

The Local Line

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Northwest Illinois Area Local

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Update by: Jackie Engelhart

60 Day Notices Mailed to Palatine Clerks

On 2-19-09 MDO Tim Anderson informed 600 CCD Alan Czerwinski he was mailing out the 60 day notice letters to 133 impacted Palatine Clerks. We didn't know when these letters would be issued, and copies were provided to us on 1-20-09, after they were mailed. 133 letters were mailed but we believe the number should be reduced based on Clerk attrition since the impact meeting on 1-15-09.

This information has been requested from Human Resources. We also requested a list of all residual vacancies within the local commuting area, as management's list shows only residuals in the Northern II District. The list we received on 2-20-09 shows 13 Mail Handler residuals at Carol Stream and 43 Carrier jobs in the Associate Offices. It also shows one Sales and Service Associate and two Custodial jobs in the Associate Offices

Residual Vacancies

The list does not include five residual Custodial vacancies at Palatine and three at Carol Stream. Management states they do not show any residual vacancies outside of the Northern II District, but we know there are ten Custodial residuals at Chicago Metro Surface (Busse) Hub that need to be filled. Apparently, these jobs have not been reported to the Area, but I informed NID Human Resource Manager Phyllis Lingenfelter that they exist and should be included in any list of residuals offered to the Palatine Clerks. The Chicago District should be reporting their residual vacancies because the entire metro area is in withholding due to numerous impacts, including the Palatine impact with a radius of 300 miles. The Chicago District seems oblivious to the fact that the entire country seems to be in withholding, with impacts from Detroit, St. Louis, Indianapolis, and Palatine, to name a few.

625 Able-bodied Clerks

Management states they need 625 able-bodied Clerks at Palatine, but they sent out 133 letters. If you add 625 and 133 you get 758 which is the total number of Clerks left at Palatine. Included in the 625 are Rehab and Limited Duty Clerks, as well as long-term 204-B's and three full-time union officers, all of whom are being counted as part of the 625 "able-bodied" Clerks. Because there are at least Limited Duty and/or Rehab Clerks included in the 625, as well as 3 full-time union officials, it seems management decided to send all 133 employees an 60 day letter and make corrections later. This is a lousy way to do business. **28 New MH Bids Posted** I have not looked at these bids but they are replacing Mail Handler Casuals, and many of them were assigned to the AFSM, so the new MH jobs are old Clerk jobs, but the posting of these newly created jobs will most likely result in 28 Mail Handler residual vacancies at Palatine. Mail volume is only down for the Clerk Craft?

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Special points of interest:

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Waiting for Mr. Johnson

It seems that history repeats itself, as the last time Greg Johnson came to Palatine we were dealing with the fall-out from the Labor Scheduler. Now we are dealing with the fall-out from Ron's going away present, the Complement Realignment and Excessing. We are holding a large number of grievances on this issue until 2-28 pending a meeting with Greg...

Pie Racks Discussed on 2-20-09

I attended the monthly Palatine Safety meeting with APWU member Johnny Love to discuss the pie racks in automation. Mail is being stacked 3 and 4 high on tour 1 at both Palatine and Carol Stream. Lifting heavy trays of mixed first class and standard mail 3 and 4 high atop the pie racks on a nightly basis is a violation of the safety of tour 1 Automation Clerks. Management continues to spread misinformation that the union agreed to this, when nothing could be further from the truth. At this meeting we went back and forth with Ralph Ramion and Tim Anderson until Ralph finally said the employees should not be instructed to stack 3-high on top of the pie racks. This mail should be stacked in sequence order into containers adjacent to the machine. Safety Specialist Kelly had several safety grievances on the pie racks remanded to the Safety and Health Committee for possible resolution. If you become permanently or long-term injured, you could be told there is no work available for you within your restrictions and separated from the Postal Service. Management no longer considers it an obligation to accommodate employees injured on the job, so it makes no sense to risk injury by working unsafely.

EEOC Class Action Pending for Postal Employees - USPS National Reassessment Process

A class action complaint for injured on duty postal employee was certified by an EEOC Administrative Judge on 5-30-08. In the case of Sandra McConnell, et al. v. USPS an Administrative Judge decision certified the following class: "All permanent rehabilitation employees and limited duty employees at the US Postal Service who have been subjected to the National Reassessment Process (NRP) from 5-1-06 to present, allegedly in violation of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973." The Postal Service filed an appeal from the certification decision, which is pending as of 2-13-09.

Chicago Metro Surface Hub

We had two days of Labor-Management Meetings recently with Plant Manager Ruby Branch and her staff. Chicago District Customer Service Supervisor Dan Davis introduced himself at the first meeting and told us he is performing a staffing review for Busse to get the facility properly staffed. Busse is 10 Custodians and three Drivers short, but they say the Clerk complement is reduced from 120 to 87 currently on the rolls. Sufficient bids will be posted so that all remaining unassigned Clerks should be able to get a bid. A "priority" issue at this meeting was discipline issued for a truck of Priority mail that was delayed after the truck was pulled into the yard and left there for 24 hours. Discipline was issued to several employees who were blamed for the mail delay. Ruby agrees that a better Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is called for. That would be more corrective than issuing discipline.

Contracting

Yesterday as I was exiting 53 on my way to Palatine I could see the red "Clayco" sign hanging off the facility. The sign was clearly visible from the expressway and if I didn't know better I would think the Palatine P&DC was actually Clayco Contractors. I wonder why that sign is hanging off a postal installation and if management got a discount out of it. This morning I spoke with MVS Director Tom Artinghelli, who told me he just received some information on a "temporary" contract with "Eagle" to haul 2C and 3C mail between Carol Stream and O'Hare. He requested the same information from Palatine but as he said "we never get information from Palatine". The 15 pages of information show that management is paying approximately \$450,000.00 for Eagle to haul mail while some of our out PVS (Postal Service Vehicles) could be transporting that mail. I wonder why would they pay that kind of money to a contractor when they have postal drivers and vehicles that could be used. It seems management would rather pay contractors than their own employees, even when it would be more cost-effective (cheaper) to use their own employees. MVS employees may have heard about a national level "pilot program" that allows for scheduling drivers 8 hours within 12 and using them to perform mail processing work. The "PVS Amended Work Rules Pilot" was signed by President Burrs to protect PVS work from more contracting. In light of the continuing mail volume decline I would think management would be reducing Highway Contract Routes (HCR) to save money.

JR