

The Local Line

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The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Local Update by Jackie Engelhart

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Meetings with the AFSM Clerks
I have requested meetings with AFSM Clerks on all three tours at both Carol Stream and Palatine P&DC. So far we have met with some of the tour 1 clerks being excessed to mail handler, and the tour 2 AFSM clerks at Carol Stream. Plant Manager Greg Johnson has set up a meeting for the tour 1 AFSM clerks at 0600 on 2-28-07. In-Plant Support has come up with their numbers which must be approved by the Area, and sent to the APWU Central Region Coordinator before they will be shared with us. We are hearing the same rumors you are. We were hoping to have this information before meeting with the AFSM clerks, but we have to wait for management. We put the information out immediately when we get it, but Senior Management of the Northern Illinois District has not shared information on AI until they absolutely have to, as the contractors come in.

Not on the Schedule
Neither Carol Stream nor Palatine was on the deployment schedule for AI, and up until the last minute we were told Palatine would not be getting it. Senior Plant Manager Woodall told us in January that "it was not off the table at Palatine", and it sounded like a warning to us. I believe, and it was confirmed for me, that Mr. Woodall "pushed" for AI at Palatine. We were not scheduled for AI at either plant but both are getting it. Palatine Plant Manager Johnson was not pushing for AI to the best of my knowledge, but he does not have the final word. I have requested information on the expected cost savings of this deployment of AI for the 4 machines at CS and the 5 at Palatine. The AI does not process flats any faster, and it does not eliminate the need for a Prep Unit, as there is no way mail handlers prepping and feeding on the machine can keep up, any more than clerks could, when prepping and loading on the AFSM.

For the CS Clerks
Senior MDO Mary Alexander has worked with 601 CCD Calvin Taylor to reduce the impact to the CS clerks. Additional automation bids are being posted on tour 2 for PARS volume. These bids will be posted for everyone, but the intent is that some of the excessed clerks will have a chance to stay on tour 2. Mary has done what she can to look out for the employees and improve a bad situation. Calvin has also worked hard to make sure that the impact is reduced for every clerk who leaves the craft and/or section prior to the excessing. Those making the decisions to deploy AI, and change craft jurisdiction, do not care about people. What I hear from Labor and Senior Management, is "they still have a job." That is all they can say, as they excess clerks to the bottom of the MH craft, and abolish FSM jobs that clerks have held since there was an FSM. The FSM abolishment and excessing is not based on automation; but on USPS corporate greed.

Breaks & Wash-Up Changes
Management at both plants has directed supervisors to enforce a sign out and in policy for breaks. This is per the instruction of District Manager Lynn Smith, in reaction to his observance of some employees at Carol Stream taking extended breaks on Friday night, 2-17-07. When the employees were instructed to return to their units and end their breaks, they either argued with or ignored him. His reaction was swift and stern. All employees must now sign in and out for breaks. This is a unilateral change in the past practice at both Carol Stream & Palatine. We don't agree with forcing all employees to sign in and out based on one incident, even if it involves the District Manager.

My advice to Lynn was to have procedure talks, and follow up with individual employees. He said it is not just a few employees, but is wide-spread, and he will not rescind his instruction. I am not aware of any company that requires employees to sign in and out for breaks. Management should be able to enforce 15 minute breaks without making employees feel like they're in jail. At Palatine, management began enforcing a ten (10) minute break, as they did not understand Lynn's instruction. We discussed this with Greg Johnson and Michelle Davis, and that part was corrected. Greg was provided with a copy of the Palatine agreement signed in 1993 that breaks are 15 minutes. APWU will be filing grievances for each employee for the rescission of the policy and \$50.00 for each employee. In addition, both plants are denying clerks a wash-up, in violation of the LMOU.

Management Changes
Management's "Local News-break" informs us "*Ronald Woodall will be moving to the Palatine Plant as Senior Plant Manager and managing the Northern Illinois Plant operations from Palatine. Gregory Johnson will move to the Carol Stream Plant as Plant Manager. Danny Bracket will assume the duties of A/Senior MDO at Palatine. Angela Sanders will return to the Carol Stream Plant and assume her duties as tour 2 MDO.*" Senior MDO Melvin Dean is on detail as the Irving Park Road (IPR) Plant Manager. All of these changes are effective 3-3-07. Angela Sanders is returning to Carol Stream as Ron Woodall returns to Palatine. Management refused to make this change in response to the numerous complaints from the Unions, craft employees, and even some supervisors. We can all draw our own conclusions from this.

Chicago Metro Surface Hub
Jerry Kubick is the A/Senior MDO for the Chicago District at Cardiss Collins. He and District Manager Gloria Tyson are tasked with improving the Chicago District, which is ranked 79 out of the 79 districts in performance. They have directed all detailed employees to return to their bid and/or titled job. At Busse, Shanteau Anderson is back as tour 3 MDO, and Jacqueline Hudson as the dock supervisor. We see too many employees being walked out at Busse and Palatine based on "zero tolerance". Verbal altercations result in both employees off of work for weeks and/or months. Use common sense and don't put your job in peril. Once you are out they don't care how long you stay out!

Greg Johnson Holds Maintenance "Town Hall Meeting"

Palatine Plant Manager Greg Johnson made good on his promise to hold a one-hour town hall meeting with tour 2 maintenance employees. He listened and agreed to follow up with a meeting for the maintenance support clerks on 2-28-07. Most of the complaints concerned managers Bob Martin, Mary Bell and Ahmad. While these are problem managers, a bigger problem is the Maintenance Manager who does not stop them.

Associate Office Issues

We know that management is continually reducing staffing in the AO's, while having supervisors and other crafts performing "lobby sweeps" or non-retail lobby functions. Staffing of the APC and/or the Lobby Director are clerk jobs. As management assigns other crafts and/or supervisors to do this work, the clerk hours will be reduced as this work is not entered into the POS system for proper credit. If the work is not entered somewhere, it doesn't exist, according to management. As management continues to reduce AO staffing, window clerks (Sales & Service Associates) are ever more accountable for everything they do.

Franklin Park Settlement

Clerks at Franklin Park recently received payments totaling \$98,000.00 as a result of an arbitration award on a grievance filed by former steward Tom Culato. The grievance was filed because management assigned an injured carrier to clerk work, when carrier work was available. After the award, Labor Relations at the Northern Illinois District stalled, and argued over the amount to be paid. Vice President Baskin and Chief Steward Arlene Thomas spent a lot of time and effort to ensure that the Franklin Park clerks were paid all that they were entitled to.

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