

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

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More Cuts in 2011?

Since management had their year-end meeting, rumors have been flying that more employees would be excessed out of Palatine and even Carol Stream. These rumors were coming from the supervisors who were at this meeting. I was able to confirm the basis for these rumors by someone who was at this meeting. My source told me that District Manager Hart told his managers they would be cutting 197 Clerks and 48 Mail Handlers from the Northern IL District by January of 2011. Since I don't see how they could cut that many more employees I asked how they plan to get the mail out, and I was told they plan to hire more casuals. I had a chance to ask Senior Plant Manager Johnson about these rumors and he said they are looking at mail volumes and BPI and this would be at all three plants in the Northern IL District, Palatine, Carol Stream, and Rockford.

"Arbitrate It!"

Any plan to excess more employees and then hire casuals proves the cuts would not be justified. Their plan is to push more employees to retire by forcing them into the Carrier Craft and /or by forcing them to move out of state to keep their job if they cannot carry mail. Mail Handlers cannot be placed into Carrier jobs so they may be forced to relocate. The contract states casuals must be separated to the extent possible prior to excessing, and in 2007 Palatine separated some Clerk casuals after the Fourth of July and then rehired them before Labor Day. The lead case for this violation was to have been arbitrated in August but management was not prepared and cancelled the date so it is now rescheduled for 9-30-10. To us this is a clear violation of the contract but they will continue until an arbitrator tells them to stop. In the meantime they will do whatever they think they can get away with.

The Worst Kind of Management...

When you read the Great Lakes Area Update mailed quarterly to your home it leads off with an article by Vice-President Jo Ann Feindt. Reading her article you would never know what's really going on out here. She says nothing about the employees being forced to move out of state and live in hotels to keep their job. I have seen no mention of all the injured on duty employees being walked out of their jobs. She does not mention the National Reassessment Process in her articles. She has nothing to say about any of this because she would have to admit just how vicious postal management has become. There is no loyalty to the employees as she and rest of the Potter regime continue to use economic problems to get rid of career employees and move towards the goal of a part-time workforce. Senior management tells us nothing and denies all until the end, but some supervisors talk because they know the employees as people not numbers.

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We Welcome "New" Employees

On 8-16-10 Vice President Baskin and I met with the Clerks from AMC O'Hare who will become Busse employees once they are placed into a residual vacancy. Management is "closing" O'Hare so they can move the ISC into the O'Hare building. The employees said that years ago O'Hare and the ISC were all in one building so they did not understand why the impact was strictly on O'Hare. O'Hare has more senior employees than the ISC, but by "closing" O'Hare and not "consolidating the two facilities they were able to do this.

Management Corrects Bids

The Clerks and the Stewards raised concerns about problems with the bid posting and we met with management on 8-16-10 to discuss the needed corrections. A/Plant Manager Tony Alvarado and Operations Manager Shanteau Anderson were very cooperative with us in making the corrections. Tour 1 and 2 General Expediter bids will be posted closed section. Some SPBS Clerks who matched with needed off-days will be given option letters to accept the new starting time instead of having their bids automatically reposted.

Shanteau is Leaving Busse

Operations Manager Shanteau Anderson is leaving Busse at the end of August and going to her new job as a Business Network Specialist at the Great Lakes Area. Some employees will miss her and some will be glad she's gone, but I caution them to be careful what they ask for. If you think Busse management is bad try going to Carol Stream or worse, Palatine. The Clerks from Palatine who came to Busse as Custodians are happy to be there.

National Reassessment Process

Most of the employees put out by management under the NRP are still out, but a few have been returned to work through appeals to the **Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB)**. Two Palatine Clerks were returned to duty and instead of being assigned to work they were sent to sit in an empty room on standby. Management set them up to put them out again. These employees will re-appeal to the MSPB as management failed to comply with their settlements. Most of the employees are now receiving workers compensation but a few are still not being paid. I know several have had to file for unemployment, which is being contested by management. I sat in on some District Reasonable Accommodation (DRAC) meetings at Carol Stream. The purpose of the DRAC meeting is to determine if the employee can be reasonably accommodated in an assignment. Some of the employees affected by NRP are also impacted by the Palatine excessing. Most of them cannot carry mail and so are being placed into jobs in other states. They are being called into these DRAC meetings to see if they can work in those out of state jobs. One injured and upset Clerk was asked if he/she could work on a LIPS machine in Michigan?! I am told all the money USPS has spent on NRP has not yet saved them any money but has actually increased their costs due to (duh) paying employees to sit at home. The policy has changed from we have work not matter what your restrictions to we have no work not matter what your restrictions. To start saving money the USPS will be pushing OWCP to start Vocational Rehabilitation.

Vocational Rehabilitation or Outsourcing...

The intent of NRP is to get rid of injured employees by withdrawing work and forcing them on OWCP. The Postal Service gets charged for postal employees on OWCP so NRP is not saving them money. That is why they will be pushing "Vocational Rehabilitation" as the ultimate goal of NRP. The employee will be assigned a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor whose job it is to find them work. How do they expect to find jobs for injured postal workers with 10% unemployment?

Carol Stream

I talked to Plant Manager Scirba and it is his idea to move tour 3 Automation Clerks earlier as he says the mail is now there at 1300 since the mail consolidation. Some Clerks are wary of being moved again as they don't trust management, and worry about the shortage of Clerks on tour 1 that is currently being filled by Casuals. I again asked him to bring back the Limited Duty employees since he has the mail and is calling OT. He said he is looking at the NRP employees and may have work for two of them to be brought back.

National Convention in Detroit August 23rd thru 27th

The national convention is here and comes at a critical time for APWU. Our contract expires on 11-20-10 and we will be the first Union to negotiate a new contract with the financially strapped Postal Service. One can imagine the givebacks Potter will be looking for. President Burrus has said he expects to negotiate a fair contract but he retires in November.

No COLA Increase

The eighth and final COLA for the 2006 contract is again zero.

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