



What Is Your Time Worth?

By Jeff Manns, ATC President

Hopefully, we all have something other than work such as family, friends, hobbies or some place to go to get away from this chosen career of ours called Law Enforcement. I am a firm believer that being a State Trooper is not what we do for eight hours each day, but what we do and how we live our lives twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Because our career occupies so much of our time, it is sometimes hard to separate ourselves from our job and it is all too easy to donate our time on a regular basis.

Have you ever complained that we do not have enough Troopers on the road and that is why you are so many cases down?

From day one, we are programmed to donate our time when we attend the Academy. This donation of time perpetuates itself for the next year while we are on the Field Training Program and continues until we complete our one-year probationary status. I, like many others, have donated hundreds, if not thousands, of hours to the Department during my first several years as a Trooper. The Department does not want to pay a new Trooper four hours of overtime to figure out how to complete a DUI case on a late arrest. Consequently, the employee donates their time to learn the job. Have you ever taken cases home in order to stay caught up with your case

load? Have you ever come in early to work or stayed late on your own time trying to get your cases done? We have all done these things. Have you ever complained that we do not have enough Troopers on the road and that is why you are so many cases down? I know I have.

Many of us are involved in extra activities within the Department such as flying, SERT, Dive Team, etc. Everyone donates their time to the Department in some manner or another. How much time in a calendar year do you donate to the Department? Do you donate one, three, eight hours per week? I come back to the question, "What is your time worth?"

Currently we have 370 dues paying members in the ATC Chapter. Let's say you donate half an hour each day to the Department. If you donate half an hour each day, that would equate to you donating 2.5 hours a week.

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What is your TimeWorth? (cont.)

**2.5 hours per week times 52 weeks in a year
= 130 donated hours a year per member.**

If you would have put in for comp time for those 130 hours (of overtime) you would have been credited with 195 hours of comp leave which equals 24 days of annual leave. What could you do with 24 extra days of annual leave?

If you didn't want comp time, let's look at your paycheck. I calculated what a four-year Trooper earns, which is approximately \$25.00/hour or \$37.50/hour at the overtime rate of pay. 130 hours at the overtime rate of \$37.50 = \$4,875 per year that does not get credited to your retirement or go into your bank account. What could you do with an extra \$4,875 per year? Over a twenty-year career your donations to the Department would amount to \$97,500. To what college are your kids going?

Let's look at the big picture. If 370 members donate \$4,875 per year to the Department, then collectively, we donate \$1,803,750 to the Department.

The State calculates that each Trooper works a minimum of 2080 hours each year (40 hours each week for 52 weeks = 2080 hours). If each member donates 2.5 hours a week to the Department, we are actually donating 48,100 hours each year (370 members multiplied by 130 hours = 48,100 hours). If you divide 48,100 hours by what a Trooper is required to work, 2080 hours, you come up with **23**. This is a significant number because with the hours we donate to the Department, the State of Alaska could fund **23** new Trooper positions. Again, I ask you, have you ever complained that we do not have enough Troopers? By donating your time to the Department you are sending a clear message to the Legislature and the citizens of Alaska: We can do more work with less Troopers.

I cannot make you stop donating your time, but I ask you to take a moment the next time you find yourself sitting at your desk an hour after you were supposed to be home with your family and ask yourself the question...**What Is My Time Worth?**

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Correctional Officer Doris Herron and President Jeff Manns present a donation to Dr. Donn Bennice and the Mat-Su Family Resource Center



Business Manager's Report



Joe D'Amico, Business Manager

The 2003 Alaska State Fair was concluded on Labor Day Weekend. The PSEA Booth was open throughout the fair. Special thanks to Mrs. Robin Bumgardner who managed the PSEA Booth again this year. Robin did an incredible job and helped make the booth and raffle a success-again. Deborah assisted with the myriad of details associated with operating our booth, while Jennifer managed the onsite staffing of our PSEA booth. Once again, Rick Harrington was instrumental in handling booth logistics and even volunteered his time to work inside the booth as did Marion "Bummy" Bumgardner. A big thank you to all of these individuals whose hard work made our PSEA presence a success.

The Board will be considering whether or not to continue with this activity at the Fair in the future as it is becoming more difficult to obtain volunteers to staff the booth. Thanks to all of those who worked on or at the fair booth.

A special vote of thanks to some of our PSEA Business Vendors: Glenn Cipriano at *Victory Capital Management*, Barb Thaman at *Labor Trust Services* and Tim Whitworth and Dave Young at *UBS PaineWeber*. All of these people reached into their pockets and provided financial support for our raffle. We appreciate their support. For those of you who do not know these individuals, Barb is our Health Trust Administrator, while Glenn, Dave and Tim manage Health Trust Assets.

Health Insurance: How to Get the Most out of Your Coverage

Joe D'Amico, Health Trustee

The members of PSEA are covered by a variety of health insurance plans. In addition, some members and their families may have additional coverage through other plans from other sources not directly related to their current employment. These include spousal plan coverage, retiree coverage, coverage from the Indian Health Service and many more possibilities.

Some PSEA members are virtual insurance experts. They can tell you how and what coverage they have, what limitations are in place, what pre-authorizations are needed and a myriad of other details. Still other

members have very little understanding of their plan, and rely on a well-informed spouse. Finally, others simply hope they do not need to use their insurance. Unfortunately, the last approach can oftentimes lead to a great deal of frustration and even added expense when the time comes that they need to use their plan.

Let's explore a few aspects of some of the plans. The PSEA Health Trust and other plans utilize what is called a Preferred Provider Network. Those of you with Blue Cross have an extensive network of preferred providers in Alaska. In this type of program, member benefits are paid at the highest possible rate, **IF** the member uses a health care provider who is a "Preferred Provider". A lower benefit level is provided to members who choose to use a non-preferred health care provider where there

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Airport Police & Fire Report



Marty Spinde, Anchorage Vice President

Thanks to the members of NECA and IBEW

I will begin by reporting some goodwill on the part of organized labor. And although PSEA takes part in all sorts of charity events, I'm referring to another labor group. The Alaska Chapter of the Nation Electrical Workers (NECA) and the IBEW local 1547, recently generously donated eight, automated, external defibrillators to the Anchorage Airport. Gary Brooks, the Business Manager of IBEW, and Steven Boyd, the chapter manager of NECA, presented the units to Sgt. Bill Weiss of the Anchorage Airport Police and Fire in August. This donation is yet another example of some of the contributions by organized labor to make the State of Alaska a better place.

The defibrillators will be used by PSEA members to save lives. The Anchorage Airport Police and Fire officers look forward to adding to our five existing AED's to have

greater coverage at the airport. Hopefully, management will put them online in the near future.

The Return of Screening LEOs

The State of Alaska has recently negotiated with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), to provide law enforcement officers who are dedicated to the security screening points at the Anchorage Airport. These officers will be in addition to the two officers at the Anchorage airport who are already dedicated as screening point response officers. This is a return to the practice that was adopted nationwide last year by the TSA. This decision is one that seems to contradict the claim by the state and the TSA of budgetary shortfalls. This program is rumored to be costing \$3 million dollars for the term of the contract.

These officers will be commissioned police officers, and PSEA is working to establish work rules for the new officers. So far, the State has declined to negotiate on the screening LEOs.

Light Duty

I have received a lot of questions lately regarding light duty for Airport Police & Fire officers. There is a lack of consistency when it comes to utilizing officers who are injured or otherwise less than full duty status.

The practice fluctuates from month to month, seemingly depending on who is requesting the light duty. Until we get some sort of contractual provision for light duty, the departmental policy is the controlling vehicle. Unfortunately, it is difficult for the Association to force management to follow any policy that isn't governed by the collective bargaining agreement.



Emergency defibrillators on display donated by the IBEW to the Airport Police & Fire.



Dispatchers: The Unsung Heroes* of Our Police Department.

(*and sometimes investigators)

Dan Hoffman, FPDEA Chapter Chair



As the current Chapter Chair of our employees association, I have to deal with a wide variety of issues. Most of these issues are raised by the “majority-group” of our membership: the Patrol Officers. Similarly, as we deal with contract negotiations, we frequently find ourselves dealing with “officer-related issues,” and have to periodically remind ourselves that our cadre of competent, professional dispatchers deserve the same level of consideration and representation.

Fortunately, I also have the privilege of being married to one of our dispatchers, (my marital motto: “*being told what to do twenty-four hours a day*”) which acts as an automatic safeguard to insure that I deal with their issues. (Oh yes, you better believe it does!) With my personal biases aside, however, I can truly attest to the fact that we have an outstanding group of dispatchers here at F.P.D. Not only do they perform their extremely stressful job day-in and day-out, but frequently rise above their normal duties, taking “bits and pieces” of incoming information from a variety of sources to make a significant impact on criminal investigations. One such extraordinary example occurred just last week:

F.P.D. Dispatcher Teri Helmers arrived to work early on the morning of July 14th, as is her usual practice. While she was not officially scheduled to begin her shift until 7:00 a.m., Teri arrived early so that she could meet with the off-going Dispatchers and get briefed on the night’s events. Off-going Dispatcher Jessica Jensen advised Helmers that midnight-shift officers had transported an “assault victim” from a local motel to the hospital, as the “victim” was suffering from a deep cut to the arm and was bleeding profusely. Jensen, along with responding-officer Jeromey Lindhag, added that the subject had not given a consistent or convincing story, and that a scene for the alleged assault had not been located.

Shortly after beginning her shift, Dispatcher Helmers received a 911-call stating that a bloody, dead body had

been discovered on Henderson Road. After immediately routing the call to U.A.F. Fire and Rescue, Dispatcher Helmers contacted the local State Trooper Detachment to make sure they were aware of the call. (Henderson road is in A.S.T. jurisdiction, adjacent to the City of Fairbanks.)

Not long after that, Dispatcher Helmers took a “routine call” from a Fairbanks Taxi company, who advised that one of their cabs and drivers had been missing for the past two hours, and couldn’t be located. The company further advised that the driver’s last fare had been picked-up at a local motel- the same motel where our subsequent “assault victim” had been contacted. With the insight and experience of her nearly twenty-year career, Dispatcher Helmers immediately put two-and-two together. Not afraid to “go out on a limb,” she immediately contacted her shift supervisor and A.S.T., advising that there was a good chance that the body on Henderson road was that of a missing cab driver, and that the possible suspect in this evolving case

was currently being treated at the hospital for his injuries.

Well, you guessed it! it turns out that the “assault victim” that we had transported to the hospital had chartered the taxi that night with the intent to rob the driver. In the process of the robbery, it appears that the suspect first choked then stabbed the driver to death, most likely cutting his own arm in the process. By putting these facts together and quickly notifying the appropriate investigators, the suspect was detained just moments before he left the hospital, where he could have easily disappeared. Further, the timely notification by Dispatcher Helmers allowed for the suspect’s room at the local motel to be secured pending search warrants, which maintained valuable evidence.

With the retrieval of evidence and full confession of the homicide suspect, this case is pretty much “open-and-

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Dispatcher Helmers received a 911 call about a bloody, dead body discovered on Henderson Road.



Correctional Officer's Contract Negotiations



Jim Lecrone, Business Agent

Planning for negotiations began long before last year's Super Bowl Party when members of the Corrections Chapter Board started discussing, drafting, and redrafting the proposals that would serve as negotiating starting points. Draft copies were sent to your institutional representatives and passed around to gather your inputs. Revisions based on the suggestions you provided were then discussed and made. In fact, suggestions continue to come in and revisions continue to be made. Each article will continue as a work in progress until the State and PSEA, "T.A." (Temporarily Agree) on it, and then every member will have the opportunity to vote for or against the final package.

In March the Governor interjected a request for one-year contracts asking for time to allow his administration to "get their feet on the ground". Negotiations followed and in April you ratified a one-year contract keeping the 2000-2003 Contract in force until June 30, 2004. Most other State employees eventually followed suit. Correction's negotiations were unique in that the State agreed to settle several ongoing contentious issues in exchange for ratification; the most notable being that they agreed to merit increases becoming automatic on anniversary dates, unless an on time evaluation specifically denying the increase was written. As the ratification ink dried processing began to pay overdue merit increases. An even more important feature of PSEA's one-year contracts was that they called for the current negotiations to begin last June. Most other State employees are just now starting to bargain. The Corrections Board and negotiating team members used the time "purchased" when the one-year contract was ratified to continue preparing for the negotiations we started in June.

The negotiating team appointed by the Chapter Board consists of three Correctional Officers and three PSEA staff members. Team members are Chief Spokesperson Joe D'Amico (PSEA Business

Manager), Danny Colang (Board President from FCC), Larry Rendon (Board Secretary/Treasurer from AMCC) and Ron Wilson (PCC Board Member), along with PSEA Business Agents Brad Wilson and me. Ongoing professional consultation has been available from PSEA's counsel, Jim Gasper; from Lance Corcoran and other members of the California Correctional Peace Officers Association; and from Brian Dawe of Corrections USA.

Chief Spokesperson Kent Durand initially led the State negotiating team. After our first session a change was made and Tyler Andrews (DOC Human Resources Manager) took over as the Chief Spokesperson. The remaining State team members are Jerry Burnett (DOC Director of Personnel), Mike Addington (DOC Director of Institutions), Joe Schmidt (Anchorage Complex Superintendent), and Christine Yates (DOA Labor Relations Specialist).

We are doing everything in our power to negotiate fairly and still get all rounds on target before the whistle blows.

As I write this, four two-day negotiating sessions have been completed; but before you read it we will have completed an additional two day session in Juneau October 14 and 15 discussing monetary issues for the first time. Prior to each session we meet as a team to discuss our positions and strategies. We meet again following each session, and regularly call members in the field for opinions on the issues being discussed. So far we've dealt only with non-monetary issues. Both sides have bargained hard and both appear to be trying to find mutually acceptable ground without "giving away the candy store". Negotiating ground rules do not allow us to report on specific issues but I can report that we are months ahead of the other State unions and that progress is being made; but I must also report we are not as far along as we hoped to be and are about a month behind schedule on discussing monetary issues. The State's change of Chief Spokespersons and their reorganization of human resources functions slowed the process down, as have several other factors on the State's side of the table.



PSEA is maintaining a good sight picture and focusing on the target. We are doing everything in our power to negotiate fairly and still get all rounds on target before the whistle blows.

We have reached agreement on several non-monetary issues and we are close to agreeing on others, but several issues remain to be resolved where PSEA and the State are not close. We'll continue working on these issues, but we're shifting gears to focus on monetary issues in Juneau in mid October. We feel we have solid positions on the monetary issues, positions that could be supported if the State wishes to do so; however no one who reads the newspapers would expect that to happen. To the contrary, it's more than likely that hard bargaining will continue right up until signatures are inked on the contract.

As you know, our goal is to negotiate a contract that obtains what Correctional Officers deserve, a contract the majority of you will be happy to ratify; and to accomplish this in time for the required funding actions to be competed by the Legislature. We are working hard to reach this goal, but reaching it continues to depend in large part on the State's actions and reactions. There's a lot of highway still ahead of us. We are sticking closely to the roadmap and we're monitoring our progress while simultaneously reviewing options should unexpected detours impede progress. Your interest, inputs and questions are appreciated.

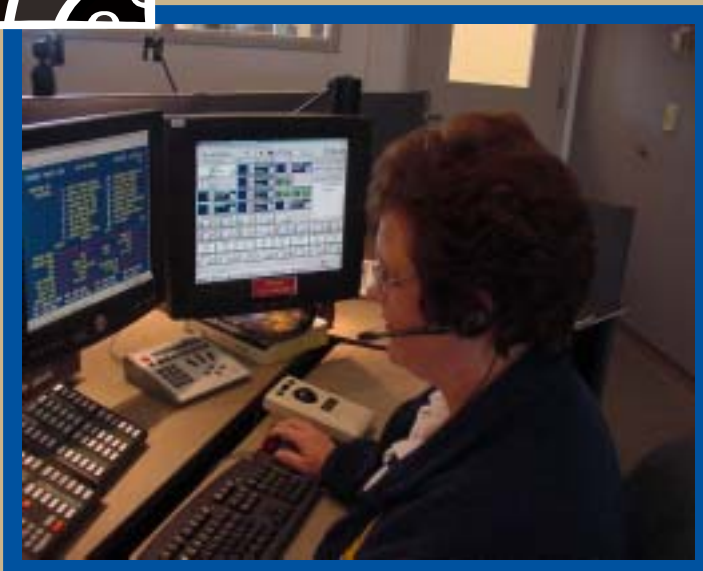
Please don't hesitate to call Joe, Brad, Jim, or any member of your negotiating team at any time to ask questions or to give inputs. It is critical that we all stay in touch throughout this process.

Call PSEA Toll Free!

1 (877) 337-1979

PSEA's "Toll Free" number is up and running to better serve our members outside the local calling area. Administrative personnel are available to take your calls:

Monday - Friday, 0730 - 1730



F.P.D. Dispatcher Teri Helmers at Work

Unsung Heroes (cont.)

shut." Had it not been for the actions and insights of Dispatcher Helmers, it may have taken a significant amount of time for investigators to tie-together the disjointed events of that morning (while the suspect, and evidence, conveniently disappeared). I believe that this is but one of many examples which illustrate the importance of our dispatchers, and showcase their integral function in police-work.

From a Union standpoint, such an example should also be used to argue for the necessity of shift-overlap between dispatch shifts. As anyone can see, the sharing of information between these two shifts was critical in the development of this case. Had Dispatcher Helmers come into work two-minutes before the start of her shift, poured her coffee, and plugged into her headset without talking with the off-going shift, the outcome of this case could have been very different! We are fortunate, as are the members of our community, that our dispatchers display the dedication to their jobs that they do!



ADMINISTRATION'S ATTACK ON OVERTIME REJECTED BY ALASKA'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

By Jim Gasper, General Counsel



At the turn of the last century, my grandfather and his brothers descended into the depths of the western Pennsylvania bituminous coal fields to extract the carbonaceous mineral at great peril to themselves for marginal earnings. When my two uncles joined their father – at ages 14 and 15 respectively – they were not paid by the hour, but by the ton. The mine operators weighed each coal cart on a scale with a 2-ton maximum. It was later discovered that the carts, when “topped over,” held almost 3 tons of mineral. The Mine Workers union exposed this practice, and other abuses that persisted for decades. Nonetheless, my grandfather and uncles were cheated out of the fair value of their labor.

Experiences like this and many others prompted changes in the law. The employees who committed themselves to the union movement used the only weapon they had – they withheld their labor. But when the integrated economic engine of the United States suffered disruption due to such work stoppages, laws were passed, and labor won some concessions for their complaints. The Fair Labor Standards Act was one of those victories. When it was enacted in 1938, my grandfather was no longer able to work underground because of silicosis – Black Lung – a disease he died from at age 67.

Among its protections, the FLSA mandates that an employer pay overtime for hours worked beyond 40 in any 7-day workweek. As you would expect, many exceptions to this protection have evolved in the last 65 years. Notably, the current Administration wishes to expand the overtime exemptions. In a proposal for new Dept. of Labor regulations, President Bush's advisors

wish to expand the category of employees who are exempt. Under the proposed changes, many in the public safety profession would be affected: employees who would fall within the scope of the new definitions recommended for the “administrative” and “professional” employee categories coupled with the newly defined “highly compensated employee” who earns more than \$65,000 annually.

This proposed overhaul of long-established standards is so untenable that it has not found sympathy in Congress. The House appropriations bill (H.R. 2660) was modified by an amendment that will block implementation of President Bush's proposed changes in the overtime regulations. Though most Republican Senators voted against the amendment, both Alaska Senators – Lisa Murkowski and Ted Stevens – supported the amendment along with 5 other Republicans.

Alaska's Representative, Don Young, also voted against the changes during the Roll Call 531 on H.R. 2660 when the modified Bill returned to the House from the Senate with the proposed ban on the overtime wage regulation changes. The House voted to keep the amendment, and Rep. Young was among 22 other Republicans that joined almost all Democratic members of Congress to preserve the current overtime standards.

It should be remembered that while Alaska's Wage and Hour Act provides earnings protection above the minimums of the FLSA, the members of the Alaska Congressional delegation rejected an attempt by this President to gut an important hard-fought right that has been the law for over 50 years. The proposed change would have a significant effect on overtime rights, and promote a new, lesser standard that would hit the public safety profession pretty hard. Alaska's Congressmen and woman should be recognized for their efforts to vote principle over party, and reject bad policy that would undermine rights that yours and my forefathers fought for, but may never have enjoyed.

The proposed change would have a significant effect on overtime rights, and promote a new, lesser standard that would hit the public safety profession pretty hard.



First National Bank **A L A S K A**

MEMBER FDIC

Public safety employees may be eligible for a new program to help them own their own home. The *Community Solutions* loan program at First National Bank Alaska offers up to 100 percent financing and flexible terms for eligible Alaskans employed full-time in safety, healthcare and education positions. As the largest locally owned bank in Alaska, First National is the first in our state to offer this particular home loan program.

“Home ownership goes a long way toward anchoring people to their community, helping to create more stable neighborhoods,” said Sue Benedetti, the bank’s vice president for mortgage lending. “Making the *Community Solutions* program available to Alaskans is one way First National Bank is helping to build stronger, healthier communities across Alaska. We’re proud to offer Alaskans in safety, healthcare and education positions this program to make home ownership easier for them,” she added.

Loans through the *Community Solutions* program are not limited to specific areas of the state or to only certain neighborhoods. Some borrowers may also find it easier to qualify for a loan through this program than through other mortgage loan programs. Also, borrowers need not be first time homebuyers. Borrowers using this program may purchase single-family homes or duplexes. Income limitations are based on HUD median incomes for each borough in Alaska.

To be eligible for this special home loan program, public safety employees must work full time for a police or law enforcement agency, a fire department (including employees who provide emergency medical response and patient care or arson investigation) a correction agency, or be among those employees who respond to acts of terrorism. To find out if you qualify for this program or other home ownership programs, contact Angela Freeman at First National’s Home Loan Center, 907-777-5635 or 800-856-4362 or email Afreeman@fnbalaska.com.





HEALTH TRUST NEWS

Health Insurance (cont.)

are preferred providers available. The difference in benefit levels can be significant.

Other plans, like the State of Alaska Aetna Insurance use a system referred to as Reasonable and Customary Charge reimbursement. In this type of program, the insurance carrier provides a benefit based on the level of coverage stated in the policy **IF** the member's health care provider does not charge more than the reasonable and customary charge for the specific service. The good news about this program is the member can use virtually any qualified health care provider. The bad news is that Aetna or the State will not provide a list of which provider charges what for each service.

Other plans, like the City of Fairbanks have two-tiered coverage built into the system. The City contracts with a health care provider, currently Great West Life for the "primary" coverage. Then, the City pays an additional benefit to the member or provider depending on the situation. This system is cumbersome and relies on gathering an EOB (explanation of benefits) from the primary provider and submitting that with the invoice to the City for the additional benefit. Reimbursement under the second part of this plan can take significant amounts of time.

Still other PSEA members are covered under additional plans, all with different rules and levels of benefits. All of these plans have at least one thing in common: **It behooves the members to become educated consumers to maximize their coverage.** In other words, become a good consumer and get the most "bang" for your bucks! It is your money. Read your plan and learn what it does and does not offer.

Potential significant savings exist that are often overlooked. For example, many members are covered by the mail-order prescription drug benefit. This program offers increased savings by purchasing prescription drugs through the mail or via the Internet rather than making a trip to the pharmacy. Most of these plans offer a financial incentive, usually in the form of a lower co-pay for a larger amount of the required drugs. This could be a

situation where a member may receive a 3-month supply by paying only a 2-month co-pay. For PSEA members or dependents on "maintenance" medications, such as medications for diabetes, blood pressure, cholesterol, thyroid, allergies, heart etc., this can add up to significant savings. In addition, drugs purchased by the plan from these locations are usually less costly. This results in lower costs to the members in the long run. How would most members know about such saving opportunities? You would need to read your plan booklet, summary plan description or other plan information obtained from your employer or Health Trust.

Other stipulations in various plans require second-opinions for different procedures, or authorize a second opinion. These stipulations are extremely important, as the costs associated with a second opinion may be significant. On the other hand, a second opinion may suggest an alternative to a procedure which may not be in the best interest of you or your family member. The plans often have eligibility information, which can be extremely important in some cases. This can be especially helpful to know if you are in the process of caring for a non-immediate family member, or in the adoption process.

In conclusion, I would like to encourage all of you to please carefully read your related plan document. If you have questions understanding the meaning of information in the plan, you can contact various "experts" who can help you understand the confusing section/s. Depending on your plan, that could be the customer service department of the insurance provider, such as Blue Cross or Aetna. You may need to contact a City or State Personnel or Human Resource Office or a Trustee or Trust Administrator. If you are having difficulty getting good information you can contact the PSEA Office, and we will help get you in touch with the right person or office. Remember, these are your benefits and you are entitled to get the most out of them! Thank you.





WHY BE A LIEUTENANT?

By Trustee Dennis Ponder

Why do I want to be a LT? This is a question I have asked myself a number of times over the last several years. Is it out of a sense of advancement, pride, challenge, self-satisfaction, or financial gain? To answer this question, I decided to take a logical look at it.

I am a senior sergeant with the Alaska State Troopers. So, to start this analysis I called Personnel and asked them what I would make over my current base pay if I were to promote to LT. After getting the answer, I found it would be the equivalent of just 2 hours overtime a week. That means, as a sergeant I have to work 104 hours (52 weeks X 2 hrs. O/T) in order to make the pay of what I would get if I were a LT. So, out of curiosity I checked my O/T for the calendar year 2002 and found I worked approximately 220 hours. That is more than double the O/T hours that I would need as a Sgt. in order to make the equivalent base pay of a LT. Just for your information folks, I am not one of those guys who volunteer to work extra O/T. This is the O/T that I was required to work in order to get the job done. So, in my logical thinking I found that I already get paid more than if I were a LT. This does not include shift differential, FTO pay, or other pay incentives that are part of the PSEA contract. OK, I hear you saying, "This is O/T that you had to work." If you think a LT does not work additional hours, then you live in a sheltered world. I have seen my LT work more than eight hours per day, work weekends, get calls in the middle of night, called out in the middle of the night, and have to travel on their RDOs.

So, I explored my question a little further. This included looking at benefits like health insurance. As a PSEA member and a member of the PSEA Health Trust, I must pay \$75 a month toward my health insurance. This is basically for 90% coverage on health services up to \$10,000 in cost and 100% coverage afterward. What does a LT have to pay out of his own pocket for health coverage? Unlike us, they have a choice of several plans.

They are as follows:

MEDICAL PLANS

1. Premium Plan for employee's \$834/month
2. Premium Plan for employee & family \$983/month
3. Standard Plan for employee & family \$764/month
4. Economy Plan for employee & family \$660/month

Now keep in mind, unlike the PSEA Health Trust Plan, the above medical plans don't include Dental or Vision care. Those services are extra and are in addition to the Medical Plans.

They are as follows:
DENTAL PLANS

1. Premium Plan \$175/month
2. Standard Plan \$105/month
3. Preventive Plan \$ 45/month

VISION PLANS

1. No Coverage \$000.00
2. Standard Plan for employee & family \$ 33/month
3. Managed Care Plan for employee & family \$ 22/month

Now I can hear you now asking about the various plan benefits. Well, to put it simply, a LT with a family will have to choose the Medical-Premium Plan (\$983), Dental-Premium Plan (\$175) and Vision-Standard Plan (\$33), to have a health benefits package that is similar to the PSEA Health Trust Plan.

Keeping this in mind, I then did a little math. The total cost of the mentioned plans is \$1,191. Let's not forget though, the State does pay \$705/month towards the premiums for each employee. So, I took \$1,191 subtracted \$705 and found that a LT will have to pay \$486/month out of their own pocket to have health benefits comparable to the PSEA Health Trust Plan. So much for the pay increase that comes with the promotion!

They are not making any more money and may even be working for less than what they were making as a SGT. Most of this is because of the cost of health benefits.

There is a plus about promoting to LT. Their union dues are only \$42.50/month as compared to the \$80/month that a PSEA member pays. However, do you think they have the protection that our contract gives us?

To conclude this article, I am writing it from my position as a Trustee. I have heard new LT(s) question their choice about taking the promotion. They are not making any more money and may even be working for less than what they were making as a SGT. Most of this is because of the cost of health benefits. They also realize the costs of health benefits are more than likely to increase next year. This means they may have to pay more out of their own pockets and/or decrease their health benefits.

So, I will again ask, "Do you want to be a LT?" Just think logically about it before you make your decision.



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