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What the government taketh away, one area company decided to replace.

Peoria, Ill.-based Alliance Benefit Group, a firm that administers retirement plans, decided to implement a "cost of government" pay increase for its 70 employees this year.

"We realized that our employees were only going to realize 98 percent of their paychecks in January," said John Blossom, Alliance president and CEO, referring to the increase in the Federal Insurance Contributions Act payroll tax that went into effect in 2013.

"We decided to do something," Blossom said.

That something was to give all 70 employees a 2 percent raise, a move that definitely "surprised our employees, but it got their attention," Blossom said.

"About a third have sent me thank-you notes," he said, adding that the hike was designed to help employees "at the grocery store and gas station."

"I believe our federal government leaders on both sides of the aisle are failing to get the economy on the right track. Rather than taking money out of the paychecks of workers, our leaders need to look for ways to revive our economy," he said.

Blossom said that the 2 percent increase won't displace merit pay increases for employees.

"The pay increase is not intended to set a precedent that we intend to keep up with every decision made in Washington. However, we think it is an important time to make an investment in our people," he said.

Blossom said the company recently introduced an internal educational process for

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