

The Local Line

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Northwest Illinois Area Local

Local Update by Jackie Engelhart

Floor Edition

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Happy Holidays!?

We continue to see management at both plants overdraft on holidays. If it is not a major holiday, they call it a "working holiday", but if it is a major holiday, like Thanksgiving, they draft anyway. For Thanksgiving 2005, Palatine P&DC decided to continue to do what they have done in the past, not take all volunteers for Tuesday & Wednesday to avoid V pay, and then draft 100% on Thanksgiving Day. I spoke with A/Plant Manager Melvin Dean about this (briefly) on Wednesday, 11-23-05 and he gave me the management explanation, that the mail is not here on Tuesday & Wednesday. We disagree with Mr. Dean on this, yes the mail that comes in on Wednesday night is obviously not here on Tuesday & Wednesday, but there is plenty of mail here at both plants to be worked. Management chooses to draft on Thanksgiving to save money by paying the

holiday (regular) rate of pay, as opposed to paying all volunteers for Tuesday & Wednesday because they do not want to pay the V pay. If all volunteers were allowed to work on Tuesday & Wednesday, it does not take a rocket scientist to know that there will be less mail to get out on Thursday, and management could allow more employees to have the holiday off, which is what the contract says.

Holiday Start Times

Every year for the major holidays we ask that employees be allowed to start earlier on tour 2 so they can get home and enjoy part of the day. Every year management waits until the last minute to coordinate with the other tours to let the Union know what units will be allowed to start early, then the Union is expected to make the last minute notifications to the employees, because that's our job, because it's for "our" employees. Management continues the policy of 100% draft on holidays while they have the day off.

Xmas & New Year's Christmas day & New Year's Day both fall on a Sunday this year. The contract states that when a holiday falls on a Sunday, and it is an employees' non-scheduled day, the following Monday will be observed as the holiday. Also, if an employees' non-scheduled day falls on a day observed as a holiday, the employees' scheduled workday preceding the holiday shall be designated as that employee's holiday.

Holiday Consolidation?

I was informed by Ron Woodall that the holiday mail would be consolidated to Carol Stream for Xmas and to Palatine for New Years. We will be meeting at Labor-Management meetings at both plants this week, and we will ask exactly what this means for the holiday scheduling. We will ask that management work with volunteers only for these "major" holidays. It is and has been the Union's position that management take all volunteers for all 3 days of the holiday schedule & not draft.

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Labor Scheduler

"It's official, labor scheduler has been a bust." These words were written by St. Louis Gateway President Roosevelt Stewart. I am hearing that "the numbers are bad" at Palatine and management has brought Carol Stream MDO Angela Sanders to Palatine to help get the numbers up on tour 3. The Labor Scheduler changes went into effect in June at Palatine and the overtime continues. The only difference seems to be that the numbers (and service) have gone down. The Labor Scheduler called for the excessing of 40 clerks (mostly from tour 1 AFSM and Automation) to the mail handler craft. I have personally talked to personnel in the Associate Offices and they wanted to know what was going on in Palatine. A/Plant Manager Dean has "inherited" the results of the Labor Scheduler at Palatine. Shortly after the Labor Scheduler was implemented at Palatine Ron Woodall was detailed as A/Plant Manager to Carol Stream. Thus far he has not implemented any Labor Scheduler changes at Carol Stream. Part of the reason for that is that the SPBS and the SPBS operators will be needed until the Spring of 2006 when Irving Park's two APPS are scheduled to take CS outgoing mail.

Where are the C.S. Bids ?!

While bids continue to be abolished at an unprecedented rate at Carol Stream, with the elimination of the CFS and Wheaton units, management continues to "assign" the "unassigned" as opposed to posting bids per the contract. On conclusion of "LDC68" interviews on tour 2, I was informed that 4 jobs would be vacated, 2 in AFSM and 2 in Automation.

We are waiting for those jobs to be posted for bid. They should be posted.

CFS Update

For Carol Stream CFS clerks, we don't have much information, but we have been asking. I am informed by Labor that In-Plant Support Manager John Colao is "working on it". He is matching CFS clerks up with positions being worked by casuals. Management informed the Union & the CFS clerks weeks ago that the unit would be closing on December 17, 2005, but the employees still do not know where & what schedule they will be working. On November 23, Labor Specialist Fuechtmann and I asked to speak to the employees for a few minutes and to let them know we would be meeting with them this week as soon as we have some information. It amazed me that the Supervisor did not want to stop the employees from working for a few minutes to allow them to talk to us. Knowing that the unit will be shut down in less than a month, and that the employees who have worked in this unit for years would like to know what their future holds, the supervisor was more concerned about losing a few minutes of production, than the employees being allowed to ask a few questions. We did tell them that the Union would agree if management allows them to keep their split days off and any excessing off tour 3 would be done by juniority. We hope management will have some information for the CFS clerks this week.

Palatine CFS Unit

The Union was informed recently that management will not be hiring Kelly Girls, as they believe the two CIOSS machines will be capable of handling the CFS mail without additional staffing. Two reasons for the success of the Palatine CFS Unit are not the CIOSS, but the experienced CFS clerks and Manager Cynthia Young, a manager who gets the job done & looks out for her clerks.

Serious Problems at Northbrook

AO Director Kathy Stokes & I met with some of the Northbrook employees on November 18th to hear complaints about OIC Raia. Also present on this date was the Local NALC President and the Northern Illinois District Labor Relations Manager. He was there to interview carriers concerning complaints about the OIC.

Most of the complaints we heard concern his instruction that employees must pick up a half tub or 6 inches of flats and hold them while throwing flats. For many this is uncomfortable & I saw a carrier throwing flats while struggling not to drop the armload of flats she was trying to hold onto. Employees also complain about being threatened with discipline for failure to meet "productivity requirements" and for the OIC standing over them for long periods of time. There are no productivity requirements for manual distribution, there are goals. I will be meeting with Raia on December 1st to discuss these problems.

Constitution Changes

4 constitution changes passed the first reading at the November meeting and will be read a second time at the December meeting. If they pass the 2nd reading they will become part of the constitution. Changes are posted.

New Stewards Appointed

Joe Golden was appointed a clerk steward for tour 1 at Palatine. Sherry Thomas & Rogelio Matias were appointed stewards at Chicago Metro Surface Hub.

50-50 New Members

Over 30 new members have signed under the 50-50 drive! Welcome all new stewards & new members.

