

# The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the  
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

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Update by: Jackie Engelhart

## APWU & USPS Sign the New Contract ...

APWU and USPS signed the new contract on 5-23-11. A printed version of the contract will be finalized soon. The union will post a notice on the website when it is available.

Charts organized by date and topic are posted on the website showing the effective dates of each new contract provision.

## PMG Says Contract to Save USPS \$3.8 Billion

Postmaster General Donahoe estimates the APWU Agreement will save USPS \$3.8 billion over the life of the contract ending in 2015. Immediate savings will come from the waiving of the 2011 COLA and the deferral of the 2012 COLA until 2013. More savings will come with the expanded use of non-career Postal Support Employees in 2013. APWU employees will pay 1% more each year of the contract for Federal Employee Health Benefits with the USPS part going from 79% in 2013 to 76% in 2016.

## PSE Effective Dates

The effective date for the Postal Support Employee (PSE) in the Maintenance Craft is 5-23-11, and USPS can hire up to 10% PSEs per district. The effective date for 20% PSEs in the Clerk Craft and 10% PSEs in the MVS Craft is 5-23-2013. USPS can exceed these percentages in the Clerk and MVS Crafts in Accounting Periods 3 and 4.

## Transitional Employees and Casuals Eliminated on 8-23-11...

There will be no more Transitional Employees or Casuals as of 8-23-11. The 5-23-2013 effective date for the new PSE category in Clerk and MVS means there will be no non-career employees in Clerk and MVS Crafts from 8-23-11 thru 5-23-2013. Management must expect enough Clerks to leave over the next two years to allow them to have room for up to 20% PSEs in 2013. In MVS they have allowed time for the APWU to review and compete for HCR work to be staffed by the MVS PSEs in 2013.

## PTF/PTR Conversions on 8-23-11...

Part-Time Regulars and Part-Time Flexibles in the Clerk and MVS Crafts will be converted to Full-Time or Non-Traditional Full-Time (NTFT) on 8-23-11. The conversion of Clerk PTFs is limited to level 21 and above offices as there will still be PTF Clerks in smaller offices. The change in status for PTR and PTF employees means they can no longer be reduced to 2 or 4 hours per pay period if and when management needs to cut hours and they will now be guaranteed at least 30 hours in a new NTFT job.

## Cannot be Forced into less than 40 Hour NTFT

Since the new contract says current full-time employees cannot be forced into Non-Traditional Full-Time duty assignments of less than 40 hours per week, NTFT jobs may go to the PTRs and PTFs if no full-time employees bid on them. The concern of the Local and other was how will management try to push full-time employees into these NTFT jobs. Time will tell if those concerns were justified.

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### Special points of interest:

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### **A "Watershed" Agreement...**

In the process of reviewing the new contract and comments from other Locals it is clear the changes in this Agreement are the most comprehensive in APWU history. History will decide if it was right. South West Florida Area Local President Sam Wood put it in perspective by reviewing the past few years under the old Agreement. He said, *"Since 1997, 100,000 or 40% of APWU represented bargaining unit jobs have been lost. Over the last few years, thousands of co-workers have been excessed, stations and branches closed, airport facilities closed, computerized forwarding system (CFS) units consolidated, thousands of employees affected by tour compression, and plant consolidations. Thousands of jobs have been lost by jobs being shifted to other crafts, to management, or outside contractors. All this happened under the last contract and Local Presidents had to deal with these issues on their own with little help from APWU headquarters. While it is easy now to look back and say the APWU should have negotiated provisions in our contract to protect APWU jobs, it is my belief that our current national officers, led by President Guffey, did just that. This contract while not perfect, has made great strides to protect current APWU members while also attempting to protect and grow jobs for all APWU represented crafts."* All things considered, the fact that we have a negotiated contract through 2015 that maintains our pay and benefits, keeps the no layoff protection, converts part-time employees, and returns work to our bargaining unit, is a good thing.

### **USPS Financial Woes...**

With most excessing on hold and the contract signed you would think things are looking up, but there is still one more thing. The Postal Service is going broke! The USPS has stated that without Congressional help, they expect to default on required annual payments of \$5.5 billion for future retiree health benefits this year. Rep. Issa (R-CA) has held hearings on the USPS and wants our pay and benefits reduced. Rep. Ross (R-FL) heads a powerful subcommittee and has stated management must layoff workers. A coalition of mailers are lobbying Congress to cut our COLAs and gut our work rules (Contract). The GAO says the USPS must reduce pay and outsource work, and the USPS plans to cut 40 million work hours this year alone. **President Guffey to Congress** APWU President Cliff Guffey testified before Congress on 5-17, and urged them to take immediate action to restore financial stability to the cash-strapped agency. He said this is not a request for a subsidy or bailout, that the USPS is very capable of dealing with the challenges of declining mail volume and electronic diversion, but must be relieved of the burden of pre-funding retiree health benefits at 5 billion per year over 10 years. No other government agency or company bears this burden. He praised part of Senator Carper's "POST Act" that would allow the USPS to use overpayments to its pension accounts to meet the pre-funding obligation of 5.5 billion. All APWU members should contact their legislators to urge them to support bills to avert the USPS financial crisis caused by the 2006 PAEA pre-funding requirement.

### **Palatine to Abolish FSS Bids**

Management has decided they must change FSS Clerk starting times from noon to 10am and from 830 pm to 630 pm, as they do not believe these changes will be temporary. The Union said they would agree to details if the time change was temporary. Since Tour 1 is being eliminated the tour 1 Clerks are abolished with retreat rights. The tour 3 Clerks have the option of going to the new tour 3 1850 starting time with their same off-days. Since 10 am is tour 2 these jobs will be newly created and posted for all Clerks to bid on. We tried to talk them out of abolishing bids but they said the time changes were needed because of problems with FSS machines breaking down. They need to bump up the times to make sure the DPS Flats get out to the Carriers in the AOs on time. We know employees blame the Union but we did not buy these machines and we did not decide what schedules to post for them. The contract and LMOU require bids to be posted by section and tour and these start time changes cross tour lines as tour 3 starts at noon per the LMOU and tour 1 starts at 2000. Tour 3 has the option to go from 1200 to 1650 because the time is within tour 3. **All Impact Bidding on Hold** The new districts, Central for 601 and Lakeland for 600 have been reviewing all impacts but have not communicated any decisions yet. **Chicago Metro SPBS Meetings** Plant Manager Melvin Anderson has scheduled meetings with the SPBS Clerks on 5-26-11 at 630 pm for tour 2 and 730 pm for tour 3 to address employee concerns over changes planned for the SPBS that could reduce the staffing. Jz