UNITED STATES

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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BRIEFING ON HUMAN CAPITAL AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT

OPPORTUNITY

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TUESDAY,

JUNE 14, 2022

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The Commission met via Video Teleconference at 10:00 a.m. EDT, Christopher T. Hanson, Chairman, presiding.

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

CHRISTOPHER T. HANSON, Chairman

JEFF BARAN, Commissioner

DAVID A. WRIGHT, Commissioner

ALSO PRESENT:

BROOKE P. CLARK, Secretary of the Commission

MARIAN ZOBLER, General Counsel

NRC STAFF:

CATHERINE HANEY, Deputy Executive Director for Materials, Waste, Research, State, Tribal, Compliance, Administration, and Human Capital Programs

ERIC DILWORTH, Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer, Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO)

BRENDAN CAIN, Senior Program Specialist, Human Capital Analysis Branch, OCHCO

COLLEEN TODD, Chief, Regional Operations Branch, OCHCO

DOUG THARP, Senior Learning Project Manager, Specialized Technical Training and Support Branch, OCHCO

BASIA SALL, Deputy Division Director, IT Services Development and Operations Division, Office of the Chief Information Officer

STEPHEN SMITH, Civil Rights Program Manager, Office of Small Business and Civil Rights

ALSO PRESENT:

SHERYL SANCHEZ, National Treasury Employees Union

1   PROCEEDINGS

2   10:01 a.m.

3   CHAIRMAN HANSON: Okay, good morning everyone. I

4   convene the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's public meeting on human

5   capital, and equal employment opportunity.   Twice a year we convene to get

6   an update on significant human capital initiatives, and equal employment

7   opportunities.   Our last meeting was in December, right at the start of the

8   agency's transition to a hybrid work environment, and I'm looking forward to

9   hearing the staff's updates in this area during today's meeting.

10   Before we start, I'll ask first if my colleagues have any

11   remarks they'd like to make?   No? Okay, with that, Cathy, why don't we get

12   started?

13   MS. HANEY: All right, thank you very much. Good morning

14   Chairman Hanson, Commissioners Baran, and Wright, the NRC work force,

15   and all others that are joining us today.   I'd like to thank you for the opportunity

16   to share the agency's progress, accomplishments in the areas of human

17   capital and equal employment.   We're pleased to update you on our

18   continued efforts to ensure the NRC is an organization that nurtures, and

19   supports diversity, and inclusion while remaining engaged in a highly

20   productive, in an unprecedented, and continuously evolving environment the

21   federal work force is currently facing.   Our Office of the Chief Human Capital

22   Officer, or OCHCO as you'll hear them referred today, leads agency's efforts

23   focused on building, and retaining our most valuable resource, which is our

24   staff.

1   In addition, the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights,

2   also referred to today as SBCR, oversees our efforts to meet our commitments

3   under various civil rights, and small business statutes.   The agency now, and

4   more than ever focused on promoting, and supporting new, and ongoing

5   efforts to recruit, develop, and retain a diverse work force.

6   We recognize that the NRC's ability to fulfill its mission

7   requires having the right number of people with the right skills in the right place

8   at the right time.   This realization greatly informed our development of the

9   new strategic plan for fiscal years 2022 to 2026.   As a result, the new strategic

10   plan includes a goal on organizational health with objectives that focus on one,

11   fostering an organizational culture in which the work force is engaged,

12   adaptable, and are receptive to changes, and makes data-driven, and

13   evidenced-based decisions; two, enabling the work force to carry out the

14   agency's mission by leveraging modern technology, innovation, and

15   knowledge management to support the data driven decisions in evolving

16   regulatory landscape; and three, attracting, developing, and maintaining a

17   highly performing, diverse, engaged, and flexible work force with the skills

18   needed to carry out NRC's mission now, and in the future.   This focus on

19   organizational health will allow the agency to more effectively align workload,

20   skills, people's needs, and organizational structure to meet the short-, and

21   long-term objectives.

22   Other benefits include increasing the range in skills and

23   abilities of the staff while creating a more agile talent pool that will allow the

24   agency to respond more quickly to unplanned changes in priorities and

1   workloads. As a modern risk-informed regulator, to ensure the NRC has a

2   highly skilled, diverse, adaptable, and engaged work force, it means our

3   efforts, and actions will be data-driven, and evidence-based.

4   Despite numerous challenges confronting the federal work

5   force, OCHCO, and SBCR have identified innovative solutions to the

6   challenges of recruiting, hiring, developing, and working remotely while

7   promoting a healthy organization. The agency has adopted new

8   technologies to facilitate collaboration, implemented new processes to ensure

9   our work force remains productive, and draws on valuable lessons learned to

10   inform, and focus our future efforts.

11   I'm very confident that we're on the right path to

12   constructively achieve our recruitment and hiring goals while continuing to

13   foster diversity and inclusion in our workplace. Now I'd like to introduce my

14   fellow presenters. Next slide please. Our first four speakers are from

15   OCHCO, beginning with Eric Dilworth. He is the Deputy Chief Human Capital

16   Officer, who will provide an overview of strategic human capital management,

17   and overview of the human capital operating plan priorities.

18   He'll be followed by Brendan Cain, who is a senior program

19   specialist in the Human Capital Analysis Branch, who will discuss the topic of

20   embracing technology and human capital analytics. Next, Colleen Todd,

21   chief of the Regional Operations Branch, will discuss strategic recruitment and

22   retention.

23   Colleen will be followed by Doug Tharp, who is a senior

24   learning project manager in the Specialized Technical Training and Support

1 Branch who will talk to us about implementing training and development

2 programs.   After Doug, we'll hear from Basia Sall, Deputy Division Director of

3 the IT Services Development and Operations Division in the Office of the Chief

4 Human Information Officer, who will discuss building a skilled IT work force.

5   And then finally Stephen Smith, civil rights program

6 manager in the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights will give us a civil

7 rights and diversity inclusion update.   So, this concludes my introductory

8 remarks, and I'd now like to turn the presentation over to Eric.

9   MR. DILWORTH: Good morning, Chairman Hanson,

10 Commissioners, NRC work force, and members of the public joining us today.

11 Thank you so much for the opportunity to highlight some of the activities that

12 we are undertaking to ensure NRC has the work force it needs to meet our

13 mission.   Next slide.   We use our Human Capital Operating Plan, or better

14 known as HCOP, as a planning document intended to address human capital

15 implementation actions that we are taking to support our agency's mission,

16 strategic goals, priorities, and performance indicators.

17   We update the HCOP annually and submit it to the Office of

18 Personnel Management.   OPM then conducts regular human capital reviews

19 to discuss implementation of the HCOP, provide feedback, and to identify best

20 practices and cost cutting human capital challenges.   As part of the annual

21 HCOP development process, OCHCO staff collects input from the NRC office

22 and region management.

23   This is truly a collaborative process to develop a tool to

24 ensure the effective and efficient use of agency resources.   At December's

1   Equal Opportunity Employment Briefing to the Commission, there was some

2   discussion on the Executive Director of Operation's Hiring Tasker.   On

3   December 2nd, 2021, the EDO tasked NRC's Chief Human Capital Officer to

4   develop and begin implementation of a hiring strategy with the objective of

5   hiring, and onboarding by October 1, 2022, within one percent of the agency's

6   allocated full time equivalent levels identified for fiscal year 2023.   Next slide.

7   Key strategies to meet hiring goals include working with office and region

8   senior management, and hiring managers to prioritize positions and

9   increasing external hiring selections.

10   Concurrent with this position prioritization, steps were taken

11   to shorten, or expedite steps in the hiring process such as including multiple

12   positions in a single job announcement.   Recruiting now for positions that are

13   expected to be vacant over the next 12 months and ensuring that hiring

14   officials make completing candidate reviews and timely hiring decisions their

15   top priority.

16   While staffing challenges exist across the agency, the ability

17   of the NRC's corporate offices to provide the critical work force, technology,

18   and facility support is particularly effective.   A working group has been formed

19   to identify strategies that support hiring in the corporate offices.   OCHCO staff

20   will work with those strategies to identify short-, and long-term focus areas to

21   address these challenges.

22   A key component to efficient hiring is ensuring managers

23   fully understand the recruitment and selection process and their role.   To

24   support them, OCHCO developed, and conducted four hiring managers

1 workshops in March of this year.   As mentioned above, we have implemented

2 the use of a single job announcement to fill multiple positions.   This sharing

3 of job announcements and lists of qualified candidates supports a more

4 efficient use of resources and can reduce hiring times.

5   Additional detail on these strategies will be provided by

6 Colleen Todd in her presentation, and data on hiring numbers will be provided

7 by Brendan Cain in his presentation.   Throughout the presentations today,

8 you will hear more about human capital initiatives, as well as an update on

9 civil rights, diversity, and inclusion activities.

10   In addition to updates on our HR programs, we will provide

11 an update on learning, and development progress with competency modeling,

12 adjusting learning for the new hybrid work environment, and an example of a

13 more modern approach to formal qualification for the resident inspector role.

14 Again, thank you for the opportunity to meet with you today.   Our next

15 speaker, Mr. Brendan Cain, will address human capital analytics.

16   MR. CAIN: Thank you Eric.   Good morning Chairman,

17 and Commissioners.   Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you about

18 the current status of work force analytics at NRC.   I work in the Human Capital

19 Analysis Branch of OCHCO, preparing reports, and analyses of human capital

20 data for OCHCO and other managers throughout the agency.   Next slide

21 please.

22   Work force analytics is used to provide information on the

23 state of the work force at a point in time to show trends over the course of

24 time, or to measure progress towards objectives and goals, or to indicate the

1   potential future state of the work force in terms of size or makeup.   Next slide

2   please.   Human capital data analytics is used to inform management about

3   what's going on with the work force.

4   It provides a basis for setting human capital goals, shows

5   progress towards those goals, identifies areas of concern, and can suggest a

6   potential course of action, for example, by informing the strategic work force

7   planning process.   Next slide please.   The goals of analytics tools include

8   providing meaningful information in an easy-to-understand format, providing

9   information that is relevant to the audience, and providing actionable

10   information to managers, and leadership.   Next slide please.

11   Visualizations are a newer tool for presenting data, including

12   human capital data.   They enhance the way that information is conveyed,

13   they allow for some degree of user interaction, for example, by filtering sets of

14   visualizations for fiscal year, or specific population, or highlighting a subset of

15   data across multiple visualizations on a page, and they offer the potential for

16   sophisticated analysis of data from multiple sources. Next slide please.

17   OCHCO chose Power BI as its visualization tool for the new

18   human capital dashboard, the internal version of which is used across the

19   agency by managers, office analysts, and OCHCO.   On the next few slides,

20   I'm going to be showing some of the visualizations used in the human capital

21   dashboard.

22   I'm going to touch on certain items about the current state

23   of the work force, where there are no recent changes of significance.   I'll be

24   looking more closely at what is significant, sharing recent trends, especially in

1 hiring and attrition, which have implications for the future of the work force.

2 Next slide please.

3   This first graph, which shows employees on board, and FTE

4 allocations by fiscal year, shows how the NRC continues to get smaller.

5 Going from 3383 employees in 2016, to 2596 in May of 2022.   A 23 percent

6 reduction over five and a half years.   All reductions have been through

7 voluntary attrition, and primarily through retirement. Periods of staff reductions

8 and scaled back hiring are often cause for concern for a disproportionate

9 impact on women and minorities.   However, our review of the data shows that

10 the composition of the agency in terms of gender, ethnicity, and race has not

11 been negatively infected.

12   In fact, there's been slight improvement in both areas.   The

13 overall representation of minorities in the agency has improved from 34.2 to

14 38 percent over this period.   Similarly, the representation of women has also

15 improved slightly, from 39.3 to 40.7 percent.   Retirement eligibility has also

16 been a topic of much discussion and concern over the last several years.

17   While 42 percent of staff is currently eligible to retire within

18 the next five years, the percentage of five-year eligibility actually peaked in

19 2019 at 44.3 percent and has begun to decline.   Next slide please.

20   This visualization shows the trend among employees

21 remaining past their retirement eligibility date.   NRC's knowledge

22 management and knowledge transfer efforts are designed to take advantage

23 of their experience in order to prepare their successors to more effectively

24 support the mission and goals of the agency.   Next slide please.

1   Turning to separations and agency attrition rates, this

2   graphic shows the outlier years of 2016, and 17, when early outs and buy outs

3   were offered.   It also shows that the attrition rate for 2021 is comparable to

4   recent years, between six and a half, and seven percent.   At mid-May, 2022

5   is incomplete, but has already passed 2021 levels.   This puts the agency on

6   pace for seven and a half to nine percent annual attrition if the losses for the

7   remainder of the year track with those of prior years.

8   Again, most separations are due to retirement, and although

9   retirements are up this fiscal year compared to last, the average of the rates

10 of the last two years is consistent with the overall average.   We believe this

11 is in part due to the catch up of delayed retirements during the first of the

12 COVID public health emergency.   Attrition rates below ten percent generally

13 are considered acceptable for both retention, and stability of the work force.

14 In addition, the impact of the increased hiring resulting from the EDO tasker

15 should mitigate some of the impact of this catch-up effect.   Next slide please.

16   Comparing gains with separations shows the historically low

17 hire rates while the agency was reducing in size, and then increasing as FTE

18 allocations, which were shown earlier, leveled off. However, as the size of the

19 agency has leveled off in the last two years, external hiring has not kept pace

20 with attrition.   Our increased focus on external hiring this year aims to reduce

21 or eliminate that deficit.   Next slide please.

22   In support of the current focus of the agency on hiring, we

23 created a new visualization to show our progress towards this year's goal of

24 300 external hires.   The color bands show the quarterly milestones in blue,

1   light blue, rose, and green.   The main central bar shows completed hires to

2   date, and the X marker shows pending hires; that is those who have accepted

3   offers but have not yet come on board. This graphic shows that although 300

4   hires remains an aspirational goal, the agency has achieved, and continues

5   to make significant progress towards, that goal.

6   A review of external hiring data reflects a relatively even

7   distribution of new employees under age 50 that will result in a significant

8   increase in the on-board percentage of employees under 40.   An even more

9   significant increase in the on-board percentage of employees under 30,

10   leading to a more balanced distribution of age groups in the agency overall.

11   Next slide please.

12   Future plans include visualizations to track information on

13   declinations of offers, or interviews, progress along the recruitment selection

14   and hiring process, and training information for offices, course managers, and

15   training, and development staff in OCHCO to support monitoring training

16   completions and satisfaction survey results.   Next slide please.

17   In summary, visualizations on the human capital dashboard

18   allow agency leaders to monitor the state of the work force, progress toward

19   their goals, and the impact actions have on the makeup of their agency or their

20   office.   As we develop new and better ways to share analytics information

21   and tools, we aim to be able to provide more timely and relevant human capital

22   data analytics in support of the agency's mission.

23   I will now turn it over to Colleen Todd, who will provide a

24   presentation on strategic recruitment and retention.   Thank you, I look

1 forward to your questions.

2   MS. TODD: Thank you Brendan and thank you all for the

3 opportunity to be here today and share with you strategies we are employing

4 to invest in the future of the agency.   As Eric mentioned, the agency is

5 experiencing ongoing staffing challenges, and based on staff demographics,

6 we anticipate these challenges will become more acute in the immediate

7 future.   Anticipated vacancies can be attributed to attrition due to retirements

8 and highly competitive market for critical skills.   Next slide please.

9   As Brendan previously highlighted, analysis of attrition and

10 hiring data indicate that to meet the hiring goals outlined in the EDO tasker,

11 we will need to hire and onboard approximately 300 full time equivalents on,

12 or before, September 30th of this year.

13   Key strategies and related activities in support of the hiring

14 goals include working collaboratively with office and region senior

15 management and hiring managers to collect information to identify and

16 prioritize fiscal year '22, and '23 hiring needs.   We've also streamlined our

17 processes by reducing the number of times an applicant needs to apply and

18 the number of vacancies we need to post by using the prioritized list of

19 vacancies, which identifies like positions where job announcements and

20 candidates can be shared across offices and regions. We've solicited and

21 implemented cross-agency support with our outreach and recruitment

22 activities.   Shown here is the hashtag #HIRENRC, which stands for hiring

23 initiative to recruit, and employ at the NRC.

24   This agencywide collaborative effort engages a broad array

1   of NRC internal staff to expand the NRC's hiring capabilities.   This initiative is

2   currently ongoing and focused on meeting the most critical needs.   Several

3   teams have been established and are focused on near-term hiring needs and

4   additional process improvements to address time-to-hire challenges.   Next

5   slide please.

6   Attracting diverse, qualified talent to our job postings is an

7   important first step.   However, we must have the processes and messaging

8   that encourages candidates to follow through with submitting an application.

9   A candidate's first impression of the NRC will be through our website and job

10   announcements.   Applicants want to know what they can expect from the

11   NRC as an employer, and how they can use their skills to make a difference.

12   Strategies for converting applicants to new hires included

13   enhancing the careers section of our public website.   Improving the marketing

14   aspects of our job announcements and streamlining our application process.

15   To support our efforts to attract talent, we have utilized our outreach and

16   recruitment plan strategically to place our efforts where we will see the best

17   results.

18   We've participated in ten events as of March 31st of this

19   year, of which 60 percent were targeted to diversity such as minority serving

20   institutions.   We've also continued to utilize the HBCU Connect, a social

21   network for historically black colleges and university students and alumni.

22   We posted job opportunities, advertised on their website, and conducted an

23   email blast to students about our opportunities.

24   We partnered with SBCR in our advisory committees to

1 expand the university champion program and increased the number of

2 minority serving institutions with the champion.   And as a result, ten additional

3 MSIs now have champions, and have been added to the list of outreach and

4 recruitment events. We've used non-competitive hiring authorities, and as of

5 March 30th, we've utilized these authorities to hire 26 external hires.

6   We've reviewed and updated the marketing statements, and

7 other sections of our job announcements to use plain language and highlight

8 the NRC as an employer of choice.   Finally, OCHCO developed a hiring

9 manager's toolkit, which is a comprehensive document designed to assist the

10 hiring manager during the interview process.   It provides a single source of

11 information on the many benefits of working at the NRC.   It not only prepares

12 the hiring manager to promote these benefits, but provides a ready resource

13 when questions arise during the interview.   Next slide please.

14   Screening applicants is critical to ensuring we have qualified

15 candidates for hiring managers to select.   We are seeking to hire the top

16 talent.   The process at the NRC includes a resume review to determine if the

17 candidates meet the minimum qualifications for the position and whether to

18 advance them to the next step.   Our agency assessment process includes in

19 many cases, a rating official, or a panel that reviews the minimally qualified

20 resumes to determine the best qualified candidates.   We've utilized hiring

21 flexibilities to expedite this phase of the hiring process where appropriate.

22 We're also ensuring that rating panels when used are diverse and the

23 members understand and are available to complete the process in a timely

24 manner. Hiring managers are encouraged to be prepared by having rating

1 officials and panel members identified in advance.   In addition, as Eric noted,

2 OCHCO developed and delivered hiring manager workshops this spring to

3 enhance understanding of the NRC process and non-competitive hiring

4 options.

5   A total of 131 hiring managers attended the workshops.

6 Several resources were also developed to provide additional information for

7 hiring managers. As previously mentioned, another strategy to streamline

8 our hiring process is the sharing of vacancy announcements across offices

9 and regions for similar vacant positions.   Across the regions we have seen

10 success in sharing direct hire postings.

11   The project engineer resident inspector development

12 program is posted for Regions I and II. The regions are continuing to use this

13 posting and have been making high-quality selections.   Approximately 11

14 have been made as of March 30th, with additional selections anticipated as

15 the posting was extended to the end of the fiscal year.

16   Another cross-regional posting for health physicists for

17 Regions I, III, and IV is currently open.   Hires from this posting are about ten

18 and climbing.   Additionally, a reactor inspector position across all four regions

19 was recently posted.   Next slide please.

20   It is not enough to recruit the top talent for our agency's

21 future; we must also retain our employees. Strategies to aid the agency's

22 retention include the reinvigorated ambassador program.   The agency's

23 ambassador program has been revitalized to address the needs of new

24 employees in a hybrid work environment.   The purpose of the NRC

1   ambassador program is to provide a mentoring opportunity for employees who

2   are new to the agency, or new to an office or region.

3   NRC ambassadors offer insights into our culture, share

4   knowledge, and help new employees overcome the challenges of starting a

5   new job.   Enhancements to the program include a newly-developed

6   ambassador program SharePoint site with guidance and support, an

7   ambassador self-nomination process, and a streamlined ambassador

8   selection process for hiring managers.

9   To assist in retaining our staff, our agency has many work

10   life flexibilities in place, which enhance the employee experience.   Some of

11   these flexibilities include our many work schedule options, opportunities for

12   telework, with many employees eligible to telework up to six days a pay period,

13   and other programs that focus on employee wellbeing, such as the fitness

14   center and our employee assistance program.

15   A diverse and inclusive work environment where employees

16   feel that they can bring their whole selves to work contributes to an enhanced

17   NRC employee experience.   Recommendations from agency culture

18   initiatives and the hybrid environment assessment and review team, also

19   known as the HEART, represent some sources of contributions to the NRC

20   employee experience.   Next slide please.

21   Strategies to enhance the employee experience and

22   support retention include managing the work force and providing staff with

23   meaningful work.   We focused on providing supervisors with the tools needed

24   to support and develop staff.   Enhanced performance management training

1   supports supervisors in their assessment of employee performance.

2   Employee satisfaction increases when employees know

3   what is expected of them.   The agency also has a robust training and

4   development program to support employees' continued growth, which you will

5   hear more about from the next presenter.   And finally, ensuring employees

6   are recognized and appreciated for their contributions to the organization's

7   success is a key retention strategy.

8   The many and varied NRC recognition programs, including

9   individual and group special act, the NRC's distinguished and meritorious

10   service awards, and more recently awards to recognize contributions towards

11   innovation and knowledge management are just some examples of the

12   recognition programs at the NRC.

13   This concludes my presentation, and I will now turn it over

14   to Doug Tharp to discuss implementing training and development programs.

15   Thank you.

16   MR. THARP: Thank you Colleen.   Good morning

17   Chairman Hanson, Commissioners.   A few years ago, we started on a

18   journey to transform, or to use Commissioner Wright's term, recalibrate

19   learning and development to enhance employee agility.   At that time, we had

20   no idea how agile we'd need to become.   But after two years of working

21   virtually, and now in our hybrid work environment, the same approaches and

22   methods are just as important, only now more urgent.   Next slide please.

23   The goals for transformation were to increase flexibility,

24   reduce time to competency, reduce cost of training, and increase experiences

1   through learning in the flow of work and learning from each other.   The

2   specific methods planned included competency models to personalize and

3   focus learning, blended learning to improve efficiency and effectiveness, and

4   performance support to provide resources beyond just training.   We have

5   competency models for many roles, some courses were redesigned using

6   technology to reduce travel costs and time away from the job, and we have

7   the capability to develop performance support resources as needed.   Today

8   I want to give you an update on competency model progress and use, talk

9   about how the models are being utilized to identify skill gaps, and how those

10   skill gaps can be closed.   I also want to discuss some of the challenges the

11   hybrid work environment can introduce and highlight what we're doing to

12   address those challenges.   And finally, I'll share some information about a

13   project that HRTD is leading to deliver the results that we identified in the

14   beginning of this transformation in a competency-based qualification

15   approach.   Next slide please.

16   As a reminder, competency models identify the critical tasks

17   performed by an employee in a role, and the behavioral examples determine

18   the employee rating within each competency.   Ratings at, or above, a target

19   value are considered strengths and ratings below the target value represent

20   potential skill gaps.

21   We have over 180 competency models available in TMS,

22   which supports about 1700 NRC staff. By the end of this year, 85 percent of

23   our core positions will be modeled.   We rolled out competency models for

24   assessment in 2020.   Participation rates grew last year, and in 2022 we've

1   set a goal of 85 percent participation.   The reason for the push for

2   participation is to identify strengths and skill gaps at the organizational level.

3   We need more data to ensure that any perceived gaps are

4   actually gaps.   One example of identifying potential organizational skill gaps

5   occurred last year.   The Office of the Chief Financial Officer identified

6   readings below the target values in the areas of accounting and financial

7   reporting.   They reached out to HRTD to partner with them and identify

8   external training resources to close those skill gaps, and we should be able to

9   see the effect in this year's assessment data.   Next slide please.

10   Often, when we think about developing skills, training is the

11   first solution that comes to mind.   Training is typically a good solution to close

12   skill gaps at the lower proficiency levels of learning in basic.   We're currently

13   expanding our course evaluation processes to look at effectiveness beyond

14   training satisfaction, to focus on how well class participants have implemented

15   what they learned when they got back to the job.

16   At the higher applied, skilled, or expert levels, a better

17   solution may be resources and experiences.   Those resources may exist

18   already in Nuclepedia, on Sharepoint sites, and Microsoft Stream, or even on

19   sticky notes hanging from the monitors of our agency experts.   As learning

20   consultants, we need to identify effective approaches, curate those resources,

21   and connect people to the right experts.   The outcomes of these interactions

22   should be focused on changing behavior and improving performance at these

23   higher levels.   Next slide please.

24   The hybrid environment introduces new challenges for

1   training interactions.   Those interactions have to be engaging, they've got to

2   allow for a balance of personal and professional lives, have to be accessible

3   when and where the employees are, and they must feel a connection, not only

4   to what they're learning, but to the instructors and to each other.   Next slide

5   please.

6   When training is done well in a hybrid environment, it can

7   be very effective.   This chart represents the results of a talent LMS survey

8   conducted last year with 1000 users who experienced training remotely in a

9   hybrid environment.   The results show that 63 percent felt more valued, 73

10   percent were happier, 72 percent reported being more productive, and 65

11   percent believe that it made them better communicators.   So, what are we

12   doing?   First, we're catching up on the back log of in-person simulator

13   courses, recognizing that some training requires a hands-on experience.

14   Next, we plan to continue using virtual classroom instruction where it makes

15   sense, and we expect to use a more blended approach going forward.   Next

16   slide please.

17   To support the hybrid environment, we'll need to redesign

18   much of our training to include blended learning activities or events that

19   provide accessible resources that are short, contextual, personalized, and

20   available in the flow of work.   This blend should include some synchronous

21   and some asynchronous training, with opportunities to engage with instructors

22   and other students to build the community in a flexible way that's available

23   when and where they need it.   This will provide an opportunity to move away

24   from traditional courses, and build resources and experiences for learning

1   impact.   I'd also like to mention the importance of social learning and

2   reemphasize the ambassador program that Colleen mentioned for new

3   employees to start building relationships and learning from the experiences of

4   others.   Next slide please.

5   The last thing I want to discuss today is a pilot project that

6   incorporates many of these aspects into one of our biggest training programs

7   to deliver on the promises of reduced time to competency while offering

8   enhanced flexibility, much more experience to learning while working, and

9   access to expert mentors.

10   We're conducting a pilot of a redesigned resident inspector

11   qualification program.   This approach is based on performance of job

12   activities under the guidance of on-the-job training instructors, and

13   assessment against a set standard for performance of each critical task.   We

14   established the performance standards by combining results from job task

15   analyses conducted with a group of very experienced senior resident

16   inspectors and a group of relatively newly qualified residents to help

17   understand the expectations for performance at each stage of development.

18   While a good portion of this program is delivered in person through a

19   structured OJT process, it is very flexible and personalized.   We expect each

20   candidate to utilize their learning preferences to gain knowledge through

21   suggested resources, existing courses, and identified experts.

22   Participants are responsible for achieving the standards,

23   asking mentors for guidance when needed, and to conduct assessments

24   when they think they can perform up to the standard.   This provides for very

1 personalized, contextual, engaging, and experiential learning.   In addition to

2 gaining valuable experience, focusing on performing will result in reduced time

3 to competency and increase confidence for new inspectors.

4 We're implementing the competency-based qual program

5 through a two-phase pilot approach.   We're five months into the limited pilot

6 with one candidate helping us to complete the development, and just getting

7 started this month with the expanded pilot, where eight additional candidates

8 will be testing the program.   We expect to have pilot results and make

9 recommendations to the region administrators and the Office of Nuclear

10 Reactor Regulation by about this time next year.   Next slide please.

11 Over the past few years, the term agility has taken on new

12 meaning, and recalibrating learning and development has become even more

13 urgent.   At HRTD we continue to adjust how we develop and deliver learning

14 content.   Competency models will continue to be built and modified, and aid

15 in identifying and closing skill gaps at both the individual and organizational

16 levels.

17 Through the ambassador program and competency-based

18 qualification, you will see a renewed emphasis on learning from others and

19 sharing experiences.   We'll continue to shift from courses to resources and

20 focus on delivering experiences when we do gather for in person or virtual

21 instructor-led training.   We'll need to ensure that our focus is on engagement

22 and connection and building learning experiences for accessibility, while

23 allowing for maximum flexibility.

24 We ask for your continued support for these changes and

1 more as we adjust and shift learning methods to better support our new hybrid

2 work environment.   Now I'll turn it over to Basia Sall, who will be providing an

3 update specific to upscaling in the IT work force.

4   MS. SALL: Thank you Doug, for that update on training

5 and development.   Good morning Chairman Hanson, Commissioners, and all

6 others here today.   I'm Basia Sall, and I'm a Deputy Division Director of the

7 Information Technology Service Development and Operations Division in the

8 Office of the Chief Information Officer, OCIO.   My division is responsible for

9 developing and maintaining NRC IT solutions, operating and securing the

10 agency's IT infrastructure, and providing enterprise IT customer support.   I'd

11 like to thank OCHCO for including me today, and I'm here to discuss past,

12 present, and future efforts that the OCIO is undertaking along with OCHCO to

13 continue to build and maintain a skilled and engaged IT work force.   Next

14 slide please.

15   I feel lucky to be a part of OCIO.   We have a dedicated and

16 hardworking staff, and have had many past and recent successes. I wanted

17 to start with sharing some good news about OCIO.   93 of our staff members,

18 about 64 percent of OCIO, took the recent FEVS survey, and here are some

19 of our results.   I believe these results indicate several of our key success

20 factors including a strong commitment and teamwork at all levels, we have

21 many long serving staff members, we've spent time building the service

22 culture in the office, and we've also focused efforts on the office culture.   We

23 formed a safety culture working group made up of staff that developed, using

24 focus groups, a culture action plan that identified the type of culture we want

1   as an organization.   Our action plan identified six areas of focus and we

2   prioritized three.

3   These include modeling behaviors to achieve desired

4   culture, time management and workload, and reasonable deadlines and

5   respecting work hours.   The latest FEVS scores indicate that we are making

6   significant progress towards creating the culture with which we aspire.   I'm

7   very proud of my team for their support of the agency during the pandemic

8   and the recent return to a hybrid environment.   We're thankful for the

9   consistent support and positive comments we receive from staff and

10   leadership across the agency related to that work.   It has helped us maintain

11   our focus on the customer experience.   Next slide please.

12   We've been working for some time to address our staffing

13   challenges.   In concert with OCHCO, we implemented several new strategies

14   that have assisted us in recruiting new staff.

15   We now have 150 staff on board with several others pending

16   onboarding, as well as several postings in the pipeline.   In addition to the new

17   strategies we've implemented, we are continuing to seek new ideas that will

18   help us manage hiring and attrition in the future.   As you can see, we have a

19   very seasoned staff, many of which are eligible to retire.

20   We also have a number of staff with skills and experience

21   that are in high demand.   So, our ability to recruit and retain staff effectively

22   is critical.   Having long serving staff has many benefits, and we're working to

23   compliment this experience with new skill sets, new perspectives, and a new

24   core group of technical experts that can carry the NRC IT/IM program forward.

1   The strategic work force planning efforts have been

2   extremely valuable.   I'd like to thank OCHCO, and specifically Brendan Cain

3   for the new human capital dashboard, which uses Power BI.   The data is

4   valuable, and can be viewed at the agency and office level.   Providing the

5   data this way has allowed OCIO management to gain additional insights and

6   help strategically plan for future hiring efforts.   Next slide please.

7   Technology innovation and change has consistently

8   accelerated over time.   When I began my career as a software developer in

9   1992, we had to share desktops, and it took weeks to deliver minor software

10   changes.   And now 30 years later, information technology is fully integrated

11   into most aspects of our work and our lives.

12   It's also noteworthy that the agency has made technology a

13   key tenet of its modernization and transformation efforts.   When we look at

14   our OCIO and NRC goals through the lens of strategic work force planning,

15   we see skill gaps that need to be filled in some key areas so we can meet

16   those goals.   These areas include data architecture and engineering, data

17   scientists, cloud architecture and engineering, mobility engineering, cyber

18   security, and acquisition and contract management.   Next slide please.

19   As I mentioned earlier, OCIO has been understaffed for

20   some time, and it has resulted in impacts to our own staff.   Some of them are

21   carrying an unsustainable workload and are at risk of burn out.   Staff have

22   indicated a feeling of increased stress given the rapid pace, and the limited

23   opportunities that were needed to do strategic thinking and tactical planning.

24   We are concerned with some staff that with continued with

1   consistent high workload, they may choose to retire earlier than originally

2   planned, further exasperating our staffing challenges.   Another impact from

3   understaffing is that OCIO is one deep in some key areas and has limited

4   successors in line for many technical areas as incumbent staff leave.

5   Lastly, it's challenging for our supervisors to invest in hiring

6   entry-level staff when they need experienced people to maintain and support

7   key services.   OCIO management has taken action to address some of these

8   impacts.   For example, we have increased our focus on prioritization to

9   assure staff focus on the most important work.   We implemented a no

10   meeting zone to support staff planning.

11   Our leadership team is working closely with our branch

12   chiefs to prioritize hiring actions to focus on the areas of greatest need.   As

13   for entry-level staff, we brought on 11 summer interns to increase our pipeline

14   of potential new staff.   This was accomplished as a result of our branch chief

15   partnering with our DRMA Division to facilitate onboarding and planning of key

16   activities for the summer interns. Next slide please.

17   Over the pandemic, OCIO has worked to partner with

18   businesses to bring new technology, but the continued agency focus on

19   technology requires to be paired with fresh thinking and new skill sets, and

20   with our skilled and long serving staff in tow.   Some hiring challenges we've

21   seen include during the pandemic we had several good applicants who did

22   not accept offers because they were reluctant to commit to a job in a transition

23   while the world was in so much flux.

24   Key needs in cyber, cloud, modern application development

1   are also what other agencies need, so hiring is competitive. We're competing

2   with private industry that often has more attractive compensation models, and

3   competition among federal agencies is also fierce, making agency salary and

4   benefit differentiators important. External hiring takes time and coordination

5   between the NRC offices.

6   Note that the number one question we receive from

7   applicants is about workplace flexibilities and the benefits available. OCHCO

8   has provided key talking points to the supervisors in that area so we can be

9   well informed. Next slide please.

10   OCIO continues to implement several strategies to

11   overcome our staffing issues in a couple of ways. First, we're partnering with

12   OCHCO to prioritize and streamline the hiring process for certain key

13   positions. Next, we're increasing staff training and developmental

14   opportunities both informal, and formal, and on the job. For example, finding

15   opportunities to do hands-on application development and cross training

16   growing staff in other ways such as cloud and data skills.

17   We're recognizing and supporting our team in ways beyond

18   typical rewards. We did things like have the OCIO snack shack, we have a

19   new kudos page, we gave welcome bags to staff when they returned to the

20   office, and we also have dedicated no meeting zones and training blocks.

21   We're focusing on making the summer interns productive and a part of the

22   team so that we can look for co-op potential.

23   We're also prioritizing key activities in the office, division,

24   and branch levels to provide more clarity on what work is important. We've

1   leveraged multiple hires on new vacancies, and we're double encumbering

2   retiring staff when we can.   Working to streamline administrative functions

3   associated with IT contracts is key for us right now.

4   For example, OCIO manages over 200 contracts, so it's

5   paramount we find ways to effectively and efficiently manage both the

6   technical and administrative aspects of our contracts.   We're focusing on

7   leveraging contract management training.   And finally, we're exploring and

8   using direct hiring when available, especially in the cyber security area.   Next

9   slide please.

10   So, here are ten of our recent hires, nine of these were

11   external.   Pictured here are an information management technical assistant,

12   a mobility engineer, an agile developer, a data center and hosting engineer,

13   two application development project managers, two network engineers, and

14   two data scientists.   It's interesting how much delight we all feel related to our

15   new hires.

16   They've been so good for staff morale, and bring new ideas

17   and fresh thinking, which really supports our office and agency culture as

18   we're pursuing technology goals.   Thank you for your time today and

19   continued support of OCIO.   I would ask that the agency continue to support

20   OCIO hiring, even though we have persisted with under burn.   Thanks as well

21   to OCHCO for their continued support.

22   And now I'll turn over the discussion to Stephen Smith, civil

23   rights program manager in the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, who

24   will be discussing civil rights, diversity, and inclusion.

1   MR. SMITH: Thank you Basia. Good morning Chairman

2   Hanson, Commissioners, and the entire NRC family. I'd like to also give a

3   special thanks to Dan, Cathy, Darrell, Vonna, and Jeanne for their vision and

4   unmatched organizational leadership, and commitment to diversity, equity,

5   and inclusion. I'm Stephen Smith, civil rights program manager for the Office

6   of Small Business and Civil Rights and I'm humbly honored to brief you this

7   morning on the status and the progress of the agency's equal employment

8   opportunity, and diversity, equity, and inclusion program efforts as it's

9   administered and managed by SBCR, our invaluable NRC partners, who

10   includes the Collateral Duty EEO Counselors, EEO Advisory

11   Committee/Affinity Group/Resource Group members and their Executive

12   Sponsors, DIALOGUE Ambassadors, and the NRC Desired Culture Team,

13   and its Culture Champions. Next slide please.

14   The mission of SBCR is to support the agency's mission in

15   protecting public health and safety and the environment by cultivating the

16   agency's diverse and inclusive workplace to advance equal employment

17   opportunity for employees and applicants, to provide fair and impartial

18   processing of discrimination complaints, to afford maximum practical prime

19   and subcontracting opportunities for small businesses, and to allow for

20   meaningful and equal access to the agency's conducted and financially-

21   assisted programs and activities. For today's briefing, I would like to provide

22   you a status and highlight the accomplishments of the agency through the

23   collaborative partnerships of SBCR, OCHCO, and the Office of the General

24   Counsel.

1   SBCR describes two vital areas of civil rights and diversity,

2   equity, and inclusion efforts, and provides examples of the contribution and

3   shared responsibility we have with OCHCO.   I will touch on EEO complaint

4   activities and trends and building blocks to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

5   Next slide please.

6   For the first half of FY22, I'd like to report that there has been

7   no significant increase in the agency's EEO complaint activity over the past

8   couple of years and during COVID-19.   In fact, and as a result of the NRC's

9   annual 462 reporting for FY21 to the EEOC, the agency's EEO complaint

10   activity decreased for pre-complaints from 33 in FY20 to 24 in FY21, and

11   formal complaints from 25 in FY20 to 15 in FY21.

12   Currently there are ten pre-complaints and six formal

13   complaints being reported as of March 31st for FY22.   You may be asking

14   yourself why the low EEO complaint activity?   In SBCR's opinion, the low

15   EEO complaint activity thus far is attributed to the agency's leadership and

16   continuous efforts to support employees with workplace flexibilities, in

17   sustaining a safe and healthy workplace.

18   In addition, it should be noted that the Partnership for Public

19   Service ranks the NRC seventh for its "Effective Leadership," ranked sixth for

20   its "COVID: Supportive Leadership," and ranked second for its "COVID:

21   Employees' Wellbeing" categories respectively, thus demonstrating its

22   unwavering commitment to the principles of equal employment opportunity

23   and unlawful discrimination in the work place.

24   In this chart, our EEO complaint activity is low in

1 comparisons to previous years, and still remains only about one percent of our

2 work force with pre-complaints and less than one percent of our work force

3 with formal complaints.   NRC's EEO complaint activity remains extremely low

4 in comparison to other federal agencies of similar size.   Next slide please.

5   In reviewing the bases raised in our formal complaints covering the

6 first half of FY22, race, reprisal, sex, age, and color are the most cited,

7 constituting approximately 83 percent of formal complaint filings.   While

8 reprisal has been our most asserted bases, generally those having prior EEO

9 activity or opposition to an employment policy or practice over the past few

10 years, it should be noted that race is the protected basis cited thus far.   This

11 chart reflects all bases cited in a formal complaint, which may include multiple

12 bases.   Next slide please.

13   Harassment in the workplace remains a persistent problem for the

14 federal government, as reported by the Equal Employment Opportunity

15 Commission, and continues to be one of our most cited issues alleged.   It's

16 reported that workplace harassment too often goes unaddressed, where

17 employees who experience harassment fail to report the harassing behavior

18 or file a complaint because they fear disbelief of their claim and action on their

19 claim, blame, or social, or professional retaliation.   However, we continue to

20 work with our partners in OCHCO, OGC, and the Office of the Inspector

21 General to cultivate a civil workplace that is free from all forms of harassing

22 behavior and misconduct, discrimination, and retaliation.   This chart reflects

23 all issues cited in a formal complaint, which may include multiple issues. Next

24 slide please.

1   It's been proven that diverse teams drive better business

2   performance, and organizations with greater diversity become more resilient

3   and innovative by recognizing that inclusion is required for diverse groups of

4   people to thrive.

5   Now, the time has come for us to make the leap from raising

6   awareness to taking meaningful action in sustaining cultural change to support

7   diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. We must recruit a more

8   diverse work force and ensure that talented individuals from different

9   backgrounds are fully included, and identify specifically what they might need

10   to be successful.

11   In doing so, we must take a more direct approach in

12   understanding equity.   While the terms equity and equality may sound similar,

13   the implementation of one versus the other can lead to dramatically different

14   outcomes for marginalized people.   Equality means each individual, or group

15   of people is given the same resources or opportunities.

16   Equity is the recognition and elimination of systemic barriers

17   and privileges that produce disparate experiences of inclusion. Notably,

18   systemic disparities must be addressed in order for employees from

19   historically marginalized backgrounds and communities to experience all three

20   forms of fairness at work.   Which includes distributive (best outcomes),

21   procedural (how decisions are made), and interactional (that's interpersonal

22   treatment and informational).

23   To see real sustainable change and to leverage the full

24   potential of an individual's gifts and talents, we must go beyond diversity and

1   inclusion, and focus more on equity in the workplace. Leading with equity is

2   about recognizing that different people have different needs and being

3   committed to giving the people what they need to succeed. When that

4   happens, everyone wins. Next slide please.

5   Elevating equity is critical, because even in organizations

6   that are both diverse and inclusive, individuals who come from different

7   backgrounds can still run into policies, practices, or assumptions that prevent

8   them from being fully engaged, supported, and able to reach their full potential.

9   When it comes to promoting DEI, and there appears to be a

10   lack of focus on equity, well intentioned diversity and inclusion initiatives can

11   appear to be disingenuous. To emphasize this importance, we must prioritize

12   elevating equity in the workplace, and ensure that our agency practices and

13   polices are equitable and essential to sustainability of our investments in

14   diversity and inclusion and retaining the most talented individuals.

15   Let's place equity as the first consideration in our DEI

16   framework, and through it all, we've learned that when it comes to diversity,

17   equity, and inclusion in the workplace, languages, challenges, norms, and

18   solutions begin to shift based on the context, culture, and climate. As

19   leaders, we must do our part, and embrace the differences in the lived

20   experiences of people to help them in achieving their full potential.

21   In this illustration, you can see that their access to the

22   baseball game makes it equal. However, equity allocates the exact

23   resources, but allows each of the individuals to visually see and be totally

24   engaged in the baseball game, thus leading to positive outcomes for all of the

1   individuals.   Thank you, and I will turn this briefing back over to Cathy.

2   MS. HANEY: Thank you Stephen.   I'd like to thank the

3   staff and management in the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer, and

4   the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, who played a central role in the

5   agency's ability to achieve its mission and the NRC staff and management all

6   over the agency who model the NRC organizational values every single day.

7   Also, I'm very appreciative of the efforts of my fellow

8   presenters, and the numerous staff who helped prepare for today's briefing.

9   We all are committed to building off our work force's innovative ideas, and

10   valuable lessons to inform, and further enhance our strategic human capital

11   initiatives, and equal employment opportunity activities to better our agency.

12   And with that, I'll turn back to you Chairman.

13   CHAIRMAN   HANSON: Thanks   Cathy,   and   thanks

14   everyone for your presentations.   We're going to begin questions this morning

15   with Commissioner Baran.

16   COMMISSIONER   BARAN: Thanks   Chairman.   Well,

17   thank you all for your presentations and for your work.   The agency's goal of

18   300 external hires by September 30th is extremely important.   Our attrition

19   has increased this year, it may end up hitting eight or nine percent as we heard

20   earlier.   We're going to need those external hires to sustain our work force,

21   and to do the work in front of us right now.

22   Given expected retirements and attrition in the coming

23   years, we're likely to need a sustained level of hiring in the coming years.   So,

24   I appreciate the innovative efforts that were discussed today to increase the

1 speed and efficiency of hiring. I also appreciate the renewed focus on

2 recruiting a diverse pool of candidates; that's terrific. I'd like to ask some

3 questions about how the hiring effort is going.

4   Eric, 300 external hires in a year is a lot more than we're

5 used to, it's ambitious, do we think we're going to achieve that goal?

6   MR. DILWORTH: Thank you sir for that question. I'm

7 really optimistic that we can reach that goal and a couple of reasons why.

8 First of all, the collaboration with office directors, regional leaders, and really

9 the entire work force to work on the hiring effort. That collaboration is

10 something I haven't seen in other places, where everyone's working towards

11 this goal for the mutual benefit of the agency.

12   So, that's -- I'm really optimistic for that reason. The other

13 reason, we've brought on approximately 111 new employees already this

14 year. In addition, we have 90 plus poised to come on right now in the fourth

15 quarter of this fiscal year. The other part is that we have enough actions in

16 the system to support over 250 new hires. Now, of course all of those won't

17 be executed in this FY, but we do have enough that will support getting to 300,

18 and also put us in a position to move into FY23 in an upward path. So,

19 because of those reasons I am optimistic that we can reach that goal.

20   COMMISSIONER BARAN: That's great to hear. As I talk

21 with folks across the agency, I hear anecdotes about hiring challenges.

22 OCHCO of course has the whole picture, so I want to get your take on some

23 of the concerns I've heard. I'm told sometimes that there's still a fair bit of

24 resistance amongst supervisors and managers to posting openings externally.

1   And at some level I understand why filling a spot with an

2   existing NRC employee might be a supervisor's first instinct.   It's generally

3   easier and quicker to hire internally than to open it up to applicants outside the

4   agency, and there's a view that an existing employee is more familiar with the

5   agency and can hit the ground running.   But internal hiring doesn't meet the

6   need to bring in new talent or maintain the size of our overall work force.

7   It moves the same people around, instead of bringing new

8   people into the agency.   Eric, how big a challenge is this instinct to hire from

9   within, and what are we doing to address that issue?

10   MR. DILWORTH: Thank you sir.   You know, that is a

11   challenge, and because we had been doing a lot of internal moves only for the

12   last few years, we needed to take a new approach.   So, as we mentioned

13   earlier in the briefings, one of our first approaches was to educate managers

14   on the hiring flexibilities, all of the different tools we have to reach the best

15   candidates.

16   Not blocking, or eliminating internal moves, making sure that

17   we can look at our internal hires, open our announcements in such a way that

18   internal applicants can be considered at the same time we can consider

19   external applicants.   And then our advising and educating hiring managers

20   that they have the flexibilities to fill their positions with the best candidates,

21   whether they be internal or external.

22   But then being able to recruit those external candidates, and

23   they see all the qualified folks that they have -- that they can potentially bring

24   into the agency.   So, by doing that, and working with them closely, we've

1   been able to keep internal actions moving.   We've had over 180 internal

2   actions while we're doing all of the external hiring also.

3   COMMISSIONER BARAN: Good, well that's good to hear.

4   I've also heard some frustration that it can often take months for an applicant

5   to hear back with a job offer and that applicants have sometimes moved on

6   by then to other opportunities.   Are we seeing that problem?   And if so, what

7   can be done to shorten those time lags?

8   MR. DILWORTH: So, part of that is the time to hire.   If it

9   takes three, four months to actually fill a job, of course the applicants can

10   become frustrated. So, what we've done, one of the things as mentioned

11   earlier in the briefings, provided talking points to managers, because a lot of

12   managers, after they do the interviews, they will have contact with the

13   employees or potential employees.

14   So, we gave them talking points, how they can talk to

15   applicants about the flexibilities that we have, the hiring process, so that's one

16   part of it.   The other part of it is making sure our HR specialists input the right

17   information in the system, so that the employees receive automated feedback,

18   that's a key component, because the system will provide automated feedback

19   as long as it's done right.

20   And then one thing that I've gone out and looked at in the

21   last couple of weeks, one key thing that we do different than many other

22   agencies, we actually have the HR specialist that's working a vacancy

23   announcement, their name and phone number is actually on the

24   announcement in USAJobs, where the applicant can call and receive direct

1 feedback.

2 I looked, most agencies either have a call center, or nothing.

3 So, having that personal touch really makes a difference in keeping our

4 applicants motivated to come work for us and also keep them informed of the

5 hiring process.

6 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Well, I'm glad to hear about

7 those efforts. I know it is a challenge in terms of just the competitive nature

8 of the job market. Doing federal hiring is a little more complex than hiring at

9 some other organization, and so those kinds of steps, I think, are going to be

10 really important to make sure we're not losing folks who just aren't sure what's

11 happening, and move on, because they haven't heard back.

12 Another concern I hear is that many applicants want 100

13 percent telework, and that we may be at a competitive disadvantage because

14 we're generally not offering 100 percent telework. How much of an issue is

15 that, and are we losing qualified candidates because of the telework policy?

16 MR. DILWORTH: So, we hear many stories from

17 managers about losing candidates, because they ask about full time telework.

18 We also have our HR staff trying to monitor that and collect actual declinations.

19 So, you have a situation where a person gets offered a job, and they may

20 mention that, we can really identify that. But when applicants pull out before

21 they actually go through the entire process, it's hard to manage.

22 But we do hear that and it is something we're making sure

23 we try to gauge and collect information on. But the one key we do -- what we

24 talk to applicants about, and one of the reasons we gave our hiring managers

1 talking points, is that we can talk about all the flexibilities that we do offer in

2 the NRC.   It's a mixed bag of telework throughout the government.

3   I've talked to different OCHCOs, other organizations, they're

4 dealing with similar challenges.   When they may have one occupational

5 series as a full time telework, but not the entire agency.   So, it's a competitive

6 thing, but there's no one solution for the government.   It's what's right for each

7 agency.   So, we make sure we identify why we have the policy we have, and

8 additionally, all of the flexibilities that we offer within NRC.

9   So, we really are competitive, and we'll remain competitive

10 with all other agencies by being -- informing our candidates and making sure

11 they understand the goodness that we have here at the NRC.

12   COMMISSIONER BARAN: Well, I appreciate that.   My

13 view has been that having employees come into the office a couple days a

14 week can be beneficial for team building, mentoring, knowledge management,

15 and overall organizational culture and health.   But I do worry that NRC may

16 struggle to compete for new employees with organizations offering 100

17 percent telework.   It may prove to be a retention problem for us as well.

18   To get the employees we need and to keep the employees

19 we have, we may need to offer more telework than would otherwise be ideal

20 from an organizational perspective.   Maybe I'll ask this question to Cathy,

21 although Eric, if you want to chime in too, that's totally fine obviously.   How

22 far along is the staff at looking at that challenge, as kind of the greater

23 challenge of the telework policy, the competition for new employees and

24 retention of existing employees, where are we on that kind of broader

1   question?

2   MS. HANEY: So, thanks for the question. So, we, at a

3   senior leadership level, have really been monitoring the data that OCHCO's

4   provided to us about why people are leaving, why they're declining efforts,

5   because we really -- to the extent that we can get in front of the scenario you

6   just described, we do want to get in front of it. So, we do have, I guess I

7   would say two things.

8   One, we have a team, we call it the HEART team, which is

9   looking at really -- it is our work under a hybrid environment, where we're going

10   out and gathering information from our staff and from the managers about

11   improving our organizational health, especially looking forward to working in a

12   hybrid environment.   Their report is due to us end of September time frame.

13   So, but at the same time, we get routine briefings from them,

14   so we are picking up on, again, some of that anecdotal information that you're

15   doing. With regards to looking at the telework policy, we just recently had a

16   meeting, a senior leadership meeting where we spent a considerable amount

17   of time looking at what are the next steps for us, and at looking at that policy.

18   And when I say policy, it's really the fact of asking staff to

19   come in a couple of days a week.   So, we're in the -- I would say we're a little

20   bit beyond the early stages that recognize -- of moving forward with that.   I

21   think we'll have more information for you in the upcoming months on what

22   we're looking at.

23   But we do recognize that we need to go back and look at

24   what the current implementing guidance is, as well as doing some of the bench

1   marking, and learning from what Eric is saying.   So, very much interested,

2   and know we need to focus on this area and share your concerns.

3   COMMISSIONER BARAN: Thanks Cathy, appreciate it.

4   And Eric, just I want to come back to you for one last topic.   I know that the

5   agencywide hiring initiative is a huge amount of work for OCHCO, so first,

6   thank you to everyone in OCHCO for all the work that you're doing.   My

7   question is does OCHCO have what it needs to accomplish our hiring goals?

8   And if not, what resources or assistance do you need to reach these tough

9   goals?

10   MR. DILWORTH: Thank you.   We do, early on in this

11   effort, we put together our plan, and approached EDO, very supportive of us

12   filling all of our vacancies.   So, that's something we've been working on,

13   making sure we fill our -- of course we need all of our HR vacancies filled, so

14   that we can help with this tasker.   And that's in all areas throughout OCHCO,

15   so that was a big part.

16   Also looking at the funding.   We've looked at we need

17   additional funds to keep our contracts going, because we have contractors

18   that assist us in the hiring effort.   Fortunately, we're unexecuting in some

19   areas like travel, and those things within our own OCHCO funds, so we're able

20   to move those to provide the funding we need in the areas of this hiring effort.

21   So, with the help of the EDO office, our finance office, we've

22   been able to move funds, and have the funding in the right place.   And also,

23   we're looking out in FY23.   So, right now we have all the funds we need to

24   execute this hiring effort and the resources.   Now, we still need to get our

1   human resources on board, because we're -- just like everyone else,

2   constantly facing turn over, and also trying to find HR experts to come on

3   board the NRC.

4   So, we're in a good spot and headed in the right direction.

5   COMMISSIONER BARAN: Okay, good. Well that's good

6   to hear, please let us know if that situation changes on that. And with that,

7   Chairman, I'll turn it back over to you.

8   CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thank you Commissioner Baran.

9   Next, we'll hear from Commissioner Wright.

10   COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Thank you Mr. Chairman,

11   and good morning to everyone. This is a really good meeting. This is

12   something that's very important, and it's becoming more and more important

13   as we kind of return to normal work in a way, and bringing forward what we've

14   experienced and how we're going to apply things moving forward. Eric, I'm

15   going to stay with you for just a second.

16   I appreciate your answers to Commissioner Baran, but I

17   wanted to ask you a bit more detail about the collaboration with office and

18   regional management. And you referred to prioritizing the hiring, are the

19   regions, and the offices using similar strategies, or are they different

20   depending on where they're at, and depending on their needs.

21   MR. DILWORTH: They're using similar strategies, but also

22   looking at the way they recruit in one location may be different than other

23   locations. You might have more colleges and universities in one location, and

24   they have a good relationship recruiting them. Where another location, you

1 may have to reach out a little bit more.   So, because we have Colleen Todd

2 as our regional -- our chief of the regional staffing office.

3   So, she works with all the regions to pull together a standard

4 strategy, that then they can branch out on.   She works with their offices, and

5 they meet weekly to make sure we're doing things that work for that region,

6 and they share ideas.   On top of that, I think she mentioned the HIRENRC

7 effort.   In that effort, we have actually employees from the regions and offices

8 that work together on Teams to pull together vacancy announcements that

9 can be used across the regions and across the offices, pulling together

10 position descriptions that can be used and standardized across the offices and

11 regions.   So, that's the type of collaboration that we're using to really help us

12 in the hiring effort.

13   COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: So, I guess what I'm hearing

14 you say, once you find something that is effective, if it's happening in one area,

15 you can take that, and work it across the system right away.

16   MR. DILWORTH: Yes.

17   COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Because you're all working

18 together, all right, thank you for that.   So, Colleen, I'm going to come to you,

19 since he mentioned your name.   Good morning to you.   And I noticed in

20 reviewing the background materials that the high priority skill gaps and saw

21 the gaps in the areas of resident inspectors in Region, I believe it was I and II.

22   And I really appreciate the fact that you're focusing on

23 making sure we recruit and retain the inspectors we need in order to perform

24 our safety mission.   Is there anything that you need from the Commission to

1 help full these skill gaps?

2 MS. TODD: Well, thank you for the question. I think that

3 we're in a good place right now, in terms of the collaboration. I had mentioned

4 the joint vacancy announcements that we're doing, and for those of you who

5 aren't aware, that project engineer resident inspector development program,

6 that is the pipeline position for our resident inspectors.

7 So, what the regions are doing is they are using a strategy

8 of looking and seeking experienced individuals who can get the training

9 necessary in that development program, and quickly step into those resident

10 inspector positions. So, we're hiring folks with experience, and some later

11 entry level at the grade 11, and so forth, who can -- so, it's a mixed strategy

12 of experience.

13 So, to answer your question, I think we're doing okay right

14 now with the efforts that are underway.

15 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Okay, well keep us posted,

16 because we want to help on anything that we need to. But we don't know that

17 you need it until you let us know, so thank you for that. Doug Tharp, it was

18 good to see you in Region IV last week, thank you for using my word by the

19 way, recalibration, I appreciate that, the shout out. And I appreciate your

20 presentation.

21 Talk to me a little bit about the difference between hybrid

22 learning and blended learning. And I guess let me go a little bit further, are

23 there examples of how maybe the staff could adjust a one week technical in-

24 person training course to an effective blended experience that might better

1   support employees who are in a hybrid state?

2   MR. THARP: Yes, thank you sir for that question, it's kind

3   of a technical one.   So, actually there's debate going on in the learning

4   industry right now about the difference between hybrid and blended. But

5   simply put it means hybrid is people in different places at the same time, so

6   you're doing part of the course in person, and part are virtual.   And what

7   happens in that environment is neither audience gets the full attention of the

8   instructor.

9   And I would actually discourage that type of activity.   So,

10   we go to blended, and what blended is, is it takes that same course, and

11   breaks it down into pieces, and does it in a way where everyone gets to be

12   engaged.   So, what you might do with -- for example, you asked about a one-

13   week technical training course.   So, instead of being in the classroom for five

14   days for eight hours of lecture each day, you might break that down, and do

15   some pre-work.

16   Where everyone can work wherever they are virtually, and

17   get some of the learning content, some of the background knowledge that they

18   need, and then come together in either a virtual -- actually first probably a

19   virtual classroom, and maybe review some of the content, and do some

20   collaborative work together, maybe in small breakout rooms.   And then when

21   you do those sessions, those lectures, they should be short, not an hour long,

22   or eight hours long, but maybe 20 to 30 minutes.

23   And then give an assignment and let them work on things.

24   And the reason for that is people learn and remember best when they're

1   applying knowledge or solving a problem.   So if we can make those sessions,

2   introduce the problem, and then give participants time to work, and solve the

3   problem, and then come back together and review and discuss it, they're going

4   to learn and retain much more.

5   And then finally at the end of this session, if there is hands-

6   on components, that's when you bring them together for lab work, we have

7   health physics labs where they come in, and actually use the instruments, or

8   the simulators for the reactor training courses.   So, rather than trying to push

9   that into five days, and do everything in person, spread it over a few weeks

10   with shorter amounts of time together, but more time to actually interact with

11   the content and practice and do things with it and apply the knowledge is going

12   to help them to retain it much better, and it's going to reduce the burden for

13   travel and time away from the job.

14   COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Wow, I kind of like what I'm

15   hearing you say there.   I hope we do that, and it works, that would be good.

16   Let me change here.   Have there been any challenges in implementing the

17   competency modeling program?   And if there have been, can you maybe

18   provide a little detail about those challenges and the plans to address it?

19   MR. THARP: Sure thing.   Competency models, the

20   biggest challenge in the beginning when we started several years ago was

21   just identifying which positions to model.   Because we have so many unique

22   positions, and within each role, or within each job title even, there are many

23   unique aspects of each job.   So, how do you build a model without doing what

24   we've done with position descriptions and building 2000 models?

1   That then wouldn't be very effective. So, we try to group

2   positions, and what we do is we follow the strategic work force planning

3   process, where they've identified the core positions for each office, and we

4   model those first. Some of the challenges we've seen is getting specific

5   enough that it meets everyone in that role's need, and not too specific so it

6   doesn't cover everyone who has a little bit of different things that they do within

7   their role.

8   So, we get some feedback on that, and that's the way to

9   solve the problem, the challenge is to get feedback. So, as users go in, and

10 do assessments, if they'll tell us yes, there are people in this role who do this

11 task, but not everyone, or this is a task that we do that was missed in the

12 model, we can make those updates, and it's fairly simple to make.

13   Long term the goal for the model is to do what I was talking

14 about, to make the learning more personalized, and it's after completing

15 assessments, what we need to continue to do is build resources, and then link

16 them to each of those tasks in the model that would then recommend to the

17 employee what they might do to close a skill gap if they have one.

18   And that can all be done in TMS, we just haven't gotten to

19 that point yet. So, that's the long-term fix, is to get feedback, update the

20 models, and then tie development opportunities to each of the tasks, so that

21 as users do see skill gaps, or potential skill gaps, we also give them a

22 recommendation on how to close it.

23   COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Thank you. And before I

24 close, I just want to let you know, I was very impressed with what I saw in your

1 presentation at Region IV last week, and we're lucky to have you down there.

2 So, good luck as you continue doing what you're doing, thank you.   Mr.

3 Chairman, my time has expired, I'm going to come back to you.

4 CHAIRMAN HANSON: All right, thank you Commissioner

5 Wright.   This is -- I want to thank everybody for their presentations this

6 morning.   I think this is a really great discussion, and I think it's important too,

7 that we're having this meeting today, just a couple weeks after our

8 transformation meeting.   Obviously, we've heard a lot that's innovative, and

9 creative, and a lot of energy that's going into this, and I really want to applaud

10 the staff for that.

11 I want to share kind of like Commissioner Baran, I want to

12 share some feedback I've heard from employees over the last year, or 18

13 months, or so, as well as kind of my own thinking about staff development,

14 and how we think about developing and growing employees that are already

15 in the agency.   And I kind of want to hone in on two pieces of feedback.

16 First, I had a discussion with some technical employees

17 awhile back, and they noted the lack of a clear development path for technical

18 folks who don't want to be managers.   While also noting that sometimes

19 technical folks become supervisors without kind of first getting the

20 management or people skills that are really essential for those functions.   And

21 the second piece I heard was in a discussion with the Federal Women's

22 Program Advisory Committee, FWPAC.

23 That sometimes employees are shut out of growth, or

24 promotion opportunities because the jobs are classified as technical, but they

1   don't really require those skills.   Again, kind of think supervisory and

2   management positions.   And there are organizations in both the public, and

3   private sectors, I've been a part of them, I'm sure others have too, that have

4   cultures that basically say look, if you want to grow, and get ahead, you have

5   to become a manager.

6   And I think you all know where I'm going with this, right?

7   The infamous Peter principle, where people are promoted based on the

8   performance in the jobs in their current roles, and not necessarily how well

9   suited they are for the role that they're being promoted into.   And I think we

10   can see this at NRC sometimes too, right?   Are you a good, technically

11   competent GG-14 who wants to grow in your career?

12   Well, oftentimes, historically at least, the main way to do that

13   at NRC is to become a branch chief.   And then a deputy division director, and

14   up on so on, and so forth.   Regardless of kind of whether you're really suited

15   to that progression, or even whether you enjoy it, or even kind of want to

16   necessarily do that.   So, I think we need to come up with ways for technical

17   folks to grow and develop without necessarily having to become supervisors

18   and managers.

19   And I know that in the government we have these SL/ST

20   positions, or SLS positions here at the NRC for senior folks.   But I think we

21   need to think about how to formulate kind of a whole-of-career model here.

22   And secondly, I think we need to expand our apertures for how we develop

23   and hire managers, recognizing that there are smart folks who could be good

24   managers, good people persons, who understand enough about the

1   engineering without having to have an engineering or scientific degree.

2   And I think this bears on today's conversation in several

3   ways.   And Colleen, let me start with you.   I've heard before that employees

4   are sometimes disheartened by the lack of opportunity we currently have to

5   kind of move up in the agency.   I think in part this is structural, right?   That

6   we shrunk over time, and it's that aspect of it isn't necessarily -- that isn't easily

7   fixed, let's face it.

8   But it perhaps, it's also a function of there being kind of

9   primarily only one definition of what it means to move up.   And have you

10   thought about this?   And what are we doing to kind of keep employees

11   engaged so they don't leave for other opportunities outside of this kind of

12   vertical promotion track that we're having?   That may or may not be suited to

13   all employees.

14   MS. TODD: Well, first thing I would say there were two

15   transformation initiatives that focused on employee career development.   I'm

16   sure you may have heard about those in previous briefings, so I think those

17   are good tools and resources for folks.   And I would definitely agree.   As the

18   agency was downsizing, opportunities for promotion, they were decreasing at

19   a time.

20   We see now that our attrition has been going up, and so I

21   think that there are opportunities.   They may not be as many as there were

22   say ten years ago, but I think that there are continuing to be opportunities.

23   We've had a lot of opportunities for staff to advance recently.   I mentioned the

24   career journey, and other paths, and sometimes, even my own career,

1   sometimes you do need to move laterally, or you need to take a step

2   backwards in order to advance.

3   So, I think there's -- you know, there's our individual

4   development plans that we highly encourage employees to look at, and work

5   with their supervisors, and really think about okay, what is my next step?   And

6   really have onus, and work, like I said, with their supervisor to see.   And the

7   supervisor can look, are there rotational opportunities, or something that we

8   can do to get you that experience?

9   CHAIRMAN HANSON: Has there been a look at job

10 classifications to see if jobs that are classified as engineering or some other

11 STEM position really kind of require those?   I mean it seems that there's

12 maybe some basic literacy as you move up for some management roles, but

13 not necessarily a BS, or an MS, in an engineering discipline for those.   Has

14 there been some thought given to that?

15   MS. TODD: I've had some recent conversations with some

16 deputy regional administrators and some folks in the headquarters program

17 offices to look at.   So, I think we're starting to look at those positions.   The

18 branch chief position specifically, to see what is necessary?   Is this truly the

19 801 general engineering series?   Is it necessary?

20   But I think it's early in the phases of looking at those

21 positions, Chairman.

22   CHAIRMAN HANSON: Okay, good, well I want to continue

23 to encourage that.   But I want to turn to Eric and Doug, because I think some

24 of the issues that I'm talking about, these kind of -- I don't know what to call it

1   - non-supervisory career progression for STEM folks, I guess I'll use that

2   shorthand. It kind of implies the competency model and I think in some key

3   ways.

4   And I guess I'm -- I really like the idea of the competency

5   model. I was down at Region II awhile back and starting to get my arms

6   around this, because I know they're kind of one of the early movers on this,

7   particularly for resident inspectors. But how do you -- some of the ideas that

8   I was talking about, are they accommodated in the competency model? Is this

9   a square peg in a round hole kind of a thing? Talk to me a little bit about this.

10   MR. THARP: So, I'll start, this is Doug. So, the competency

11   model would account for that, however the OPM requirements, the way the

12   positions are written, sometimes the formal education requirements are

13   mandated. So, we actually have examples at the TTC, instructors who they

14   were actually operators at licensed facilities, they came to us as trainers, they

15   have gone through the full qualification process, so they've demonstrated that

16   they can perform the resident inspector duties.

17   They actually fill in from time to time, as temporary

18   inspectors for vacations, or whatever. So, they're capable of doing the job,

19   they do a great job, but they can't be assigned in the role because of the

20   position description limitations. So, the competency models will make up the

21   difference as far as developing the skills, but it doesn't help overcome the

22   OPM requirements written into the position descriptions.

23   CHAIRMAN HANSON: Okay, all right, thanks. A lot of

24   other places that we could go here. I won't take up too much more time other

1 than to say I was down at the TTC last weekend, and really enjoyed meeting

2 with Steve, and Matt, and Latonya, and the rest of the team down there, and

3 was just really impressed by the capabilities that they have for kind of direct,

4 hands-on learning.

5   And I think as we think about competency models and

6 employee development, whether on the management side, or on the technical

7 side, or even just kind of cultural assimilation, NRC 101 type side, I want to

8 make sure -- I'll be looking to see that the TTC has the resources it needs and

9 it continues to kind of be a key element, or even a centerpiece in those efforts

10 moving forward.

11   With that, now I'd like to introduce Sheryl Sanchez.   She is

12 the president of the National Treasury Employees Union Chapter 208 here at

13 the NRC, and I'd like to hand it over to her to make some remarks.   Sheryl.

14   MS.   SANCHEZ: Good   morning   Chairman   Hanson,

15 Commissioners Baran and Wright, managers, and staff, and most importantly,

16 NRC bargaining unit employees.   I'm Sheryl Sanchez, president of NTEU

17 Chapter 208, and I'm honored to provide the union's comments this morning.

18   NTEU   Chapter   208   is   the   exclusive   representative   of

19 bargaining unit employees at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.   I'm joined

20 virtually by many NTEU team members who work very hard every day on your

21 behalf, such as our stewards, labor partners, and a variety of volunteers.

22 Without such a dedicated team, NTEU would not be able to work together to

23 strive to ensure that every NRC employee is treated with dignity and respect.

24   Happy Pride Month.   I hope you will participate in various

1   activities both at the NRC and outside the NRC as I plan to.   I was very moved

2   and grateful to be able to attend the Pride flag raising last Tuesday.   I'm

3   incredibly proud to work for an agency that embraces all employees and

4   strives to empower our employees to bring their whole selves to work.

5   We've come so far, and so many have suffered to make this

6   possible, but we can do better. There's still far to go.   I have a personal story

7   about a friend in the LGBTQ plus community.   Dr. Michael Dan Henry is my

8   former brother-in-law.   Although I am no longer married to his brother, I am

9   proud to still call him a friend.   Michael transitioned to male in the early 1980s.

10   Sadly, it was not an easy journey back then.   Dr. Henry was

11   a professor of Russian and political science at St. John's University in New

12   York, and he had to wait to receive tenure and take an unpaid sabbatical to

13   transition, which was all done at his own expense.   He had to postpone his

14   life for some time to keep his employment, this is very sad.   Most of his family,

15   including his mother, were aware of his situation, but they still had to tell

16   Raymond, his father.   Raymond was a typical suburban blue-collar man, who

17   worked at a tire factory, and had a ham radio hobby.   His mother was

18   explaining the situation to her husband one evening, and she was a little

19   apprehensive about what his reaction would be.   Raymond was just about the

20   sweetest man on the planet, and I mean this sincerely.

21   He had six children, and my ex-husband swears that he

22   never heard his father raise his voice to any of the children.   Sure, he might

23   have yelled a little when snaking out the sink, or something, but he did not

24   raise his voice to his wife or children.   Dude did a lot better than me.   His wife

1 Jean did her best to explain, and I'm sure Raymond didn't really understand

2 at that point in time.

3   But his completely logical reaction was perfect. He said

4 roughly, and I paraphrase, because it was a long time ago. "He's still the

5 same person, so why should anybody care? I do hope that people will mind

6 their own business though and let him be. Oh, and what's for dinner?" The

7 point is that if this man got it immediately, and loved and supported his son no

8 matter what, and in the 1980s, everyone could learn a lot about tolerance and

9 love from Raymond Henry.

10   Okay, deep breath, I had technical difficulties before I got

11 on, so I'm a little flustered. Okay, and a heartwarming story, change of topic,

12 let's get real about what's currently going on at the NRC. This is one of the

13 most challenging times I've ever faced as president of NTEU Chapter 208.

14 I've seen NRC employees have the office redesigned by someone who clearly

15 has no idea what work we do.

16   I've seen NRC employees being told they can't continue to

17 telework, even though they were doing a great job. I've seen NRC

18 employees forced to return to an office they don't think is safe. Finally, and

19 sadly, I've seen far too many NRC employees decide they've had enough and

20 leave the agency. I know times are hard now for our bargaining unit

21 employees, but I want you to know that the harder it gets, the harder NTEU

22 will fight for you.

23   We know that people want telework, which is why we

24 submitted an institutional grievance in February, arguing that telework

1 decisions should be based on only two things. One, is your work portable?

2 And two, can you effectively do your work while teleworking? Of the over 100

3 employees that left the agency in the November to December 2021 time

4 frame, 23 told NTEU that not getting the telework they desired was the sole

5 reason they left.

6   Our grievance is in its final stages now, and we will soon

7 invoke arbitration. I'm confident that we can, and will win, not only because

8 we're right, because we have case law on our side. Over 95 percent of our

9 bargaining unit employees don't want open floor plans like those on the sixth

10 floor of One White Flint North. We were told this floor was being built as a

11 concept floor, and it would be used to see what worked and what didn't work,

12 and the agency would use the experience to adjust the design for future

13 renovations. In the spirit of partnership, we agreed, but in hindsight, we

14 should have pushed harder, polled our employees more robustly, and issued

15 the results of our poll more quickly, as it took us over eight months at that time

16 to issue our report. This time, recently, when the agency announced their

17 intention to renovate other floors with a tweaked version of the same design,

18 we immediately invoked bargaining, provided our bargaining unit employees

19 a much longer, more comprehensive poll, and produced an almost 400-page

20 report in a little over five weeks. We are telling the agency this is a terrible

21 idea, and our survey gave us an invaluable tool in this fight - a clear and

22 resounding unified voice. These two issues are foremost on our employee's

23 mind.

24   And as we talked about recruitment and retention, we

1   cannot ignore the obvious.   While recruitment is important, it is equally, and

2   perhaps more important to keep our valued employees and keep them happy.

3   We are losing employees to retirement, but we are also losing mid-career

4   employees.   And we're seeing employees reject job offers because they

5   cannot work remotely.

6   You can work for DOE Germantown from Iowa for goodness

7   sake.   Many employees have told me that they currently have multiple job

8   applications in at other places and are seeking to leave the NRC.   This really

9   troubles me, because I worked for DOE at a National Laboratory and the NRC.

10   I truly believe that the NRC has the best employees; our employees deserve

11   better. Some days are incredibly frustrating.

12   But what keeps me from quitting, what gets me up ready to

13   fight the good fight every day is our employees.   There's still time to recover,

14   and I certainly hope we do.   But we continue to lose good employees, and

15   many of our current employees are very discouraged.   Eventually it will

16   impact our mission if we cannot continue to employ the best staff in the

17   government.

18   I don't want to sound dramatic, but this could result in

19   something bad, such as an accident, incident, or event.   I certainly hope this

20   is never the case, but should it happen, I will not be too nice to come back,

21   and tell y'all I told you so.   For those bargaining unit employees who have not

22   been involved, or active in the union, I urge you to change this.   Join us in our

23   fight and help us make the NRC a better place to work.

24   We can do it, and this is the time.   Thank you for listening

1 to me.

2 CHAIRMAN HANSON: Thank you Sheryl. Thank you

3 again to our presenters this morning. Thank you to my colleagues. As

4 usual, we covered a lot of ground.   It was a really good discussion on a whole

5 host of areas that are really important to the proper functioning of this area.

6 Two last comments before we go, I just want to quickly thank staff, in SBCR,

7 OCFO, and Research, and other program offices for sending the Commission

8 the SECY paper on reestablishing the minority serving institution grant

9 program.

10 I want to thank the collegiality, and collaboration of my

11 colleagues on that as well, and look forward to that program getting up and

12 running and reestablishing close ties with minority serving institutions around

13 the country.   And for both a pipeline for the NRC, as well as just bolstering

14 the capabilities amongst institutions.   And on a final note, we have a holiday

15 weekend coming up, and I'd like to wish everyone listening a happy

16 Juneteenth.

17 Even though I know that happy is kind of -- I don't know if

18 it's entirely the right word on this, because while it is an opportunity for

19 celebration, the end of slavery in the United States, it's also a day for deep

20 reflection, and Juneteenth I think should remind us all that the history of this

21 nation shapes the society we live in today.   And that history should not be

22 forgotten or diminished in its importance.

23 With that, thank you all again, and we're adjourned.

24 (Whereupon the above-entitled matter went off the record at

1   11:47 a.m.)