

# The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the  
Northwest Illinois Area Local

## Local Update by Jackie Engelhart

Floor Edition

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### Carol Stream Key Handling List is Done!

It has taken a long time, but the list of maintenance craft employees and the amounts to be paid have been completed by the Union, and submitted to management. A total of \$424,962.00 will be paid to Carol Stream E.T.'s, MPE's, MM-5's, Electricians and the Welder, with the larger amounts going to the E.T's and MPE's. The money will be paid to employees in these occupational groups who were on the Overtime Desired List (ODL) only, as management would have had to perform this work on overtime and non-ODL employees would only have worked if the ODL were maxed out to 60 hours per week. Non-ODL employees do not sign the ODL because they do not want to work overtime. Paying the violated ODL is the usual remedy requested for violations on subcontracting, crossing crafts and supervisors performing bargaining unit work. \$47,219.00

(10%) will be set aside in case any eligible employees were missed. The long delay is over, and the affected employees should know management will be expediting this settlement, so it shouldn't be much longer. Thanks go to Maintenance Craft Director Chuck Olson who spent many hours on this settlement to ensure accuracy and fairness, and to Dave Baskin for reviewing and finalizing the settlement. Thanks also to Maintenance Craft National Business Agent Vance Zimmerman, who settled this grievance, as well as the Palatine P&DC Key Handling grievance.

### Palatine Key Handling Pay-Out Will be Next!

As stated in the July 7 Local Line, the Palatine Key Handling grievance was settled on June 27, 2006 by NBA Zimmerman for a total of 11,246 hours at the applicable overtime rate in effect on 12-8-96. Maintenance Director Olson will be working on the list for this settlement now that Carol Stream is done.

### Chicago Metro Bids

We were in discussions with Plant Manager Melvin J. Anderson on posting 1700 SWYB bids, and to allow 2005 SWYB clerks to retain their bids by adding flat/rack to their bids. All discussions have been put on hold due to the passing of Mr. Anderson's father last week, and we all extend our condolences to Melvin and his family. Employees should know we will resume our discussions when Melvin returns. John Johnson has been discussing some of these issues with Senior MDO Shauntea Anderson, but we will most likely not get anything resolved until Melvin returns.

### Dignity & Respect ?

Vice President Dave Baskin filed a grievance for two Metro tour 1 Clerks who were subjected to a verbal tirade by a certain tour 1 SDO, who I have personally witnessed losing his cool on more than one occasion. Verbal abuse leads to a hostile work environment, which is in violation of the USPS "Zero Tolerance" policy. This policy also applies to supervisors.

**Special points of interest:**  
Carol Stream Key Handling List is Done!

Palatine Key Handling Pay-Out Will be Next!

Chicago Metro Bids

Dignity & Respect?

First District Meeting with A/ Manager Nancy Retinhours

Voice of the Employee

Other NID Information

Attendance Crackdown

National Convention Begins

**First District Meeting with A/ Manager Nancy Rettinhouse**  
The Northern Illinois District (NID) holds a quarterly Information Meeting for all Postal Unions who wish to attend, and we usually attend because we do receive good information that we can use and pass on to the employees. Present for the first time, was the Chicago Local, represented by President Sam Anderson and Secretary-Treasurer Danita Colvin (sister of our 2 Palatine mail processor Marcia Colvin). Sam and Danita were impressed with the fact that the Northern Illinois District holds these information meetings with the Unions, because the Chicago District does not. While we do not agree with the NID on many things, we do appreciate the fact that they make the effort to have these meetings on a quarterly basis to update the Unions on the business side of things. In today's USPS the business side directly impacts the employees on a daily basis. Nancy pointed out that USPS has changed since she started 28 years ago in Grand Rapids, Michigan as an LSM operator. She asked how many of us in the room had been LSM operators and a few of us raised our hands. During the 30 years I have been a Postal Clerk, the USPS has changed from a public service to a hybrid public service and a corporate entity. Unfortunately, the emphasis is on the corporate side due to the disproportionate influence of the business mailers. This is what is driving the USPS to cut costs at all costs, by cutting necessary craft jobs and trying close some mail facilities by consolidating them to larger facilities across city and sometimes state boundaries. (Rockford is now spared).

**Voice of the Employee**  
For her portion of the presentation, Nancy focused on the Voice of the Employee (VOE) surveys, and why USPS mandates them. Her efforts are understandable as the NID is near the bottom in survey scores. In the past when Lynn Smith spoke on VOE, I did voice our position (against) participation in VOE, but others at this meeting stated what USPS already knows, we are against VOE. The latest APWU News Bulletin, dated July 26, 2006, addresses this issue. It states "**APWU Firm in Opposition to Employee Opinion Surveys**" "With contract negotiations set to begin next month, APWU leaders and members are being asked to remind co-workers *not* to participate in management efforts to seek their opinions on workplace issues. "The subjects addressed in 'Voice of the Employee' and other employee-opinion surveys should be discussed in labor-management meetings, where the concerns of all represented employees are considered. That is the purpose of these meetings, for workers to speak with a united voice, so that their message cannot be manipulated against their own interests. The Postal Service has misrepresented survey results in the past, by claiming during contract talks that workers' responses supported management's wage proposals." (From APWU Industrial Relations Director Greg Bell). USPS has admitted that using the surveys as a tool against the Union to say that the employees did not want a raise was wrong and they will not do it again. The Union remains opposed to any USPS attempts to bypass the Union by going directly to the employees, as the Union is the real VOE.

**Other NID Information**  
Finance Manager Len Eickhoff reported that this district is the fourth largest revenue generator for USPS, and one of the few that actually makes money. He said that is why it is important that we continue to cut costs, etc. It appears that the NID will continue to cut costs and jobs, and continue to put the pressure on craft employees, supervisors and Postmasters to do more with less. Many of the Unions present voiced serious concerns about the ever continuing spiral of job cuts and the resulting pressure on those that remain. Management talks about efficiency and service, and we are all for that, because we all need our jobs and want USPS to be successful, but where does it end. As Len said, next years budget will be even tougher. (Translation more cuts).  
**Attendance Crackdown!?**  
NID Leave Control Manager Pouncy informed 601 Clerk Craft Director Calvin Taylor that management intends to begin an attendance crackdown to deal with the high sick leave use. (The Unions are constantly battling the fact that most offices now close the advance leave books on a regular basis, making it increasingly difficult to get a day off.) He said that management will be following proper procedures in issuing attendance discipline, and this will make it more difficult for the Union to fight. Attendance discipline for abusing sick leave is hard to beat.  
**National Convention Begins**  
All Officers will be at the national convention in Philadelphia for the week of August 14-18, and will return on August 21, 2006. If you need assistance contact the area steward or Chief Steward of your tour. They will be able to contact us by cell phone if necessary. We will provide a full report upon our return.

