

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

Injured Employees Walked out at Palatine and Carol Stream

Last week management began the ugly work of sending injured on duty employees home and informing them there is "No Work Available" for them because the work they are doing is not "necessary". The union was given little notice about these meetings and the employees were given no notice they were about to be put out of work. According to NRP protocol the local union gets 14 days notice on NWA meetings but the protocol changes for Limited Duty No Day Work meetings and they have been advised by Labor to give us 1 days notice. With No Day Work they say they are still looking for work for you but that search consists of sending e-mails to other offices that are also sending injured employees home. They say this work can be absorbed by bid employees and therefore is no longer necessary work.

Carol Stream Calling Overtime as Employees are Walked Out.

Carol Stream has been calling overtime in manual units including letters and flats and we heard the overtime call shortly before they walked three Clerks out of CS. The employees could not understand how there was no work for them as they work in letters and flats. I asked the man in charge of the NRP for the Northern Illinois District, Health and Human Resource Manager Gilbert Lopez how this could be? Why would management walk these employees out while calling overtime in the same units they were assigned to? He said that these employees were not "productive" and I asked him if work/time studies had been performed. He said no but they were not productive due to their physical limitations. Mr. Lopez was training several CS managers so the employee were told they were being put out of work in the presence of four managers and two union representatives.

Add Insult to Injury and Treated Like Criminals

One manager read the employee the letter stating that management had not found necessary work for them and what their rights were as far a filing a claim for OWCP. The process is to read to the letter so they stick to the script. Not one employee has made a threat in any of these meetings although some have been angry. Some of the employees were quiet as they may have been in shock while some tried explain where they normally work etc. They did not understand this was a set-up and the facts do not matter. How do they justify walking Clerks out who can throw mail in letters and flats while calling nightly OT in these units? The goal is to get rid of employees and this is their plan for those injured on duty. The employee's timecard is taken and then told their badge card will be taken out of the system and they cannot enter the facility. Then they are escorted to their locker by a manager and out the door as if they had committed a crime.

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Palatine Picket Draws Media

APWU held an informational picket at Palatine P&DC on 3-23-10 from 1030 am to 1230 pm and over 100 Palatine employees came to walk the picket line. On the picket line from Carol Stream were Treasurer Al Modi, Chief Trustee Ray Wience, Legislative Director Walter Elerby Jr. and Steward Ramon De Peralta Jr. Also present was National Business Agent Linda Turney who can be counted on for her support. The picket drew media coverage and WGN called us at 615 am to ask if we would be available at 730 am. VP Baskin made it to Palatine in time for the live on-camera 730 interview. WGN was there until the end of the picket and was joined by ABC which filmed the picket but did not talk to anyone. The Daily Herald and WBBM Radio were also present talking to employees including some of the injured employees who did not know they would be walked out later that night. Many of the picketers were tour 1 Clerks whose lives are being disrupted by the serial excessing at Palatine. They chanted "Save our Service" and "Keep the Mail Here" on and off for two hours. We don't think a picket will stop the well-oiled excessing machine created by the Northern Illinois District but we felt we accomplished our goal of informing the public about what is happening at the Palatine P&DC. I am told that at least one senior manager was watching the picket from the security office and was quite upset about it. When the injured employees were walked out that night some thought it was in retaliation for the picket but I think the timing has more to do with the current excessing.

AMP Excessing Number Goes Down from 130 to 99

We argued before and after the impact meeting that there should be a reduction due to the overlap of the BPI impact for 61 Clerks with the AMP impact for 130. Industrial Engineer Blaise Steel agreed and stated at the impact meeting there should be a reduction of 23 due to the overlap. Senior Plant Manager Johnson would not commit to any reduction because Palatine must be at 90% BPI in Automation because Great Lakes Area VP Feindt said they should "strive" for 90% BPI. Attrition accounts for any other reduction in the number impacted.

Senior in Lieu of...

22 Palatine senior Clerks opted to go in lieu of the junior Clerks and the most senior Clerks bid on the eight jobs at the JT Weeker International Service Center or ISC. A few senior Clerks at Palatine say they didn't know they could go in lieu of but the information has been posted by management. There are supposed to be eight more jobs at ISC that will be offered to the next round of Clerks being excessed out of Palatine. The senior Clerks who got these jobs are glad to get out of Palatine and who can blame them. These Clerks will go into bids as they bid into residual vacancies and they will keep their seniority but they cannot bid at the new facility for the first 180 days. Most of the Custodian jobs around the district were taken including all five at Chicago Metro Surface Hub. A grievance is being filed because management did not include all 9 of the Busse Custodian vacancies and the 4 jobs not offered would have been taken. It also throws off the whole selection process.

Mail Changes at CMSH

Due to the impending closure of AMC O'Hare mail is being split up and sent to IPR, the NDC and CMSH. CMSH will lose the STC mail but gain Outgoing Priority and Northern Illinois Standard and Periodical mail. We agreed to hold the April Clerk bid posting for 30 days at management's request as they review staffing changes that may be necessary for the changes in mail flow. I was told the Scan-Where-You-Band and Flats unit will be back and the plan calls for a second SPBS. This is good news for us as there may be additional Clerks needed at CMSH. Things change quickly as this reversal of fortune follows months of rumors that Busse would be closing and mail going to the NDC. The NDC sent mail handlers to other states and is now getting mail because of the AMC closing. This calamity befalls the AMC employees instead of Busse, so ISC can get the AMC site.

Push for 5 Day Delivery

Postmaster General John Potter is pushing for a change from six to five day delivery and the NALC and APWU are fighting this change because it is projected to cost 49,000 jobs if approved. Aside from changing the funding for retiree health benefits pre-funding, the five day delivery is the USPS plan for cutting costs and staying solvent. The unions believe that not only will this cost thousands of jobs but will also be the start of the dismantling of the USPS, providing our competitors with a golden opportunity to take business from the Postal Service. Now is the time to contact your Congressman and ask them to co-sponsor **HR 173** to keep six day delivery. *Je*