

From *Federal Computer Week*:

Energy agency launches performance-based pay system

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Published on March 27, 2008

The Energy Department's National Nuclear Security Administration has launched a new performance-based pay system involving about 2,000 of its 2,500 employees.

NNSA officials described the effort as a pilot project that will test the feasibility of the new system, which collapses the traditional 15 General Schedule pay bands into broader pay bands. The new structure encompasses specific career paths covering professional, technical, administrative and support occupations with three or four pay bands in each path.

The ultimate purpose of the program to help the agency attract high-quality, technically skilled employees, NNSA Administrator Thomas D'Agostino said.

"This pilot project gives us the tools necessary to do so in an ever increasingly competitive job market," he said.

Officials said the new system will give managers greater leeway in establishing higher pay for their employees through appointments, promotions and performance evaluations. They also expect workers to be more motivated to perform well by the prospect of faster pay progression.

The Office of Personnel Management will oversee the project, which is scheduled to last five years. If deemed successful, it will become a permanent part of the personnel management system at NNSA, officials said.

NNSA is a relatively new federal agency. It was established by Congress in 2000 to maintain and improve the safety and security of the country's nuclear weapons stockpile.