127 Employees Feel Like a Million Bucks Due to NWSEO

(August 29, 2011) The National Weather Service has just finished distributing $919,248 to 127 NWS employees as a result of a settlement of a grievance filed by the National Weather Service Employees Organization challenging the FLSA exempt status of 161 employees. As a result of this grievance, the NWS converted 161 employees to FLSA non-exempt status so that they will be entitled to true time and one-half pay for overtime work. The 127 employees who worked overtime between August 2007 and August 2010 received lost overtime wages, interest and an equal amount as liquidated damages.

In 2010, the NWS initially distributed $25,286 to 12 of these employees as an initial payment of lost overtime. Last week, the NWS completed payment of an additional $893,962 in lost wages, interest and damages to the remaining employees. Employees who used compensatory time during that period also received the difference between what they were paid for comp time and the FLSA overtime rate, plus interest and an equal amount as liquidated damages.

Eighty-one of the employees involved in the grievance received more than $1,000 as a result of the settlement and 23 employees received over $10,000 in back pay, interest and damages.

"NWSEO proactively continues to look out for my well-being," said Michael Burgy, NWSEO member and Senior Electronics Technician in Alaska who received more than $7,000 from the FLSA settlement. "The Operations staff that I support tripled and I spent many hours working overtime that initially were not covered by time and half. Only NWSEO was intent on challenging this status. NWSEO provides additional options when none appear available. As one NWS BU employee, I had no input into the determinations of NWS for my position, but as a NWSEO member, I am not alone."

Last year, NWSEO settled another grievance which challenged the FLSA exempt status of 270 Met Techs, resulting in payment of $140,418 in lost overtime wages to these employees.