

# The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the  
Northwest Illinois Area Local

## Local Update by Jackie Engelhart

Floor Edition

March 10, 2006

### Pay & COLA Increase

The 1.6% pay increase and the first COLA under the 2005-2006 contract extension take effect on March 18, 2006, and will be reflected on paychecks received on April 7, 2006. The COLA increase is 22 cents per hour, and the 1.6% increase for a 5-0 is \$728 per year.

### Upgrades

Effective March 18, 2006 pay levels for the following maintenance craft duty assignments will be upgraded one level: Maintenance Mechanic, PS-5, Welder, PS-6, Carpenter, PS-6, Painter, PS-6, Plumber, PS-6. The upgrades will be based on a step to step upgrade, including credit for waiting period time already served. As Maintenance Mechanic, PS-4 positions become vacant, reposted vacancies will be PS-5.

### Maintenance Settle.

Settlements for the Carol Stream Key Handling grievance and for the CMSH Custodial Staffing grievances are completed per Maintenance Director Olson.

### Bulk Mail Clerk PS-6

Bulk Mail Clerks will be upgraded to level 6, while Bulk Mail Technicians will remain level 6 for the duration of the contract. Future contract negotiation will seek an upgrade for Bulk Mail Technicians. Per the LMOU Bulk Mail Clerks and Bulk Mail Technicians are separate sections for leave, overtime, and holidays. We have requested a labor-management meeting for bulk mail to be held in the near future. A major problem in bulk mail is management's use of unqualified non-bid clerks in lieu of bid or ODL clerks. Grievances are being filed when this occurs for OT pay to ODL.

### Skills Bank vs. EAS

Most postal employees know that if they are detailed out of the bargaining unit for 4 months they will lose their bid, as this is what the contract states. Management often uses EAS details to avoid the LMOU provision on using the Skills Bank by seniority, so they can pick who they want. Don't blame us.

### Limited Duty Interviews

Injury Compensation Manager Gilbert Lopez informed us that management will be conducting interviews of all limited duty and rehab employees (clerk & mailhandler) for the purpose of determining if that employee will be able to return to their bid, or whether they are permanent and the bid should be taken. These interviews will be conducted by a William Pouncy & Mary Hughes at Carol Stream, and by Shirley Hampton & Connie Pierce at Palatine. Our employees will be assisted in these interviews by Vivian Henderson at Carol Stream and by Mimi Jackson at Palatine. Gilbert stated these interviews have nothing to do with "Outsourcing", as this has not yet been approved for the Northern Illinois District. He also stated that employees who can't throw mail are not considered productive, and they would be the first ones targeted for "Outsourcing". We all agreed that we currently have enough work for all injured employees.

Jackie Engelhart  
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### Special points of interest:

Pay & COLA Increase

Upgrades

Maintenance Settle

Bulk Mail Clerk PS-6

Skills bank vs. EAS

Limited Duty Interviews

Associate Office Excessing

New steward at Northbrook

Thanks Dave Retel!

Welcome Back Gary Nolet

CS Low Cost Dispute Filed

National Disputed Filed for Automatic Induction on the AFSM.

RI-399 at Palatine

From Bad to Worse at Metro

News Item (Sun-Times 3-9-06)

### **Associate Office Excessing**

Of the original 67 AO clerks targeted for excessing in the Northern Illinois District, the number has been reduced due to attrition, and due to an insufficient number of residual vacancies in the district. Clerks identified as excess in their office were given a list of withheld residual vacancies available in the NID AO's. They were allowed to preference on these jobs by seniority, and they will be notified as to their new assignment and starting date at their new office. All excessed clerks should inform management if they wish to exercise retreat rights back to their original office. Meanwhile, we continue to hear stories about understaffing at the AO's from both craft & management. Grievances have been filed by Vice President Baskin for all four of NWIAL's affected offices, Glenview, Highland Park., Lake Forest & Mount Prospect.

### **New Steward at Northbrook!**

We welcome Larissa Davis as our new steward at Northbrook.

### **Thanks Dave Retel!**

Dave Retel is taking a break from his steward duties as he has taken a promotion on tour 1. We have asked him to be a steward on tour 1 and we hope that after a short break he will be back. We all thank Dave for the excellent job he has done representing the maintenance craft for many years. (and the clerk craft before he went to maintenance.) Dave will be missed but his years of hard work and service are appreciated

### **Welcome Back Gary Nolet**

Gary Nolet has informed me that he will accept steward appointment to tour 1 CS maintenance, effective April 1st, and this is not an April Fool's Day joke.

### **C S Low Cost Dispute Filed!**

APWU filed a dispute with the Carol Stream Local Dispute Resolution Committee in response to Plant Manager Woodall's action of assigning all work on LCTS 2-4 to the mailhandler craft. Copies of the dispute were sent to Ron Woodall and the NPMHU President at CS. LDRC should be convened for this dispute within 30 days. Grievances will be filed by tour and pay period once operation begin in LCTS 2-4. While USPS at the national level continues to assign automated distribution work to the mailhandler craft, at the local level it defies logic to assign manual distribution to other than the clerk craft. Soon to be displaced SPBS clerks have to wonder why is Ron Woodall taking manual jobs away from us.

### **National Dispute Filed for Automatic Induction on the AFSM.**

The APWU has filed a dispute at the national level on USPS decision to assign work on the AFSM with Auto Induction (AI) to the mailhandler craft. Flatsorter work has always been clerk work and once again management is taking clerk work and giving it to the MH craft. Should AI be installed at any NWIAL facility we will file a local dispute to be held pending the national level case, as we have done for the APPS dispute. We have not been informed of AI deployment at either Palatine or Carol Stream.

### **RI-399 at Palatine**

The Palatine Low Cost dispute is awaiting national arbitration and we continue to file grievance for LCTS #2 every pay period. We are still waiting for management to convene the LDRC regarding the local APPS dispute and the "old" 181 tray operation. A meeting is scheduled for March 28, 2006.

### **From Bad to Worse-at Metro!**

Chicago Metro Surface Hub has always treated it's employees a little differently, and usually not better. With the arrival of Melvin J. Anderson as plant manager, we hoped things would get better under his "leadership". Thus far we have been disappointed, the feedback from the employees is growing louder and we hear you. I am in communication with tour 3 Chief Jonn Johnson on a daily basis, and he has expressed that problems keep getting worse. Why is it that managers at this facility don't know how to talk to employees. Dignity and respect do not work here. Why can't clerks get a day off? Why are employees not paid when they submit medicals? Why has management not converted the two senior PTF's as agreed on September 9, 2005? Why do we have to file a grievance for something that was agreed to? Why are bids still not being posted for clerks months after the 2nd APPS eliminated most SPBS work? When issuing discipline what happened to "just cause"? When will maintenance be properly staffed at all levels? The frustration grows at "Busse" while management seems oblivious to the problems. We will be filing more grievances at Busse until management corrects these problems. There is a correlation between how you treat employees and the success of your operation, and this is clear at Busse.

**News Item (Sun-Times 3-9-06)**  
"Treasury Secretary John Snow notifies Congress that the administration has now taken "all prudent and legal actions," including tapping into federal pension funds, to keep from hitting the \$8.2 trillion national debt limit." They are taking money from Civil Service retirement and they don't intend to pay it back. Take note postal workers!