

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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Ron Woodall Leaving Palatine for Area Job
Great Lakes Area Vice President Jo Ann Feindt made this announcement in a letter dated 1-30-09. Senior Plant Manager Woodall will be detailed as acting Area In-Plant Support Manager. She also announced that Carol Stream Plant Manager Greg Johnson will be detailed into Ron's spot as Senior Plant Manager for the Northern IL District. He will begin his detail to Palatine effective 1-14. Tampa Postmaster Nancy Fryear will be detailed into Greg's spot as the Carol Stream Plant Manager. We don't know anything about the incoming Tampa Postmaster but hope she will continue the management style of Greg Johnson at Carol Stream. Greg is coming in a month after the Complement Realignment that threw hundreds of Clerks out of their bids. We have already talked to him about meeting as soon as his schedule permits.

T.A.I.P.
T.A.I.P. stands for Targeted Allied and Indirect Positions and is another Headquarters mandate like the Tour Compression. It calls for the elimination of a fixed percentage of jobs that don't directly process mail. The jobs targeted by T.A.I.P. include Expeditors, General Clerks, Data Collection Clerks, Express Mail Clerks, etc. On 12-8-09 Great Lakes Area In-Plant Support Manager Charles Donnigan issued an order to abolish the identified positions by 33%. APWU National Business Agents have provided Local Presidents with copies of two letters to help document any grievances that may be filed on TAIP. A letter dated 12-8-08 to Central IL Senior Plant Manager Mark Tovey from Donnigan instructs him to eliminate 51 positions. A letter dated 12-23-08 informs Senior Plant Managers they must justify every position retained and document every abolishment. This will be next.

Five Day Delivery?

On 12-16-08 the Postmaster General informed Postal Unions of the bleak economic picture that the postal service is in. The first two months of FY 2009 were worse than anticipated per the PMG. Efforts to secure a better payment plan for retirement obligations, along with severe cost-cutting efforts may not be enough relief for the USPS to keep its operation sustainable. If and when five day delivery comes it will not be a set day eliminated. In some areas it may be Saturday while in others a different day on a rotating basis. The immediate impact will be to the Carrier Craft but operations will also be impacted. Employee work weeks will be modified and more excessing will occur. The NALC (Carrier's Union) has been reaching out to APWU in an effort to coordinate union response to work place disruptions. The two largest postal unions have much in common as much of the cost-cutting and job losses are directed at our members.

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Great Lakes Area to Excess
Area VP JoAnn Feindt held a Town Hall meeting on 1-29-09 and told Area employees "The Postal Service is in dire straits". She said the reduction in Area staffing level is being driven by worsening conditions in the economy and a projected mail volume decline of 15 billion pieces. With a projected net financial loss in FY 2009 of \$6 billion or more, she stated "We could be out of cash by summer."

Area Locals Meet on 2-4-09

On 2-4-09 the large Area Locals held a meeting hosted by South Suburban Local President James Malone in Bedford Park. 601 CCD Calvin Taylor and I attended this meeting to discuss our common problems. We discussed the Area plan to cut TAIP jobs by 33%, and the Tour Compression of Clerks, and the universal problem of management's relationship with the Mail Handler Union that continues to play into many of the management attacks on Clerks. One Local reported that once the Clerks were removed from tour 2, Management tried to sneak Mail Handlers into Automation but this was stopped once discovered by APWU. This week at Palatine, tour 3 MDO Jeff Wisner "couldn't find a Clerk" so he assigned a Mail Handler to the Operator position on the AFSM. This is the last job we have on the AFSM at Palatine. We prepared to arbitrate Palatine grievance # P10700426 filed for crossing crafts in Central Dispatch but management refused to allow us to arbitrate the theft of Central Dispatch jobs from the Clerk Craft and referred it to the black hole otherwise know as RI-399. This allows the USPS and the NPMHU to continue to take.

Compression of Clerks

Management eliminated 75 tour 2 Clerk jobs at Carol Stream and wiped out hundreds of bids at Palatine based on a national tour compression. We asked management if this compression only applied to Clerks and Senior Plant Manager Ron Woodall stated the Mail Handlers would be next. It was therefore with interest that I read in the Mail Handler floor letter that both the A/Plant Manager and the Senior Plant Manager "have confirmed that there is no discussion of any changes of starting times for the mailhandlers at the present time." So it seems that management's intent is to continue to take Clerk work and then take their bids, their schedules, and finally move more of the juniors into the Mail Handler Craft. **Yes the Clerk are frustrated!** Management at the national level has taken mail processing from Clerks on the APPS and AFSM. Locally, management has taken the Low Cost, Central Dispatch, and the list goes on. Management continues to assign Clerk work (mail processing and distribution) to the Mail Handlers and then to excess Clerks to MH. It's a vicious cycle that the two parties want to keep buried in RI-339, and will not allow us to arbitrate local grievances for such as the Central Dispatch grievance. They tell us to "arbitrate it" and when we try they stop us. Or when we win a grievance for 18 Clerks who "volunteered" to become Mail Handlers to be brought back to the Clerk Craft with full back pay, they refuse to implement it. They say a "Class Action" applies to only one Clerk!? We now have to arbitrate to force them to implement the award as written!

Chicago Metro Surface Hub

We met with Plant Manager Ruby Branch on 2-3-09 and we will have a Labor-Management Meeting on 2-13-09. Headquarters, Area, and District personnel are conducting staffing reviews at Busse and the consensus is they are understaffed, as we have said.

FMLA Changes

Due to last minute anti-employee changes by former President Bush to FMLA regulations management has notified us of the following. 1. Publication 71's and WH380's will be discontinued and replaced with other forms. (Our Business Agents inform us that APWU forms are still acceptable under the changes.) 2. Employees must designate FMLA at the time of call-in or request as the two-day provision has been eliminated. 3. The Employer has the right to contact your doctor. 4. The time-frame for return of certifications deemed incomplete has been changed from 15 days to 7 days.

FMLA Voice Mail not 24/7

I recently spoke with FMLA Coordinator Cora Krause about the inability of employees to leave messages for her when she is non-scheduled and/or on leave. We had this conversation before but it came up again as an employee made several efforts to leave a message for her to request an extension but she was on leave and had her Voice Mail set up to **not take a message**. Cora said she was in on 1-5 thru 1-8, and the employee could have called Marilyn. I asked if Marilyn has her Voice Mail set up the same way as Cora and she said "yes". **USPS is a 24/7 operation and when employees are instructed to call the FMLA Office the Voice Mail should be left on!**

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