

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

RESERVATIONS NEEDED: As part of force-shaping efforts, the Air Force restarted the career job reservation system in May.

The CJR system will reduce career field shortages and overages, and balance the career force within each skill, according to officials. The CJR system allows Air Force officials to limit the number of first-term Airmen re-enlistments in certain skills.

Beginning May 1, all first-term Airmen must have an approved CJR before they may re-enlist. Airmen serving in CJR-constrained skills must compete for a CJR quota. A list of 30 CJR-constrained specialties can be reviewed at local military personnel flights.

Four-year enlistees may apply for CJRs on the first duty day of the month during which they complete 35 months on their current enlistments, but no later than the last duty day of the month during which they complete 43 months of their enlistments. For six-year enlistees, they must apply between 59 months and 67 months. Local MPF re-enlistment office officials have more information. (*Air Force Print News*)

HIGH STANDARDS REMAIN: The Air Force will adjust the cutoff score used to gauge new recruits taking the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery in July.

The change — from 40 to 36 — does not mean the Air Force is lowering its standards, said Tina Strickland, chief of Air Force testing policy and research integration.

“We don’t want people to think we are lowering the standard of quality coming into the Air Force,” Ms. Strickland said. “It appears that way because 36 is lower than 40, but it will still be the same quality of applicants we are accepting into the Air Force today.”

Test takers get a raw score — the number of questions scored correctly. But, Ms. Strickland said, DOD officials are more interested in where the test taker stacks up against a sample, or

Civilian
Focus

CIVILIAN CHANGES

Labor-relations draft due November

By K.L. Vantran
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Defense Department senior leaders approved the plans for the new national security personnel system, an official announced April 14.

Secretary of the Navy Gordon R. England, who heads the project, made the announcement.

The system, authorized by the fiscal 2004 National Defense Authorization Act, will introduce changes in the way the department hires, pays, promotes, disciplines and fires its civilian employees.

Six teams of about 25 to 30 people, representing various agencies within the department, spent several weeks reviewing the system, said Secretary England at a meeting with reporters in the Pentagon. Representatives from the Office of Personnel Management and Office of Management and Budget also participated. The teams received briefings from Department of Homeland Security and General Accounting Office officials.

Earlier this month, Secretary England and David S.C. Chu, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, sent a letter to the department’s civilian employees on the progress of the system.

“The task before us is to design a transformed system for the department’s 700,000 civilian employees that supports our national security mission while treating workers fairly and protecting their rights,” the letter stated. “We want to ensure that all stakeholders in the new system — including civilian employees (and) managers — have an opportunity to provide their thoughts, ideas, views and concerns.”

While the system is mission-first, it is also employee-centric, and Secretary England said he encourages input from employees. Mechanisms such as Web pages and town meetings will not only provide information to the work force, but also will allow for feedback.

The plan also calls for “aggressive, but event-driven schedules,” he said. The first milestone is to have a labor-relations draft regulation to the Federal Register by November.

“We have schedules, but they could be longer (or) they could be shorter, because it’s event-driven, and it depends on how we complete each step,” Secretary England said. “We won’t go to the next step until we finish, because we are going to do it right. We won’t rush it.”

“We’ll go through this in stages and phases,” he said. “We’ll get feedback, and we’ll keep improving the program as we proceed.”

Secretary England said the system is a great opportunity for employees, the Defense Department and America.

“It’s a great opportunity to have a terrific program for our employees, and I’m convinced we will,” he said. “The process will work, and the product will be one that everyone will want to embrace and be proud to embrace.”



Secretary England’s letter