

# The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the  
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

## Palatine AMP Study Announced on 6-10-09

Another bomb was dropped at Palatine, when District Manager Bob Hart and A/Senior Plant Manager Greg Johnson informed both unions they have been instructed by Headquarters to conduct a 60 day Area Mail Processing (AMP) study for possible consolidation of Palatine originating mail to Carol Stream P&DC. Within 30 minutes of notifying the unions, Greg Johnson and Bob Hart were on the floor meeting with groups of employees to inform them of the study. Greg stated the study would be performed by two Industrial Engineers, Alex Nigro from Palatine, and Doug St. John from Carol Stream. They will be inputting all data into a program that looks at processing capacity, BPI, transportation and service, etc. Within 60 days we will know whether this AMP goes forward or not. The question everyone is asking "Why Palatine?"

## "Why Palatine?"

Palatine employees asked why Palatine would be targeted when Palatine has always had more mail. Greg Johnson could not answer this because he said it was a "headquarters decision." The HQ decision was surely filtered through the Area and specifically In-Plant Support. Many employees (with no prompting from me) are asking what does Ron Woodall have to do with the targeting of Palatine. Why take mail out of a facility that sits right on top of route 53 and the 290 and 90 expressways? Why take mail out of a facility that just opened a multi-million dollar expansion project (for FSS) which now houses cancellation? Palatine has historically been a very productive plant in spite of some decline in the last few years of the Woodall-Bracket regime. Why was Ron taken out of Palatine and is this some sort of payback? We hoped for the best but predicted as much in the last Local Line.

## Not a Done Deal...

In 2006 Rockford and Fox Valley were AMP targets. The Rockford APWU fought the consolidation and with help from Congressman Don Manzullo was able to stop the AMP of Rockford into Palatine. I was the 600 CCD when Ron started taking Rockford's mail, and I know Rockford did not win their fight by grievance filing but by political lobbying. They did not give up and Palatine can do the same if we all stand together by calling and writing our Congressmen and Senators to stop the consolidation. I will have a sample letter ready for employees next week. Since tour 3 processes out-going mail the loss of originating would impact tour 3 bids. Any reduction of employees would be by juniority. Fox Valley was also targeted for AMP in 2006 but USPS decided not to consolidate their originating mail to South Suburban. Both plants were on a list from headquarters, but we have seen no headquarters list this time, and the question without an answer is "Why Palatine?"

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## Special points of interest:

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## International Service Center (ISC) to Close?

I have heard from several reliable sources that the International Service Center will close and their operations will be shifted to AMC O'Hare by June of 2010. The ISC is a leased facility on the edge of O'Hare Airport and AMC O'Hare is nearby and USPS owned. I am told that AMC mail will be split between Chicago Metro Surface Hub and Irving Park Road (IPR). What will happen to the employees remains to be seen but Northern IL District performs Human Resource Functions for ISC. These are scary times for postal employees with and without union contracts as some EAS employees are about to get riffed if they cannot find positions soon. Those of us with union contracts have no layoff protection thru November of 2010. Some of us can retire soon but others have years to go. Until and unless mail volume comes back the USPS will continue to slash costs, and the possible ISC closing and Palatine AMP study show what the future holds. Low mail volumes continue to drive operational changes that negatively impact employees. We have seen that one craft's loss is another craft's gain and now one plant's loss is another plant's gain but the impacted employees are the losers. We had Clerks at Palatine who volunteered to become Mail Handlers because they were scared they would be forced into the Carrier Craft, and now they will stay PTF indefinitely as we remain in withholding. If they had waited to be excessed they would be full-time and management knew that. **The only good thing is we still have a job because we have a Union contract.**

## The NRP is Really Coming

Management met with the APWU at Palatine on 6-10-09 at our request to discuss the scarcity of work in the NRP Necessary Work Sheets prepared by Danny Bracket and Ralph Ramion while Ron Woodall was Plant Manager. We asked that manual letters, flats and nixie be added to the worksheets. We were met with silence from most of the management team so Ralph took the lead to say that there is not enough work for the bid employees in these units. NRP "Operations Team Leader" Melvin Dean stated there is no more necessary work at Palatine. As I have been saying, if you do not already have an NRP job offer you are not likely to get one. This District is preparing to get rid of approximately 200 Limited Duty and Rehab employees (all crafts) by the end of the year. If you do not have a bid and do not have an NRP job offer, this means you. Since they already know this I asked why not let the affected employees know what is coming. H R Manager Lingenfelter said "we can't". She said they are not approved yet by the Area but the person from the Area is in the building to start the process. The reason there has been a long lull between the NRP Job Offers and the No Work Available is the surrounding districts have to catch up with the Northern Il District by identifying all necessary work. The reason for that is employees whose MMI date is over one year must be accommodated within the local commuting area. Until the surrounding districts have exhausted their necessary work management cannot start walking those 200 employees out the door. If you have questions, call me.

## Unintended Consequences

For the past four years Dave Baskin and I have done our best to represent the members of this Local and make decisions carefully. We try to consult with the Officers and Stewards when in doubt. In the case of the agreement to cancel the Clerk bid posting at Carol Stream we made a decision that we felt was right at the time. I have since felt the wrath of the unencumbered Clerks who have waited patiently since 1-9-09 for bids to be posted for them. The reason given for not posting bids earlier was the Targeted Allied and Indirect Positions (TAIP) headquarters directive to make a 33% across the board reduction in positions that "don't touch the mail". The positions targeted were Review Clerks, General Expeditors and Postage Due Clerks. These abolishments were made after the Tour Compression and management did not want to post newly created bids until all the abolishments were done. Then came the "unplanned" reduction of tour 2 AFSM bids the day before the posting came down. At the time we thought they should have a chance to bid and the delay would be a minor inconvenience. I have since talked to and been educated by some of the unencumbered Clerks and understand why they are so upset. They saw light at the end of the tunnel to get a bid, to get off tour one, and to use their seniority within their bid. I asked In-Plant Support Manager John Colao to post more bids because of the six AFSM Clerks. He said they will post 55 jobs which is more than enough for the 46 able-bodied unencumbered Clerks assigned to Automation as well as the six AFSM Clerks.