

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

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Meeting with Mayor of Arlington Heights

Vice President Baskin and I met recently with the Mayor of Arlington Heights to inform her of the proposed consolidation of outgoing mail from 600 SCF offices from Palatine to Carol Stream. She told us she's a "postal junkie" and will contact officials in an effort to stop this. Vice President Baskin has been spearheading our efforts to stop the proposed loss of mail out of Palatine. I was told by senior management that if the AMP is approved Palatine will lose at least 50 jobs and those jobs will be lost in both the Clerk and MH crafts. Management has not stated what impact the AMP would have on Maintenance and MVS. We are asking all employees wherever you work and whatever your craft to fill out letters to IL Senators and you Congressman to stop this AMP. They say if the AMP to CS doesn't work they will look at taking mail out of CS.

Carol Stream to Pre- pare Impact for FSS

I was notified on 7-9-09 by In-Plant Support Manager John Colao that Carol Stream he has been instructed to prepare an impact statement for the Flat Sequencing System or FSS. Clerks retain about half the jobs on the AFSM-AI at Carol Stream because we still do the sweeping and with the FSS more Clerk jobs will be lost. At Palatine we have very few jobs left on the AFSM so any impact should be smaller. I was told that any impact could be offset by the proposed AMP consolidation of mail from Palatine as well as well as by the National Reassessment Process or NRP. This means if Carol Stream does not get Palatine mail and does not "lose" enough Clerks via the NRP process then there will be an impact for the FSS which is due in January of 2010. At this point USPS cannot cut jobs fast enough and their plans pit one employee group against another for job survival.

Plant Manager's Time

Over a month ago I was asked to set up a meeting for the tour 3 automation Clerks at Palatine and I relayed this request to Plant Manager Greg Johnson but they are still waiting. There are other issues that I would like to see addressed with or by Mr. Johnson but the Plant Manager's time is limited so we wait. A/Senior MDO Ramion and Tour 3 MDO Anderson are in the process of setting up this meeting. At Busse on June 19th I asked Plant Manager Ruby Branch to set up a meeting requested by maintenance employees due to problems with a supervisor not getting the ok from maintenance when starting the APPS. These employees are still waiting for this meeting. There are other issues that require her attention but the Plant Manager's time is limited so we wait. When was the last time a Plant Manager requested a Labor-Management meeting? The answer is never until Carol Stream A/Plant Manager Lee Thompson requested one. How does she find the time?

Jackie Engelhart
President
Alan J. Czerwinski
News Director

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Northwest Illinois Area Local
American Postal Workers Union
194 W. Lake Street
Elmhurst, IL 60126
Phone: 630-833-0088
Fax: 630-833-0248
Email: nwialapwu@hotmail.com
Web: www.nwial.com

Omar Gonzalez on NRP
"NO OCCUPATIONALLY NECESSARY TASKS AVAILABLE" are the words management is using to get rid of the ill and injured. The National Reassessment Process (NRP) has nothing to do with the health and welfare of injured workers. NRP was designed in 2002 under the PMG's Transformation Plan, named and piloted in 2004, and rolled out nationwide in 2006. It is designed to get most injured workers off the rolls of the Postal Service and get them vocationally rehabilitated to private companies at which time they will no longer be postal employees. The NRP is being accelerated as the Postal Service needs to cut employees in a hurry. The process begins with a demand for updated medical documentation, followed by a tracking of work activity, a determination the work the injured are doing is "not necessary or needed" and the "No Work Available" interview resulting in injured workers being walked off the work floor. It is an attack on those already hurt and in pain. A CA-2a Recurrence Form and CA-7 Compensation Form is issued along with a PS 3971, followed by a visit from an OWCP Vocational Rehab counselor, training, and separation from the Postal Service. This information from APWU Western Region Coordinator Omar Gonzalez is consistent with what I have been telling injured employees. I have been told the Northern IL District will be inviting the unions to an NRP briefing on 7-28-09, and they want the "No Work Available" employees gone by the end of 2009. I will make copies of Mr. Gonzalez informative article available to all union members.

The "Biggest Loser" is USPS?
National Business Agent Linda Turney sent us an article in "Mike Causey's Federal Report" about USPS titled "The Biggest Loser". *"Picture, if you can, the USPS as one of the contestants on that popular NBC reality show, "The Biggest Loser". Like the human contestants, the USPS needs to downsize to stay in the game and stay alive. So how did a popular federal operation that touches nearly every American household 6-days a week suddenly become too big? And how can you downsize? Let's start with you, the consumer. When was the last time you wrote somebody a letter? When was the last time you got a real letter? Do you pay your bills on-line? If you don't bank using the internet, chances are your children do. All indicators are that as young people join the workforce they shop, bank and do business on-line. Stamps? Who needs them? Postal Clerks? Who needs them or at least so many to move an every dwindling flow of mail? The situation with the Postal Service is similar to that of the newspaper business. Both are between a rock and a hard place. A growing number of newspapers are cutting staff, cutting the size of the newspaper and creating on-line editions. The difference is that the USPS can and will ask for taxpayer subsidies. Meantime, the USPS is hoping that technology and fewer people will let it stay in business. Last summer they offered early retirement to 40,000 rank-and-file employees. Mostly from the Clerk craft. Now they've upped the amount to 140,000 folks, including some management types they would like to see leave earlier than planned.*

Biggest Loser "Snail Mail"
The last early out offer tempted 7000 folks to depart. Union leaders urged employees (also dues paying members) not to consider an early-out unless they also got a buy-out too. Buyouts are worth a maximum of \$25,000 before deductions. Early retirement is a good deal only for people who want to, and feel they can... Many of the USPS 646,000 workers (120,000) of whom are eligible to retire or take an early out are apparently hanging on in hopes that buyouts will be offered. Officials are expecting 40,000 to retire this year. That's nowhere near the number they would like to see go. Many are concerned about the hit their TSP accounts have taken and the and the poor economy, and say a buyout is just the nudge they need. But union and management sources say it is unlikely that USPS will ever again offer buyouts. USPS brass hope that when and if the economy starts to improve more people will send more first, second or third class mail. But in private they believe they are sailing against the tide "The first time I heard the term "snail mail", I knew we were in trouble a former postal official said."
A Senator's View
Senator Tom Carper (D-Del) said that the drop in revenue is due not just to the economy but also to new technology that won't be going away. "The real problem needs to be addressed" Carper said. "There are several options on the table and I wouldn't preclude any of them." He left the door open to any option that fixes the problem permanently. The contracts for all four major unions expire in 2010 and you can imagine the negotiations will be ugly.

JK