

The Local Line

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Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

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More Impact Games for Palatine & C.S.

We received notices canceling all impacts (Clerk and Mail Handler) at both Palatine and Carol Stream. These impacts were issued on 10-30-09 due to declining volumes and a realignment of the flats operations. The impacts were met due to the attrition of 200 craft employees from the retirement incentive. The notices for both plants said the impact was met and no employees were reassigned. 10 days later, on 12-21-09, management issued new impact notices for 26 Clerks at Carol Stream and 61 Clerks at Palatine. According to the impact statement these numbers are based on the difference in BPI between the goal of 90% and the actual numbers of 76% at Carol Stream and 65% at Palatine. Senior Plant Manager Greg Johnson agreed that BPI was part of the reason for the impacts. So now that they have run out other reasons...

Management Plans to Excess Clerks for BPI

The statement mentions continued volume and workload decline in automation, but is based on the "Automation BPI Targets" which shows how many Clerks to be cut to achieve the goal of 90% BPI in automation. We just lost 200 employees and most of them were clerks in the plants. The impacts were cancelled due to attrition on 12-11-09, so what kind of game are they playing with the lives of craft employees. No unit works harder than the Clerks in Automation and most of them have been pushed to nights where they can't use annual leave and are forced to work holidays. They are pressured to push out more mail although NIOSH studies recommend the only way to reduce injuries on the DBCS is to work slower. What other units are not hitting 90% and will they be threatened with being moved up to 400 miles? What other plants are at 90% BPI and why are only our plants impacted?

AMP & 10 Miles Apart

Unofficially, I am hearing that the AMP will happen in April or May. I have been told officially that once a decision is made they have 90 days to move Palatine's outgoing mail to Carol Stream. We spoke with Central Region Coordinator Stone to ask what other plants have issued impacts based on the 90% BPI and she said none. I also spoke with Article 12 National Business Agent Lynn Pallas-Barber to ask her why Palatine, and to a lesser extent Carol Stream, keep getting hit, and she said you have two plants so close together. She made a comparison with Detroit which is excessing hundreds of employees because they built a new facility in the suburbs of Detroit on the site formerly called Royal Oak, which is renamed the Metroplex. She said that Detroit is starving while they send Detroit's mail to the Metroplex. She also said JoAnn Fiendt's Article 12 watchdog, the same guy who was in charge of the mess in Detroit, now has an office at Carol Stream.

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Special points of interest:

More Impact Games for Palatine & Carol Stream
Management Plans to Excess Clerks for BPI
AMP & 10 Miles Apart
Secrecy & Manipulation
Unfair Labor Practices
Settlement Does Not End NRP
Attendance Discipline
Locker Inspections for the NID

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Secrecy & Manipulation

When management decides to excess the first thing out of their mouth is "we follow the contract. The contract states the process to follow once management makes the decision to excess. Just a few months ago management was this close to moving the International Service Center (ISC) operation from their expensive leased site into the USPS – owned AMC O'Hare building and excessing all the AMC employees out of their own facility just by changing the name of the facility. In Detroit they built a new facility and took Detroit's mail to the new facility and then excessed the Detroit employees up to 400 miles away. Palatine is the only plant in the Chicago Metro area that has excessed Clerks three times since 2004, which would have been four had it not been for the incentive plants are being targeted for excessing but this time not because of overstaffing but because some big shot decided they want 90% BPI in automation even though Carol Stream has been at an acceptable 76% for the last three years. Management just cancelled all impacts due to attrition because so many employees left that they met whatever their target number and are no longer overstaffed. The Northern Illinois District is not following the contract because the contract calls for dislocation and inconvenience to employees to be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs of the service. Instead of creating constant turmoil for the employees with an endless cycle of impacts why don't they tell us how much mail and how many employees will remain at Palatine? What is the plan for Palatine?

Unfair Labor Practices –NID

Management pays to staff Labor Relations but they rarely tell operations when they are wrong. While management refuses to allow the 600 Clerk Craft Director to be released for union time for weeks at a time Labor Relations fails to advise management that this is a violation of the contract. If they have so advised management then they are being ignored, because this contract violation and unfair labor practice continues as we wait for the NLRB to act. In the meantime we met with the Senior Plant Manager for the NID and he said he would do what he could but that Alan Czerwinski does not report to him but to the Marketing Manager. I pointed out to Greg that he is the Senior Plant Manager, and outranks the Marketing Manager who has refused to release 600 CCD Czerwinski. District Manager Robert Hart does not return our calls but should be aware of this unfair labor practice as I faxed him the last Local Line. The Human Resource Manager (Phyllis Lingenfelter) and the Labor Relations Manager (Scott Sharon) are all aware of the unfair labor practice and have done nothing to stop it. At Palatine we have had unfair labor practices against our Maintenance Craft Director Joe Golden and Chief Steward Rick Szczesny with both of them being denied union time if they fail to provide a full report of their union activities. This is an unfair labor practice because it's directed at only these two Stewards. These two Stewards have also been targeted for discipline in what the union considers retaliation for their grievance filing. Labor Rep. (Mike Fuechtmann) agrees with whatever management does.

Settlement Does Not End NRP

The National Postal Mail Handler Union announced the signing of a national settlement regarding the National Reassessment Process. This settlement is similar to one already signed with the NALC. The settlement states the NRP has not redefined or changed the USPS obligation to provide limited duty and rehabilitation assignments for Injured-On-Duty employees. The NPMHU settlement also states that light duty employees will not normally be displaced solely to make new limited duty or rehabilitation assignments unless required by law. Neither of these settlements will end NRP as USPS has consistently stated they are following all federal laws and contractual requirements with the NRP. The language in these settlements requiring management to comply with all legal and contract obligations does not change anything because they have always said the NRP does not violate any laws or contractual provisions.

Attendance Discipline

Bob Hart put out a letter warning employees of the consequences of not coming to work. Mr. Pouncy goes through attendance files at both Palatine and Carol Stream, and Busse attendance is being reviewed by district personnel. As management looks to cut budget they will focus on attendance and attendance discipline. The union pointed out to Greg Johnson that most employees are now on nights and cannot get annual leave or a holidays off. He sympathized but said that was no reason to call-in sick if you're not incapacitated.

Locker Inspections for the NID

Inspections will begin on 1-4 and end on 1-19-09 for all offices in the Northern Illinois District.