

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Local Update by Jackie Engelhart

Union Wins \$48 Million Settlement for MS-47 Handbook Grievance

The APWU and the Postal Service finalized a \$48 million payout Jan. 29 to remedy the USPS violation of staffing procedures for custodial employees. The settlement will be in the form of lump-sum payments of \$2700.00 to more than 17,000 employees occupying custodial positions as of 1-29-08. Payment will be made by 4-18-08. The settlement is the culmination of a 11-6-06 award in which Arbitrator Shyam Das ordered the USPS to rescind Handbook MS-47, Housekeeping Postal Facilities, issued in 2001, and to reinstate the 1983 version. The 2001 handbook had revised custodial staffing procedures to lower custodial staffing. Arbitrator Das remanded discussion of the remedy for the violation to the parties, and the \$48 million settlement is the result. The 2006 award was the third national level award since 2002 to protect the custodial workforce.

From Maintenance Craft Director Raymer

"Only those employees in the harmed occupational groups on 1-29-08 will receive the \$2700.00 payment. If a member left the harmed occupational groups (promotion, retirement, etc) prior to 1-29-08, then they would not be eligible for any payment under the terms of the settlement. This decision was made at this level based on prior APWU settlements which limited the scope of the employees receiving a financial remedy. It was not our intent, nor did we have the resources, to remedy each person that occupied one of the identified bargaining unit positions between 12-31-01 and 1-28-08. As such, our decision was made in the best interest of the harmed bargaining units as well as the Union. While individuals may believe they were slighted by the terms of the settlement, the case was not about individual losses, rather it was about a loss to the Union and our bargaining units."

More Custodial Jobs

The 1-29-08 agreement requires the Postal Service to complete the custodial staffing packages per the 1983 MS-47 within 30 days of 1-29-08. The Local union is entitled to all information relied upon in developing the custodial staffing packages including forms 4869, 4839, 4851, 4776 and 4852 as well as e-MARS reports. Maintenance Craft Director Chuck Olson has informed me he has completed and will submit appropriate information requests for all NWIAL offices. In facilities where the staffing packages result in additional custodial positions, these additional positions shall be posted by notice of intent within 60 days of 1-29-08 and filled in accordance with the contract. Palatine Custodian and Maintenance Craft Steward Bob LaFoe has been instrumental in keeping me informed on all issues pertaining to the MS-47 settlement and custodial staffing issues. Steward Ron Langten is vigilant on custodial staffing issues at Carol Stream.

Floor Edition

February 18, 2008
Jackie Engelhart
President
Alan J. Czerwinski
News Director

Union Wins \$48 Million Settlement for MS-47 Handbook Grievance

From Maintenance Craft Director Raymer

More Custodial Jobs

From VP Dave Baskin...

More Arbitration for VP Baskin

Meeting with Robert Hart

CMSH Town Hall Cancelled

FMLA Problems

Contract Level Upgrades

Olivia is Back

From VP Dave Baskin...

"On February 6th, the Labor Scheduler grievance was heard in arbitration. You may remember February 6th was the day of the big snow storm. We would like to thank Chris Savas, Joe Speciale, and Pat Thoele for braving the conditions and testifying on behalf of the Clerks affected by the Labor Scheduler. The hearing went well. The Union was able to present all our evidence including charts that showed between the 3 months prior to the Labor Scheduler and the 3 months after the Labor Scheduler, with all the overtime used, management saved a total of 61.20 hours per week by excessing the 40 Clerks. We were also able to show the overtime worked after the Labor Scheduler alone, equaled 61 full-time duty assignments and that this overtime rate continued up to the implementation of the AI in 2007. The Union's witnesses also testified that employees were constantly being moved from area to area, and that employees lost their bids only to keep the same schedule for up to a year afterwards. We expect a decision in about a month."

More Arbitration for VP Baskin

Dave will be arbitrating LMOU Impasse Items for Carol Stream, Palatine and Chicago Metro Surface Hub. The main issue appealed to Impasse Arbitration is the 14% issue. For years management at all three facilities has refused to honor the LMOU negotiated 14% (15% at CMSH) off by section and tour during the choice vacation period. They have substituted "vacation" for the negotiated language "choice vacation period." The arbitrator will have to decide the 14% issue.

Meeting with Robert Hart

On 2-1-08 we met with Northern IL District Manager Robert Hart to discuss our views on the VOE survey. Mr. Hart had read the Local Line dated 1-21-08 and he stated he agreed with what we said. The Local Line article criticizing VOE was then used as a tool to mislead APWU members at NWIAL offices that we support VOE participation. Our position was twisted beyond recognition by some WEI (Workplace Environment Improvement) staff member in a Service Talk given to NWIAL offices. Our position on the VOE has not changed. We advise APWU members to decline participation in this voluntary survey. We told Mr. Hart that the problems with communication and dignity and respect start with senior management and flow down to the MDO and Supervisor levels. The Supervisor is yelling at the employee because he/she just got yelled at by a senior manager. I have heard that during the daily telecom supervisors were routinely belittled by senior management while all others were forced to listen. You can talk about "Workplace Environment Improvement" but it starts at the top. Mr. Hart is aware of the problems at Palatine and he said he is working on them. We meet again on 3-7-08. Management conducts VOE Surveys on a quarterly basis, with each employee surveyed once per year. The survey comes in an envelope addressed to you and is your property. We remind you that APWU remains opposed to VOE participation.

CMSH Town Hall Cancelled

Chicago District Manager Gloria Tyson came to Busse on 1-31-08 for a scheduled Town Hall meeting. Due to a bad snow storm and the call-ins she cancelled the Town Hall and will reschedule it. While there she did speak with both unions.

FMLA Problems

Since FMLA functions were consolidated at the district level the problems have escalated. We met with the Northern IL District FMLA staff on 2-5-08. 600 FMLA Coordinator Cora Krause told us she finds 90% of all FMLA forms submitted to her to be "incomplete". On the 601 side, Shirley Taylor said she finds 55-60% to be incomplete. Most FMLA requests are processed within 60 days of request, but if your form is deemed incomplete, you will go to the end of the line where you could wait another 60 days. Each FMLA Coordinator is assigned 5000 employees for a total of 10,000 District employees. Two people cannot process FMLA for 10,000 employees and management has added two more Coordinators and a Clerk. They still can't keep up, and with a 90% and 55-60% incomplete rate, it is unlikely they ever will catch up. To come up with a 90% incomplete rate I'm thinking Cora is working very hard to find reasons to find forms incomplete. We will share information from the FMLA staff in the next LL.

Contract Level Upgrades

The one-level upgrade for all APWU employees is effective on 2-16-08 and will be on the 3-7-08 paychecks. A computer glitch will delay numeric level adjustments until pay period 10.

Olivia is Back

We are happy to report that Olivia Norman is back as the Chief Steward on tour 1 at Palatine P&DC, and we thank Alternate Chief Steward Carolyn Walker and the tour 1 Stewards for stepping up in her absence.

JZ