

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Local Update by Jackie Engelhart

NALC President Speaks at APWU Convention.

National Association of Letter Carriers President Bill Young addressed the delegates on the opening day of the recently concluded national convention. He said "Something's got to change and we've got to make it happen. The men and women of the NALC are ready to stand with the APWU to make sure that it does." He shared with us a study done by the Economic Policy Institute on the criteria for a "good job". The three criteria for what they consider a "good job" are the job must pay at least \$35,000 annually, it must have some sort of health benefits even if the employee pays 99% of the cost, and have any kind of employer sponsored annuity. Only 23% of American jobs meet even these three "miserable criteria." The significance for postal workers is that APWU and NALC have to negotiate against a "standard of comparability" He said we must join hands and return this

country to working men and women, and we need to work together to elect a President who will stand up for us. Whatever divided us in the past doesn't mean diddly-squat and we will work together and we will succeed." Young's appearance came a few weeks after President William Burrus had accepted an invitation to speak at the NALC national convention in Boston. These convention appearances signal a change in the relationship between the two largest postal unions for the better.

President Burrus...

President Burrus said in the past we have focused on improving conditions for the employees we represent, but this year it is not the quality of our jobs that is at stake, but their very existence. He said the APWU continues to represent the workforce well with the 2006 contract, APWU finances are in good shape in spite of the shrinking bargaining unit, and more Locals are affiliating with the AFL-CIO. (We have)

APWU legislative efforts have been very successful, and COPA donations exceed 1 million per year. He said the USPS will suffer \$1.5 billion deficit in 2008, and under current law cannot recover this loss by raising rates beyond the rate of inflation. He said this has serious implications for our 2010 contract negotiations and for the future of the Postal Service. Postal reform legislation enacted in 2006 requires Congress to review universal service, the mailbox monopoly, six-day delivery, and the postal network. He said these reviews are being conducted while postal management continues disastrous policies of granting excessive work share discounts and pursues a misguided policy of contracting out postal work. He said we must wage a campaign to preserve universal mail service and support the Mail Network Protection Act. President Burrus ended by saying we need to elect friends of labor this fall, as the very existence of our jobs is at stake.

Floor Edition

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NALC President Speaks at APWU Convention.

President Burrus...

Excessing in Dallas, Texas

Memphis Impacts Us

More VERA Approvals

USPS Aims to Downsize Rapidly

COLA Raise on 9-19 Checks

No Clerk Casuals at Palatine Effective 8-30-08.

NWIAL Retirement Seminar

Excessing in Dallas, Texas

We received this impact notice dated 8-7-08, and it said "On May 16, 2008 all affected unions were sent an impact statement for the Dallas District that reflects the reduction in staffing of clerks and mailhandlers resulting from the AMC closing, staffing realignment, and decreased mail volume at the Dallas, TX Post Office. It stated that attrition alone will not be sufficient to avoid excessing outside the craft and/or installation. Please be advised that due to insufficient attrition, the reduction of mail volume, and the effect of other impacts **it is necessary to increase the withholding radius to 750 miles.**

Number of Impacted Employees

324 FTR Level 6 Clerks

83 FTR Level 7 Clerks

118 FTR Level 4 Mailhandlers

47 FTR Level 5 Mailhandlers

The 750 mile radius extends all the way from Dallas, Texas to Springfield, IL!

Memphis Impacts Us...

We received the impact notice dated 8-12-08, and it said "Attached you will find the Notice of Withholding relative to the impact due to mail volume decline at the Memphis, TN BMC. You are being advised that we are implementing the withholding provisions of Article 12.5.B.2 for all FTR Level 6 and below Clerk positions, FTR level 5 and below Mailhandler positions, FTR City Carrier positions, as well as Custodian positions within a 500 mile radius of the Memphis, TN BMC. Due to a decline in mail volume it is necessary that 10 FTR Level 6 Clerks and 11 FTR Mailhandlers be reassigned outside the craft and/or installation per Article 12.5.C.5."

More VERA Approvals

VERA stands for Voluntary Early Retirement Approval, which the Postal Service must request from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Early outs were approved for Clerks, Mailhandlers, some Supervisory personnel, and eligible Headquarters employees. VERA has been extended to include all eligible employees in Motor Vehicle, Rural and City Carriers, Field EAS (non-Headquarters-related offices) and Postmasters. The offer is open to employees in those positions who meet the OPM conditions, who are at least 50 years of age with 20 years of creditable federal service or any age with 25 years of creditable federal service. No incentive package will be offered for employees who choose early retirement. USPS is shifting operations in a continuing effort to improve efficiency and manage costs. The USPS objective is to remain a viable organization well into the future and to continue to provide universal service at reasonable costs. (From USPS NEWS LINK)

USPS Aims to Downsize Rapidly

The VERA has been extended to 130,000 employees or nearly 20% of the USPS work force. The postal service continued to open new facilities and place massive orders for new equipment while mail has been in decline for years. The poor economy has further reduced mail volume to the point where simple budget cutting efforts are not enough. As President Burrus has said many times, we have the capacity to process all mail volumes within the postal system, so why are we still giving discounts to private firms to process the mail? Tour 3 Automation Clerks are scrapping for mail and being moved later and later because there is no mail, while private firms are still getting discounts to process the same mail.

COLA Raise on 9-19 Checks

The paycheck you will receive on 9-19-08 will include a COLA raise of \$1,477 per year. This wage increase will be the largest raise in the history of postal bargaining, and one of the largest in our nations history. For those non-members who say the union "doesn't do anything for them" they are full of you know what. President Burrus has sent out a mailing to all APWU employees to inform them of this raise and to ask them to support the APWU either by becoming a member if they are not, and to support COPA if they do not. There is no good reason not to be a member and every non-member knows they would not want this job without a union. We are still offering \$50 for signing up a non-member and \$50 to the new member.

No Clerk Casuals at Palatine Effective 8-30-08.

I received notification from Senior Plant Manager Ron Woodall that the 7 remaining Clerk casuals at the Palatine P&DC will convert to Mailhandler casuals. They will be utilized in the FSM. Management has continued to work Casuals in Clerk operations after two waves of excessing in 2005 and 2007, in violation of the contract. We hope Carol Stream will now follow suit & eliminate Clerk casuals. **NWIAL Retirement Seminar** Our annual Human Relations Retirement Seminar will be held on Saturday 9-20-08 from 9 am to 4 pm, and will be co-hosted by NWIAL and the IL Postal Workers Union (IPWU). The seminar is free to all APWU members with lunch included.

JZ