

Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

5 CFR Part 532

RIN 3206-AM33

Prevailing Rate Systems; Redefinition of the Northeastern Arizona and Colorado Appropriated Fund Federal Wage System Wage Areas

AGENCY: U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

ACTION: Proposed rule with request for comments.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Office of Personnel Management is issuing a proposed rule that would redefine the geographic boundaries of the Northeastern Arizona and Southern Colorado appropriated fund Federal Wage System (FWS) wage areas. The proposed rule would redefine Dolores, Montrose, Ouray, San Juan, and San Miguel Counties, CO, and the Curecanti National Recreation Area portion of Gunnison County, CO, from the Southern Colorado wage area to the Northeastern Arizona wage area. These changes are based on recent consensus recommendations of the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee to best match the counties proposed for redefinition to a nearby FWS survey area. No other changes are proposed for the Northeastern Arizona and Southern Colorado FWS wage areas.

DATES: We must receive comments on or before March 24, 2011.

ADDRESSES: Send or deliver comments to Jerome D. Mikowicz, Deputy Associate Director for Pay and Leave, Employee Services, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Room 7H31, 1900 E Street, NW., Washington, DC 20415-8200; e-mail pay-performance-policy@opm.gov; or FAX: (202) 606-4264.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Madeline Gonzalez, (202) 606-2838; e-mail pay-performance-policy@opm.gov; or FAX: (202) 606-4264.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

is issuing a proposed rule to redefine the Northeastern Arizona and Southern Colorado appropriated fund Federal Wage System (FWS) wage areas. This proposed rule would redefine Dolores, Montrose, Ouray, San Juan, and San Miguel Counties, CO, and the Curecanti National Recreation Area portion of Gunnison County, CO, from the Southern Colorado wage area to the Northeastern Arizona wage area.

OPM considers the following regulatory criteria under 5 CFR 532.211 when defining FWS wage area boundaries:

- (i) Distance, transportation facilities, and geographic features;
- (ii) Commuting patterns; and
- (iii) Similarities in overall population, employment, and the kinds and sizes of private industrial establishments.

Montrose County is currently defined to the Southern Colorado area of application. Based on our analysis of the regulatory criteria for defining appropriated fund FWS wage areas, we find that Montrose County would be more appropriately defined as part of the Northeastern Arizona area of application. When measuring to cities, the distance criterion favors the Northeastern Arizona wage area. When measuring to host installations, the distance criterion favors the Southern Colorado wage area. All other criteria are indeterminate. Although a standard review of regulatory criteria shows that most factors are indeterminate, distance to the closest cities does favor the Northeastern Arizona wage area. Based on this analysis, we recommend that Montrose County be redefined to the Northeastern Arizona wage area.

Gunnison County is currently defined to the Southern Colorado area of application. Our analysis of the regulatory criteria indicates that Gunnison County is appropriately defined as part of the Southern Colorado area of application. The distance criterion favors the Southern Colorado wage area. All other criteria are indeterminate. Based on the mixed nature of our regulatory analysis findings, there is no clear indication that Gunnison County should be placed in a different FWS wage area. However, the Department of the Interior informs us that the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park in Montrose County and the Curecanti National Recreation Area in Gunnison County are

co-managed and that the majority of employees who service the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park have duty stations at the Curecanti National Recreation Area. The two parks are adjacent, with the Curecanti National Recreation Area sharing its western boundary with the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. Because we are recommending that Montrose County be redefined to the Northeastern Arizona wage area, and because of the organizational relationship and geographic proximity of these two parks, we recommend that the portion of Gunnison County occupied by the Curecanti National Recreation Area be part of the Northeastern Arizona wage area. This change would ensure that FWS employees at the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and the Curecanti National Recreation Area are paid from the same wage schedule. The remaining portion of Gunnison County would continue to be part of the Southern Colorado wage area. We believe the mixed nature of our regulatory analysis findings indicates that the remaining locations in Gunnison County remain appropriately defined to the Southern Colorado wage area, with distance being the deciding factor.

Dolores County is currently defined to the Southern Colorado area of application. Our analysis of the regulatory criteria indicates that Dolores County would be more appropriately defined as part of the Northeastern Arizona area of application. The distance criterion for Dolores County favors the Northeastern Arizona wage area more than the Southern Colorado wage area. The commuting patterns criterion slightly favors the Northeastern Arizona wage area. All other criteria are indeterminate. Based on this analysis, OPM proposes to redefine Dolores County to the Northeastern Arizona area of application.

Ouray, San Juan, and San Miguel Counties are currently defined to the Southern Colorado area of application. Our analysis of the regulatory criteria indicates that Ouray, San Juan, and San Miguel Counties would be more appropriately defined as part of the Northeastern Arizona area of application. The distance criterion favors the Northeastern Arizona wage area more than the Southern Colorado

