

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Local Update by Jackie Engelhart

Floor Edition

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AI Part II

In the last Local Line I shared the impact information for Carol Stream due to the Automatic Induction of the AFSM. As stated, on January 12 we met with Ron Woodall and John Colao, and were officially notified that the impact would be 32 Clerk jobs. We were told that 32 jobs would be the maximum and that it could be less. 6 of the 32 jobs would be reduced by attrition due to retirements, etc. The other 26 would be reduced by forcing them into the Mail Handler craft at Carol Stream. We are waiting for senior management to schedule the second meeting we requested on January 15th. We believe the impact can and should be reduced. Management is quick to cut jobs, but they are not so quick to add jobs when volume is added. We all know management uses casuals to fill-in for injured employees and Carol Stream has historically used them year-round for this purpose.

We strongly disagree with excessing 26 Clerks out of their craft, only to bring casuals back in the door to work on the AFSM or wherever that excessed Clerk could be working.

Palatine Part II at CS
Management excessed 39 Clerks in June of 2005. At that time there were no Clerk casuals at Palatine (for years). Around Labor Day of 2006 Management informed us they were hiring 20 Clerk casuals for the "fall mailing season". The number was reduced to 15, as Greg Johnson listened to us and did not assign 5 casuals to tour 2. We have grievances that will be scheduled for arbitration soon on the excessing at Palatine. Management knows they are required to eliminate casuals prior to excessing, so they will (temporarily) get rid of the casuals. They will wait a short time and return the casuals, but they will not return the career Clerks. We informed management this would violate the contract, and it's just plain wrong!

The Real Impact

Management sits at the table and informs us the impact will be 26, but the "impact" will affect more than the 26 clerks management has targeted for excessing. The 26 junior Clerks, regardless of physical limitations, will be excessed, and most will be from tour 1 automation and the AFSM units. How will management replace those bodies if they can't use casuals? They must force Clerks to tour 1 from tours 3 and 2. After years of working on your respective tour and earning that schedule, management is going to abolish your AFSM job and assign it to a Mail Handler. You are needed on tour 1 to replace the 26 excessed Clerks who are needed to staff the job you used to do on the AFSM. Thank you for your years of service, and please fill out your VOE survey! Here are the numbers presented by Management:
Tour 2: 21 bids to be reduced to 10 bids.
Tour 3: 44 bids to be reduced to 20 bids
Tour 1: 47 bids to be reduced to 20 bids.

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President
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News Director

Special points of interest:

AI Part II

Palatine Part II at CS

The Real Impact(

Numbers Don't Lie?!

Clerks Understand "What's Really Going On..."

Remember This at VOE Time.

Numbers Don't Lie ?!

Then number of Clerks needed to staff each AFSM with AI will be reduced from 5 to 3. This should not require the more than 50% reduction in bids as proposed in management's "staffing summary". This is overkill, pure and simple, because it's Clerks.

Management's numbers don't add up. On the Mail Handler side, management states they anticipate a 31% increase in productivity for the 035 Flat Prep unit. The Flat Prep unit will be eliminated by AI, but that's ok, its now part of the AFSM?! Anyway, with an anticipated 31% increase in "Flat Prep" productivity, management proposes to increase the number of career Mail Handlers assigned to this operation from 41 to 67.

(The staffing of the AI will be 4 Mail Handlers per crew.) If there is an increase in productivity, how can an increase in staffing be justified? Because its not Clerks. Management uses their numbers to do whatever they want with staffing and we know their numbers do not add up. They do not listen to us and in the meantime Clerk craft employees are moved around in the grand plan to assign mail processing work to Mail Handlers. We understand this and we know Clerks understand it too. I received a copy of a letter on AI from Palatine Clerk Mary Corner, that she sent to APWU National Clerk Craft Director Jim McCarthy. Copies were also sent to APWU President Burrus, USPS Contract Administrator John Dockins (who oversees the craft assignments in the AFSM) and Senior Plant Manager Ron Woodall. The letter lays out all of the reasons why all work on the Flat Sorter is Clerk work.

Clerks Understand "What's Really Going On..."

The letter made many of the same arguments that I am making in the Carol Stream AFSM AI dispute that APWU will be filing at the local level once the AI is started at the facility. The facts are obvious, the Flat Sorter is, has been and always will be a Mail Processing operation, and (Mail Processing) Clerks are the craft assigned to this work per the RI-399 rules. Management continues to assign automated mail processing work to Mail Handlers in violation of the RI-399 which assigns mail processing work to Clerks. The USPS wanted to eliminate the 035 Flat Prep unit because it never met the productivity standards called for in the AFSM handbook, which is two employees (Mail Handlers) per machine hour. As we stated at the Impact meeting on Jan. 12, we know management staffed this unit with year-round casuals and excessive overtime. Much of the productivity gained on the AFSM itself was reduced by the labor-intensive 035 Flat Prep Unit. USPS plans to fix this problem by eliminating the Flat Prep Unit, and designating the feed station as the 035 "Prep Station". How ingenious! Clerks have always performed all work on the flat sorter. Prepping and feeding were combined on every generation of FSM, until the deployment of the "high-speed" AFSM. Now that the AI is returning the prepping to the FSM, USPS is creating the Prep Station. FSM Clerks have historically prepped and fed the machine. The ingenious part is the station where the mail is actually prepped and fed is designated as the prep station. The mail is placed into the

Automation Compatible Tray (ACT) which travels by conveyor to the other end of the machine where it is actually inducted. So the feed station is called the prep station but the mail is being loaded /fed into the machine. The only difference is it is being inducted on the other end. The fact remains the mail is being prepped and loaded at the same time, and this has historically been Clerk work. In their drive to take mail processing work from Mail Processing Clerks and assign it to Mail Handlers, they are designating the automated mail induction point as the feed station. This allows them to call the actual feed/prep station the Prep Station and assign the work to Mail Handlers. When the affected Clerks get their Excessing and Abolishment notices, let them understand why. This action is based on saving the hourly wage differential between a level 5 (soon to be a level 6) Clerk and a level 4 Mail Handler.

Remember This at VOE Time.

Just as USPS is pushing the elimination of the Clerk craft and the assignment of mail processing work to Mail Handlers, they continue to push the VOE Survey. They say VOE should not be confused with "Labor-Management" issues, but we vehemently disagree. The VOE is USPS' attempt to bypass the Union, with the hope of getting good responses on the six categories. At the recent "Town Hall" meetings, Palatine Plant Manager Greg Johnson told the employees that Palatine's response rate was 50%. As I told Human Resource Manager Phyllis Lingenfelter at the recent Information Meeting, employees don't care about the VOE. They care about their bids, their start times and days-off. Management wants them to care about VOE but management doesn't care about them.