in schedule made for the personal preference of the employee, the employee is responsible for all cost associated with the ticket.**

## **AWIPS II**

NWSEO and the NWS have also reached agreements on negotiating AWIPS II OT and E. NWS is required to bargain over Impact and Implementation of AWIPS II at each WFO. The union agreed to AWIPS II activation for testing and evaluation at eight of the 23 test sites (Boulder, Colorado, Omaha, Nebraska, Norman, Oklahoma, Houston, Texas, Billings, Montana, Blacksburg, Virginia, Huntsville, Alabama, Taunton, Massachusetts).

NWS will continue installation of AWIPS II at the remaining 15 OT and E sites but will roll back to AWIPS I and negotiate Impact and Implementation with the National NWSEO Leadership Team **at the next National Labor Council Meeting before activating AWIPS II.**

## **NWS Agrees to Fill All Vacant ITO Positions**

This week's successes come on the heels of the union's work with Congress save the all ITO positions. Earlier this month, the National Weather Service agreed to fill the vacant ITO positions at WFOs from Caribou to Guam. This decision represents a radical course correction for the NWS, which has been telling Congress that the ITOs are unnecessary.

NWSEO rallied to save the ITO positions nationally, including informing members of Congress of the important role of the ITO, working with national media and initiating letter writing campaigns. NWSEO was prepared to go to arbitration during the week of August 20 with a very strong case against the NWS for leaving positions vacant pending final action by congress; the NWS agreed to fill all vacant ITO positions just a few days before the scheduled arbitration.

The agency is preparing to issue a blanket vacancy announcement for the ITO positions in the continental U.S. A separate vacancy announcement is being prepared for Guam.

Union membership provides the strength for NWSEO to improve working conditions. The negotiation skills of NWSEO leadership were a key factor in this success. Many of our members read up to the minute news on the progress of saving the ITO positions on the private NWSEO Facebook group. If you are a NWSEO member and would like to join, please visit <http://www.facebook.com/groups/nwseo/>.

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