

NEWS



Forest Service

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FEWER FOREST SERVICE ROAD MAINTENANCE EMPLOYEES TO CONTINUE WORK, FLEET MAINTENANCE TO BE CONTRACTED

Susanville, Calif., Jan. 7, 2004—As part of ongoing efforts to make government more efficient, 20 Lassen National Forest (NF) employees will be affected by the results of the statewide cost effectiveness studies on roads and fleet maintenance activities.

A total of 219 employees (139 in road maintenance and 80 in fleet maintenance) on the 18 NF's in California are affected by today's announcement. Of the total number of affected employees, the Lassen NF workforce consists of 11 roads maintenance employees and nine fleet maintenance employees. This workforce is located in Susanville and the surrounding communities of Quincy, Oroville, and Alturas. The decision follows nationally directed competitive sourcing studies comparing the costs to those of private sector contractors. The future status of the employees will be determined through subsequent steps over the next six months. The Forest Service (FS) will provide assistance to employees throughout the process.

“These detailed studies have found that it is to the government's advantage to continue our road maintenance work in-house, through use of a Most Efficient Organization (MEO),” said Lassen NF Supervisor Ed Cole. “MEO's are typically smaller than the existing organization, so changes in our roads maintenance workforce are expected.”

“For maintenance of our fleet, it was determined through this competitive process that it was more cost effective to contract that work out,” said Cole. “The private firm that won the contract is SERCO Management Services, a leading international fleet management and maintenance company.”

“I greatly appreciate the professionalism of our employees, including those in fleet and roads maintenance, whose hard work led to completion of these studies,” said Cole. “I am very concerned about the effects on our employees. Each affected employee has been personally contacted, and will be provided information about possible transfers to new positions or taking on new duties, and other options such as early retirement. We will work closely with each employee to help them make the best possible decision.”

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Roads and fleet work duties were studied in strict compliance with guidelines established by the Office of Management and Budget, USDA and FS to ensure accuracy, consistency and fairness. The roads maintenance employees will work under a Letter of Obligation, which is essentially the government's contract to accomplish the work. In fleet maintenance, a small residual governmental organization will be set up to implement and administer the SERCO contract, and for any work the contract does not cover.

The transitions are expected to take about six months. More than 5,000 permanent employees work on the 18 NF's and Pacific Southwest Regional Office in California. Most of the affected employees are permanent employees. Additional studies are planned for various segments of this workforce over the next five years.

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