

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The HR Newsletter of The Agriculture Program

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Alternate Work Location (AWL) Options

In our last issue we discussed flexible work schedules as an alternate means of meeting employee and unit needs. Another option that could provide the similar flexibility is an Alternate Work Location (AWL) arrangement.

AWL is the re-location of an employee's work site either to his/her home, or to another work site. AWL arrangements can be applied on a part-time or full-time basis, with the number of hours depending on factors such as the nature of the work to be done, the needs of the unit, and if possible, the needs of the employee.



recruitment and retention. However, such arrangements can also lead to problems, if not implemented correctly.

The supervisor, unit head and Director or Deputy Director must review and approve alternate work location arrangements prior to changing any work locations, establishing performance standards, or before changing the terms and conditions of employment of any other employee. The AWL location agreement may be terminated if, in the judgment of the supervisor, it leads to diminished work quality, is disruptive to the work flow, is not in the best interest of the Agriculture Program or, in general, is not suitable to an individual or office.

For additional information refer to Alternate Work Arrangements - Telecommuting, A Manager's Guide, which can be found at:

<http://agtraining/hrlearn.htm>.

Some of the advantages to a unit may include increased employee productivity, improved employee morale, lower use of employee sick leave, and improved opportunity for unit re-

The Human Resources Office is available to assist if you have questions or concerns about alternate work location arrangements.

Non-Faculty/Support Staff Performance Evaluations

Reminder—Annual Performance Evaluations for all non-faculty/support staff should be conducted before March 15, 2002. As part of the process, also be sure to review with the employee their position description.

Performance evaluation procedures are available on the Ag Program Human Resources web page at <http://aghr.tamu.edu/pol.htm> or call the HR Office at 979-845-2423.

HR QUICK FACTS

- **Employment/Compensation**
Phone: 979-845-7986
Fax: 979-862-4885
- **Benefits** Phone: 979-845-2178 Fax: 979-862-4885
- **Payroll** Phone: 979-845-3636 Fax: 979-845-9329
- **Training** Phone: 979-845-4766 Fax: 979-862-4885



LINKS

- AG Program HR:**
aghr.tamu.edu/default.htm
- Employment:**
aghr.tamu.edu/employment.htm
- Benefits:**
aghr.tamu.edu/benefits.htm
- Ag Program Directory:** agdirectory.tamu.edu/
- Payroll:** aghr.tamu.edu/pay.htm
- Forms (Alphabetical List):**
<http://agservices.tamu.edu/forms/forms-alfa.htm>

Social Security Retirement Age Going Up

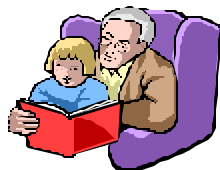
A change in the Social Security law was enacted in 1983 that affects only workers born in 1938 or later. The increase is being phased in gradually. When fully implemented, the **full retirement age** for anyone born in 1960 or later will be 67.

The chart below shows how the change is being phased in.

<u>Year of Birth</u>	<u>Full Retirement Age</u>
1937 or earlier	65
1938	65 and 2 months
1939	65 and 4 months
1940	65 and 6 months
1941	65 and 8 months
1942	65 and 10 months
1943-1954	66
1955	66 and 2 months
1956	66 and 4 months
1957	66 and 6 months
1958	66 and 8 months
1959	66 and 10 months
1960 and later	67

If you take **early retirement** (age 62), your benefits will be permanently reduced based on the number of months you will receive checks before you reach full retirement age. As a general rule, early retirement will give you about the same total Social Security benefits over your lifetime, but in smaller amounts to take into account the longer period you will receive them.

For more information about retirement benefits, call the Social Security toll free number at 800/772-1213 or visit their web site, www.ssa.gov. For additional retirement information visit the Agriculture Program Human Resources web site at: ag.hr.tamu.edu/retirement.htm.



United Way Campaign Award Winner

Gloria Schwind and Suzanne Deatherage accepted an award on behalf of the employees of the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station and Texas Cooperative Extension presented during the annual celebration luncheon of the United Way Campaign of the Brazos Valley held February 28. The plaque was awarded for the "TAMU System

Agency with the Largest Dollar Increase" at the annual celebration luncheon for the United Way of the Brazos Valley.

Thanks to the generous employees who made this award possible.

COUNTY PROGRAMS HR CORNER

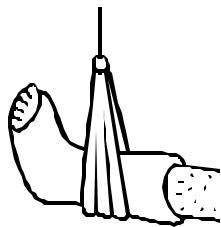
Staff:

Dan Bogart 979-845-3708
 Jennifer Humphries .. 979-845-7810
 Sissy Jackson 979-845-3708
 Dana Daugherty..... 979-845-7207
 Barbara Bracken 979-862-7197
 Anna Dean 979-845-7880
 FAX 979-458-1046

Announcing New Employee

Ms. Jennifer Humphries has joined the County Programs Human Resources staff as employee benefits manager filling the position vacated by Alissa Schroeder. Jennifer was formerly with the TAMU Career Center as assistant director, Cooperative Education, since 1994. Her previous employment experiences were with IBM, Wells Fargo Bank, and Computer Systems and applications. She received her B.B.A. from TAMU in Business Analysis and her M. S. from TAMU in Human Resource Management. Since completing her M.S., she has also obtained certification with the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) as a Professional in Human Resources (PHR). We feel fortunate to add an individual with her qualifications and enthusiasm to our team.

Policy Patter



Hopefully you will never need to use the resources of the sick leave pool, but the sick leave pool hours are there for those who qualify and need them. Employees are eligible for sick leave pool hours once they have:

- missed 160 hours of work because of a catastrophic condition or combination of conditions,
- been under a medical practitioner's care for that condition(s) throughout the 160 hours, and
- exhausted all available paid time off.

Sick leave, vacation and compensatory time may be used to cover this requirement. If the employee does not have enough paid leave to cover the 160 hours, he/she must be placed on leave without pay until the requirement is met. The 160-hour requirement applies over any period that a condition persists. Employees are eligible for a maximum of 90 days (or one-third of

the time in the pool, if less) of sick leave pool for each event. The 160-hour requirement is also proportional to the employee's percent effort. In other words, a 50% employee would have to miss 80 hours of work to be eligible for the pool.

The regulation governing sick leave pool states that sick leave pool hours should not be awarded retroactively. Consequently, employees should be encouraged to apply for sick leave pool as soon as they think they will have the need for it.

Terminating employees can choose to donate sick leave to the pool in one-day increments, however, the donated sick leave may not be restored if they return to state employment within 12 months. Retiring employees may also donate all or part of their unused hours of sick leave. In either case, the donation must be signed on or prior to the date of separation from employment.

For additional information on sick leave pool you may call Human Resources or refer to System Regulation 31.06.01.

Training Room

The Wage and Salary TTVN training presented by Linda Edge and the "Hiring Foreign Nationals" presented by Mario Rojo del Busto were both very informative and timely. We are currently working with the video tape of the Hiring Foreign Nationals to enable it to be viewed by those who missed the training, or to have the information made available through a web-based training module. Your training liaisons will be informed when this material is available.



Do you know who your training liaison is?

Each unit has an individual appointed as a Human Resources training liaison. This person will receive all notifications of TTVN and special training which is to be presented by the Ag Program HR Office in cooperation with the County Programs HR Office. Check with your unit administration to find out who the unit training liaison is, then keep aware of the upcoming training opportunities - some may be of interest to you!

Don't forget: Free, web-based training courses are available for Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access, plus Corel WordPerfect and others on the Land-Grant Training Alliance Online Lessons web site at: <http://www.lgta.org/> Check it out, then expand your software knowledge - for free!