

# The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the  
Northwest Illinois Area Local

## Local Update by Jackie Engelhart

**Meeting with Mr. Hart**  
We had our monthly meeting with Northern IL District Manager Robert Hart on 4-11-08. We usually meet with Mr. Hart, the Human Resource Manager and the Labor Relations Manager, but this time he included Senior Plant Manager Woodall, Carol Stream Plant Manager Johnson and Palatine Senior MDO Bracket.

**Mail Volume Down**  
Mr. Hart told us that mail volume is down for first class and periodicals, and overall volume levels are close to the post-anthrax scare numbers, when people were afraid to send mail. He said after the May 12th rate increase we can expect the volume to go lower and Ron predicted a dismal summer. Standard mail is the only category to increase in volume from 101 billion in 2006 to 104 billion in 2007. Continuing mail volume decline is driving management plans for Clerk excessing, sending light duty employees home and the National Reassessment Process.

**Plant Managers Listen**  
I was encouraged that the Plant Managers were present at this meeting because they're the ones we need to talk to. Light duty Clerks being sent home, employees unable to get incidental leave, and Clerk excessing are subjects that should be discussed with the Union. Ron said they are working on impact statements for both Palatine and Carol Stream, but the Palatine impact statement we discussed weeks ago is dead. That impact statement was based on the removal of the FSM-1000. When we met on that proposed impact our input was that the 30 newly created Manual Flats jobs more than made up for the loss of 28 FSM1000 jobs. We also noted that management did not reduce the casual work hours at all, while the contract requires them to reduce casuals to the extent possible prior to excessing. Ron had warned us that the next impact statement would include declining mail volumes.

**Mr. Hart to Meet with Palatine Tour 1 Upper Automation on May 6th**  
Tour 1 Upper Automation Clerks have asked us to request a meeting for them with Bob Hart and he informed us that he will meet with them on May 6th, and he asked Ron Woodall and Danny Bracket to be present. We consistently have more problems and complaints in this unit than any other. We look forward to these Clerks being able to voice their concerns directly to the District Manager and Senior Plant Manager.  
**Clerks Denied Reassignment to Carol Stream Custodial Vacancies**  
I wrote a letter to Senior Plant Manager Ron Woodall on April 9th, informing him that Clerks were being denied reassignment to the Custodial Craft by Carol Stream Maintenance Manager Ken Pellech while management was approving requests for employees outside of the district. I did not think Ron would agree with this policy and I was correct as he said this will be fixed.

## Floor Edition

April 14, 2008  
Jackie Engelhart  
President  
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**Meeting with Mr. Hart**

**Mail Volume Down**

**Plant Managers Listen**

**Mr. Hart to Meet with Palatine Tour 1 Upper Automation on May 6th**

**Clerks Denied Reassignment to Carol Stream Custodial Vacancies**

**Nationwide Trend to Casuals**

**Busse Labor-Management**

**Another Hostile Incident**

**USPS to Eliminate 2400 Supervisor Positions**

**National FMLA Dispute**

**USPS and the Sarbanes-Oxley Act**

**People Need to Come to Work**

**If Everybody Came to Work..**

### **Nationwide Trend to Casuals**

USPS employment statistics showed a continuing decline in the career workforce at the end of 2007, ending the year with 681,013 career employees down 1.9% from 2006. The decrease of 13,329 career jobs was more than made up for by 21,537 added casual workers and 11,801 transitional employees.

### **Busse Labor-Management**

We will be meeting with the new Plant Manager Ruby Branch on 4-18-08 to discuss labor-management issues and to get the updated mail changes. We will be asking what management has been telling employees on the floor about these changes prior to discussing them with the Union.

### **Another Hostile Incident**

We will also be discussing another in a long line of incidents of a certain A/MDO screaming in an employee's face as a method of communication. Management is aware of this latest incident which occurred a week ago and they have given no response to the Union in regards to the incident report sent to the Plant Manager and Operations Manager by me. Similar incidents have been discussed with Plant Managers Melvin Anderson and Brian Stewart, as well as current Operations Manager Shanteau Anderson. Their response was "we're working with him" and "he gets the mail out". We have talked to the Mail Handler Union and they have similar complaints about this A/MDO. This manager has shown he is unable to control his anger when speaking to employees and he is creating a hostile work environment with his repeated outbursts and yelling in the face of the subject employee.

### **USPS to Eliminate 2400 Supervisor Positions**

According to Postal Reporter.com Postmaster General Jack Potter and members of Headquarters staff made conference calls to each District Manager with direct instructions to reduce supervisory positions within each district. Each district has been given a target number of supervisory positions that must be eliminated ranging from 26 to 47 positions per district. The editor expects increased use of temporary supervisors to fill local office requirements as needed. The plan is similar to using casuals in place of full time employees.

### **National FMLA Dispute Filed**

The APWU has filed a national-level dispute over the Postal Service's practice of requiring employees to automatically provide new medical certification for a serious health condition with the first absence in a new leave year, simply because the old leave year has ended and a new leave year has begun. It is the APWU position that once an employee has provided the Postal Service with an FMLA medical certification, it is improper for them to automatically require recertification simply because a new leave year has begun.

### **USPS and the Sarbanes-Oxley Act**

The 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act includes a mandate that the USPS comply with the Securities and Exchange Commission rules that implement the Sarbanes-Oxley Act by fiscal 2010. The act was passed after Enron, and requires corporations to report on the effectiveness of their internal controls, with the goal being to ensure the accuracy of financial reporting. The USPS is the first federal agency mandated to comply with the act and thus faces unique challenges. USPS must give a liability estimate for every grievance we file.

### **People Need to Come to Work**

This is a constant refrain I hear from Danny Bracket and he wants to know why I don't put it in the Local Line. We have put it out and we will put it out again, because we do not want employees to jeopardize their jobs unnecessarily. We also don't want to see employees punished for being sick and unable to work. If you are abusing your leave consistently you are putting your job in jeopardy because management is serious about getting rid of people who don't come to work. If you have legitimate reasons for your absences your case is different from some one who is abusing their leave and the facts will prove or disprove your case.

### **If Everybody Came to Work..**

During our 4-11-08 meeting, the question was asked "what would happen if everybody came to work?" There was a pause, and I said "management would excess more clerks." Mr. Hart said that was what he was going to say, but he didn't think he should say that. Danny and Ron were saying that if more people came to work they wouldn't be closing the leave books and could give people a day off. We know how management thinks, and they have said "if everyone showed up to work one day we would have too many people." If we all came to work management would keep the leave books closed, excess more Clerks and replace them with casuals. The 14% issue will be arbitrated at Palatine on 4-16-08 by Vice President Baskin with assistance from Tour 2 Chief Steward Al Czerwinski.

