

# The Local Line

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The Official Voice of the  
Northwest Illinois Area Local

## Local Update by Jackie Engelhart

### Hundreds of Grievances Filed in FY 2008.

The USPS Fiscal Year began on October 1st, and we have already filed hundreds of grievances. Labor Relations keeps telling us to stop filing and we have to find a better way. They don't say what that better way is. The fact is management does not seem to care how many grievances we file because they don't have to answer for them. Grievances are the problem of the Labor Relations Staff whose purpose is to support operations management. Labor cares because they have to do the work. They want us to just stop filing multiple grievances for an ongoing issue and to file just one. They want us to "supplement the file" or just add documentation to one grievance filed on an issue as that is less work for them. It also looks good for them as there are fewer grievances being appealed. Does anyone really think that management is going to resolve issues because we don't file grievances?

### Complement Cutting

For the last two years management has used a Complement Coordinator to oversee a continued reduction in Clerk craft jobs within each district. The current occupant of this position for the Northern IL District is Labor Relations Specialist Bertha McGee, and wherever you see Bertha bad news is sure to follow. Her job is to cut jobs based on numbers.

### Palatine CFS Unit

Complement Coordinator (CC) McGee is coordinating a reduction in the CFS unit from 36 to 30 jobs due to "the decline in volume" but the CFS Clerks say they work overtime to get the mail out. One irate CFS Clerk expressed her anger over the fact that she had recently obtained a bid in the unit after being excessed from the AFSM. She wanted to know why management would post a job she just got only to take it away. The CC responded that the Union files grievances when management reverts bids but I had to correct her.

### No Communication

I said management does not usually give a reason for reverting bids other than "for the needs of the service", and we will always file a grievance for a bid reversion unless we know the job is not needed. I pointed out that we agreed to revert SPBS vacancies when we knew the machine was leaving. In the current CFS downsizing no one knew about the coming cuts but the CC and Operations Support. I asked if the CC talks to the In-Support Specialist who discusses bids with the Union, or with the CFS Manager, or do any of you talk? In the past a manager knew what their staffing was supposed to be but those days are gone. Operations Support comes up with a bare-bones complement number for each office and/or unit within the District. Then CC McGee is tasked with actually making the cuts to get to that number. The Clerk being excessed for a second time in six months was angry at the lack of communication and the "arrogance".

## Floor Edition

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### Special points of interest:

**Hundreds of Grievances Filed in FY 2008**

**Complement Cutting**

**Palatine CFS Unit**

**No Communication**

**CC McGee & Franklin Park**

**Reduced Volume & Consolidations**

**Carol Stream Key Handling \$\$\$**

**Palatine APPS Going 1-14-08**

**Vacation Submission Time**

**Other Issues at Busse**

**Advance Sick Leave**

### **CC McGee & Franklin Park**

The Complement Coordinator has been busy lately, as she attended our Labor-Management Meeting at Franklin Park on 12-17-07 to advise OIC Cynthia Schwartz on staffing issues. Our issue was the two residual vacancies that have not been filled in over a year, and our suggestion that the one PTF Clerk be converted and the other vacancy be filled from outside the office. The CC and the OIC did not agree to do this. When I asked the CC how long does it take to fill a residual vacancy, she said "We have to wait until someone wants to come to Franklin Park." In the meantime they have a Clerk casual and a "loaned PTF Clerk in the office. The complement has been reduced from 17 full-time and 4 part-time Clerks in 2003 to 11 full-time and 1 part-time Clerk. With a complement of 11 they are working with 10 Clerks because they will not fill the two residual vacancies. The CC told us they need to look at the current assignments and determine if they are "conducive" to their needs before adjustments are considered. On 12-31-07 OIC Schwartz sent out letters (prepared by or with the assistance of CC McGee) abolishing two jobs and reposting three. There was no discussion with the Union prior to the issuance of this letter and the only reason given for them was for "efficiency". When we contacted the OIC we found out she was leaving Franklin Park for another office at the end of the week and leaving this mess for the next OIC. We contacted District Manager Hart and he said he would look into this. In the meantime the CC e-mailed the new OIC to proceed with the abolishments and repostings.

### **Reduced Volume & Consolidations**

First class volume continues to decline and management is constantly looking for ways to cut costs and make budget. Letter collection mail is being consolidated at Carol Stream until 5 pm, which means cancellation at Palatine starts later and the mail comes into automation later. By consolidating the mail to Carol Stream the goal is to send out full trays instead of partial trays for air transport. Fed Ex charges a flat price per tray regardless of how much mail is in the tray. If the same amount of mail can be placed into fewer trays, the postal service saves money. This was explained to me by Senior MDO Bracket when I discussed the 1700 starting time for automation. He said if this tray consolidation continues we will see more tour 3 automation Clerks starting at 1700. I told him the employees will not like being moved but they at least need to understand why they are being moved and what's going on. I told him the tours need to do a better job of communicating with the employees. I told Danny that when I asked Tour 3 MDO Wisner about the 1700 start for New Year's Eve he made it sound like tour 3 was coming in at 1700 to staff for tour 1, but he said nothing about cancellation starting later.

### **Carol Stream Key Handling \$\$\$**

We are aware that settlement money remains due to the fact that some included maintenance employees have not claimed their checks. The main payout for this settlement was made in the fall of 2006, with a second smaller payment in late 2006. Some checks remain unclaimed, and we have requested that the unclaimed funds be released and paid out as a third payment to the affected employees. Maintenance Craft Director Olson has contacted Labor Relations to begin this process.

### **Palatine APPS Going 1-14-08**

We received notification from Senior Plant Manager Ron Woodall that the Palatine APPS is going to AMC O'Hare, and the last day it will be run at Palatine is 1-13-08. The removal of the APPS will begin on 1-14-08 and is to make room for the FSS.

### **Vacation Submission Time**

Employees may begin submitting their vacation requests at all three plants on 1-1-08. They must be submitted at Carol Stream and Palatine by 2-1-08, and at Chicago Metro Surface Hub by 1-31-08. At Busse management still thinks they can approve your vacation but approve your 3971 "pending sufficient annual leave", but this policy violates the Local Memo which management agreed to long ago. If your 3971 is approved pending annual, file a grievance.

### **Other Issues at Busse**

The Clerks who should have been placed into their new bids on 10-31-07 will be getting out-of-schedule pay as management has agreed to resolve the grievance filed. Other issues being grieved are management's failure to assign management details by seniority, and the continuing bypass of Saturday/Friday employees for Saturday. Management thinks they can bypass them because they are "absent" on Friday but absent does not mean non-scheduled.

### **Advance Sick Leave**

Employees who exhaust their sick leave and need advance SL need to know these requests are not automatically approved. Your sick leave use will be reviewed and if they see abuse your request will be denied.

*Jr*