

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

Palatine Impact

The Palatine Impact meeting was held on 1-15-09 with Senior Plant Manager Ron Woodall, "Labor Scheduler" Tim Anderson and Industrial Engineer Blaise Steele. Also present was Human Resource Manager Phyllis Lingenfelter who was upset about individual grievances being filed at Carol Stream and Palatine on the compression and/or realignment. She said the fax machine keeps running out of paper and they can't keep up. She lectured that we should be filing one class action and used the meeting to appeal to APWU Regional Coordinator Sharyn Stone to make us stop. She continued to complain until Ron said "I think you got their answer." Then we listened to Area Complement Coordinator Nicole Collins-Early go through the motions by reading from the Impact Notice. We argued that the numbers do not justify an impact of 158 Clerk out of Palatine.

The Numbers

Their report called "Palatine TPH 6-Month Trend" showed a decline of 6.9% for the last six months of 2008. "TPH" stands for Total Pieces Handled. Flash Reports for fiscal 2007 and 2008 were also included. The Flash Reports do not separate Clerk and Mail Handler work hours. 2007 Clerk/MH hours were down 4.5%, total mail processing hours were down 5%, and First-Piece Handling (FHP) was down .05%. FY 2008 Clerk/MH hours were down 7.2%, total mail processing hours were down 8.4%, and FPH was down 5.6%. Combining totals for the last two fiscal years you have a decline of 11.7% for Clerk/MH hours, 13.4% for mail processing hours, and 6.1% for FPH. In the same two year period Palatine has lost 190 Clerks as there were 958 at the beginning of FY 2007 and there were 758 at the end of FY 2008. **They now say they only need 625 able-bodied Clerks.**

Clerk/MH Hours?

Their Impact numbers combine Clerk and Mail Handlers work-hours. With continued cross-craft assignment of distribution and mail processing to Mail Handlers it's no wonder the work-hours are combined, but how can combined numbers be used to excess 158 Clerks. Blaise said he was very confident of his numbers, and Ron must have a lot of confidence in him. Nonetheless, we are looking at a two-year mail volume decline of 6.1% and a 20% decline in the Clerk craft. This proposed Impact is a 35% reduction in the Clerk craft. Clerks in the last two waves of excessing were forced into the MH craft at Palatine, so they gain as we lose. How can combined Clerk/MH work-hours be used to excess Clerks? We also asked Ron why Automation is being clocked on operation #114, and why the Pie-Rack safety hazard has not been corrected as promised. Ron said he would look into it, and when asked if it would be corrected he repeated, "he would look into it".

Floor Edition

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Special points of interest:

Palatine Impact
The Numbers
Clerk/MH Hours?
90 Day Notice Letters
National Reassessment Process
Dignity and Respect
Chicago Metro Understaffed

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90 Day Notice Letters

APWU Regional Coordinator Sharyn Stone told management the impacted Clerks must be given at least 90 days notice prior to being moved. Management stated they will be adding Mail Handler jobs at both plants, and the International Service Center (ISC) will likely be adding Clerk and MH jobs. The 158 number has been reduced to 132 based on Clerk attrition out of Palatine. The junior impacted Clerks will be placed into residual lower level positions within the facility in the Maintenance (Custodian) and Mail Handler Crafts. The rest will preference by craft seniority on a list of residual vacancies prepared by the Northern IL District (NID). I asked Complement Coordinator Catherine Porter for a current list of the residual vacancies within the NID and she said she could not provide one at this time. Phyllis said they cannot provide a current list because the vacancies have not been "validated" I don't know what they mean by validation other than some of the residuals will disappear. They have moved as many Clerks onto tour 1 as possible in preparation for the excessing. They won't save any money by moving Clerks around but only by moving them out. What was the point of moving everyone to tour 1 before the excessing, except to make the Clerks more upset? In spite of declining mail volume and management's confidence, how will the mail get their mail out with 158 less Clerks? The remaining Clerks will be pressured to work faster, and as the Pie Racks demonstrate, less safely. They know how to fix this safety hazard but they won't because it might reduce their BPI.

National Reassessment Process

"No Work Available" interviews may begin in approximately 90 days, and we will report any new information. If you have not been interviewed yet you could fall into the "NWA" category. I have requested and management is obligated to provide us with their "No Work Available" list, but they have provided nothing in response to our Information Request dated 12-16-08. Some Clerks targeted by National Reassessment Process (NRP) were able to obtain bids on the 222 bid posting at Palatine, which will save them from NWA if they can perform the job within 6 months per the Burris Memo.

Protect Yourself

Management continues to look for ways to reduce their career complement with the VERA, and when that didn't work, with the National Tour Compression and Ron's Complement Realignment, and of course the "NRP-NWA". For those of you who think you are safe because you don't have attendance problems, think again. What you may consider a minor infraction may generate serious discipline against you, up to and including removal. Be careful and don't put yourself in harm's way.

Associate Office Reversions

Management is not reposting Clerk jobs vacated due to retirement in the Associate Offices as every one has been reverted. Complement Coordinator Porter denies the existence of a list in which all retirement-created vacancies are marked "revert" but these vacancies are all being reverted and she has yet to provide her list as we requested on 12-20-08. Most of these reversions are not justified and grievances have been filed in NWIAL offices.

Dignity and Respect

Senior management sets the tone. When Senior Management treats subordinates with respect they lead by example and this applies to the treatment of EAS and Craft employees alike. When Senior Management treats Supervisors with disrespect a signal is being sent and received that it is ok to treat subordinates the same way. I've heard horror stories about the daily telecoms where supervisors have been berated in the presence of a captive audience. I have seen the disrespect towards some Labor Relations personnel first-hand. All postal employees are to be treated with dignity and respect regardless of who you report to. Information comes my way that I cannot share in a floor letter as I would not want to identify the source, but suffice it to say I hear plenty "off the record". I recently received a letter regarding unprofessional conduct that has been condoned by Senior Management, which confirms some of my worst suspicions in this regard. I'm sure this employee does not feel they are being treated "like royalty".

Chicago Metro Understaffed

We have requested a Labor-Management meeting and are waiting for Ruby. We have told her the facility is understaffed for Clerks and Maintenance, and now I hear the Area is looking at Busse staffing needs. Clerk vacancies should be posted, and Ruby stated before Christmas that she would be posting some newly created tour 1 Rack bids. Those bids need to be posted, and Shared Services needs to finalize SPBS bids that employees were placed into in December. Four Busse Stewards are attending Steward training in Champaign, IL this week. *Qz*