

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Local Update by Jackie Engelhart

\$479.00 COLA Increase

All APWU employees will be receiving an annual raise of \$479 based on the rise in the Consumer Price Index. The Cost-Of-Living will be effective 3-15-08 and will be reflected in 4-4-08 paychecks. The adjustment will amount to a 23-cent per hour increase or \$18.40 per pay period.

"Cost of-living adjustments demonstrate the value of our contract and the strength of our union, said President Burrus, "Coming just one month after across-the-board upgrades, the COLA means our members will enjoy a substantial increase in pay over a short period of time." APWU members who began the year at Level 5 Step 0 will realize an increase of more than \$1700 per year as a result of the upgrade and the March COLA. There will be five more COLA adjustments under the 2006 National Agreement. With the \$686 raise on 9-1-07 and the latest adjustment COLA raises in this contract have totaled \$1,165.

Palatine Expansion

Senior Plant Manager Woodall briefed the Unions on the upcoming building expansion in preparation for the Flat Sequencing System (FSS). Parking lot work is scheduled to begin on 4-2-08 and Bulk Mail demolition on 4-9-08. Demolition of the block house (old leave control) will begin this week. Start of the building expansion is scheduled to begin on 5-21-08. Part of the FSS site preparation includes moving all flats operations to the second floor and all letter operations to the first floor. The FSS will have separate mail processing and mail preparation areas as the AFSM did before AI, but USPS has not said who will staff the FSS. The FSS will have a major impact on the carrier craft as it will DPS flats that are normally cased to the route by the carriers at their respective post offices. The current install dates are 3-27-10 for three FSS at Palatine and 3-6-10 for two FSS at Carol Stream.

FMLA Issues

In the last Local Line I wrote about our meeting with the FMLA staff and FMLA problems we discussed. We will meet again on 3-12-08 to continue looking for ways to help reduce the FMLA backlog by reducing the number of FMLA forms deemed "incomplete" by the FMLA Office. In the last Local Line I quoted 600 FMLA Coordinator Cora Krause as stating 90% of the certifications submitted to her are incomplete. I said "I'm thinking Cora is trying very hard to find reasons to find forms incomplete", and she called me to take exception to what I wrote. She said she has worked with us to help employees over the years and I agreed that she did try to help employees when she was at Palatine but the job has changed (since the consolidation). A good suggestion came from 601 FMLA Coordinator Arlene Sanders who said employees should read their forms before leaving the doctor's office to make sure it's complete.

Floor Edition

March 6, 2008
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CMSH Tour 3 Chief Steward Sherry Thomas Hospitalized

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Mail Changes at Metro

Plant Manager Brian Stewart briefed us and the Mail Handler Union on 3-3-08 on changes in what mail will be processed at Busse. A copy of the changes is available in the Union Office and is posted on the Union Board.

The changes will mean more jobs on tour 2 as the APPS will start at 0800 and the SPBS will run from 10 am to 4 pm. Tour 2 SPBS jobs will be posted with a 10 am start.

The most negative change will be the loss of originating Priority Mail which will be processed at AMC. This means that the entire Scan-Where-You-Band Unit will be eliminated and the elimination of all 18 Clerk SWYB positions.

On 3-4-08 we met with Operations Manager Shanteau Anderson, and she said that more bids will be posted for tour 3 Racks due to the addition of Carol Stream and Palatine mail. The changes were approved by the Great Lakes Area and presented to the Unions. Management is working on their staffing plan and keeping both Unions informed and seeking our input. Tour 3 MDO Jacqueline Hudson, Vice President Baskin, and I met with the SWYB Clerks on 3-4-08 at 1800 to discuss these changes and give what information we have.

CMSH Tour 3 Chief Steward Sherry Thomas Hospitalized.

CMSH Chief Steward Thomas has been hospitalized for a sudden and serious health condition, but we hear he is doing much better. He is in Central Dupage Hospital in Winfield. We all wish for his complete recovery and return to work when he is well. Last night Dave and I talked to new Steward applicants and hope to have a new Steward on tour 3 next week.

Welcome New Members

We recently signed six new member Custodians at Chicago Metro Surface Hub and eight at Carol Stream. We hope to see more new Custodians in the near future due to the MS-47 Settlement. Former Custodians were not included in the \$2700.00 lump sum payment if they were not a Custodian as of 1-29-08. The settlement terms were agreed to by the National Maintenance Craft Director Steve Raymer, and not by Local Maintenance Craft Director Olson.

Maintenance Problems at Busse

We received employee complaints regarding the attitude and conduct of Tour 2 Supervisor Jeffrey Goggins, and we will be discussing these complaints with Senior management.

Bidding Process is Working

While too many Clerks have lost their bids due to operational changes (loss of FSM-1000) and/or RI-399 (AFSM to AI) many of these abolished Clerks are obtaining new bids in other units. At Palatine management posted newly created Manual Flats bids on all three tours. The new contract requires a bid for every Clerk and this has stopped management from reverting so many jobs. At Carol Stream management is adamant that they will not post Flats bids based on the number of light/limited duty Clerks assigned to Flats. 601 CCD Calvin Taylor will continue to pursue Flats bids with In-Plant Support Manager John Colao.

Election Committee At Work

The NWIAL Election Committee is hard at work preparing for the 2008 Election. The Committee members are (Chairperson) D'Andrea Harris and Annie McKee from Palatine and Leroy Hein and Dorothy Winfrey from Carol Stream. We thank them for volunteering for this hard work.

Daylight Saving Time Begins on Sunday 3-9-08.

From the Legislative Director

"The Legislative Committee will be placing **one last order** for the Martin Luther King T-shirts. If you want to order T-shirts for family, friends, church groups or block clubs, see Ray Wience or Walter Elerby Jr. at Carol Stream, and James Faulkner or Vera Wilkerson at Palatine. There will be order forms in the Union rooms. This order will be placed on March 14th with no exceptions. The Committee would like to thank everyone who made this project a huge success! There will be a complete report on the Legislative Committee progress at the April membership meeting. Director Horan can be reached at 630-816-1542 for any questions.

FMLA Legislative Alert

The Department of Labor has proposed drastic changes to FMLA that will have a negative impact on our members. The proposal will require more medical information at an increased cost. It will allow management to require medical documentation for less than 3 days for paid leave if requesting FMLA. If not requesting FMLA, the current rules apply. Management may require more medical documentation if they deem the medical statement by your doctor to be "insufficient, vague, ambiguous or non-responsive". We have until April 11 to contact the Department of Labor to make comments on these proposed changes. You can contact them at www.regulations.gov or by mail to Richard Brennan at the US Department of Labor, Wage & Hour Division, Room S3502, Washington DC 20210.

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