

Budget Messages from LEI Supervisors

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From: _____
Sent: Tuesday, February 04, 2014 1:00 PM
To: FS-pdl r1 lei
Subject: FY-2014 LEI Budget Woes

Folks, I just got off of a national LEI VTC call yesterday and our Regional LEI Supervisors call today to discuss the above. I do not know if any of you have been tracking this but the national picture for LEI this year is extremely bleak.

Here in R1 our LEI budget has steadily declined from \$8.5 million 2 years ago to \$7.2 million this year. This \$7.2 figure is based on the budget passed by Congress and approved by the President in January 2014. As you may know, LEI is a Budget Line Item so we get what Congress and the president give us - separate from the rest of the agency. So while the FS "proper" budget went up and they got much of their fire transfer dollars reinstated, we in LEI actually were reduced and were not given our \$6 million in fire transfer back.

What this means for us in R1 as well as all other LEI units across the country is about a 15% reduction and a need to reduce expenditures significantly. I just spent 2 hours with the LEI supervisors trying to brain storm how to do that and while we have no firm ideas, the fact is that collectively, we all in R1 LEI are facing really hard times.

My goal as we move forward toward resolution is that any/all financial hits are shared equally; that we all remain professional; that no one loses their job (through RIF); and that we work closely with the NFS side of the house to help us see through this.

In the coming days/weeks, as direction emerges and/or is approved by the WO, I will be sharing ideas and commitments on how we can (and will) work our way through this. In the meantime, I would ask that we try to control the rumor mill; pick up the phone if you have a question or hear something that sounds a bit "askew"; and as I have said, remain professional.

We did come up with a large bullet list of potential things we could do to meet our current deficit of over \$1 million here in R1 but right now that's all it is, a list - so I am not going to worry you or bore you with those details. I can tell you that all LEI hiring nationally is frozen, for all positions. So anything we have vacant today will remain vacant and anything that may become vacant through attrition, will also remain vacant.

In the interim, I am always open to new ideas on how to streamline and cut costs. You are all really smart people so if you have something to share, please do so.

I apologize for having to be the messenger of such news but as I said, we will get through this.

Thanks in advance for your support and understanding.

Captains,

Beginning this Sunday (PP3), your LEOs are to utilize an "office day" each week until further notice. This day will not include weekends, and should therefore be directed more towards days when less forest visitor use is expected (i.e. Monday-Thursday). Their time should be spent completing paperwork, liaison/communicating with district staff, attending district meetings, as well as any office assignments you deem appropriate. The obvious justification behind this is because our LEI budget has been dramatically cut, and we must focus on limiting mileage. Please make it absolutely clear, **THIS IS NOT A DAY TO SIT AROUND DOING NOTHING** and/or being non-productive. If any LEI employee is found conducting activities outside of work-oriented tasks, disciplinary action will occur.

In the event an officer is called out (i.e. back-up a fellow officer, crime in progress, etc.) while restricted to the office, they should most definitely respond. However, normal day to day patrol work should not occur during their office days. Please remind your officers this is not punishment of any kind, but merely a last resort in attempting to save the necessary funding for salaries, required training, and vehicle costs that must be met.