

# The Local Line

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The Official Voice of the  
Northwest Illinois Area Local

## Local Update by Jackie Engelhart

Floor Edition

### Burrus Update #14-06 Congress Adjourns Without Passing Postal 'Reform'.

"On the evening of September 30, 2006, as Congress was poised to adjourn to campaign for the mid-term elections, postal workers avoided a legislative disaster.

Susan Collins (R-ME) Chair of the Senate Government Affairs Committee, finalized a revised version of a Senate postal "reform" bill and initiated parliamentary procedures for a vote.

Only through the combined efforts of the postal craft unions (APWU, National Association of Letter Carriers, National Postal Mail Handlers Union, and National Rural Letter Carriers Association) were we able to delay final action on this bill that would have been bad for American citizens and bad for postal workers. If this legislation had passed, the winners would have been the large mailers, their congressional supporters, and the White House. The losers

would have been individual postal customers, small businesses, and postal employees. The bill would have put in motion a legal framework that would have led to the erosion of service and a reduction in wages and benefits. This is a bad bill and it does not deserve to become law. Notwithstanding the flowery rhetoric proclaiming that it would "save" the Postal Service, this legislation would have ensured its demise. Collective bargaining would have been subordinated to unrealistic and inflexible restrictions on postage rates; operational control would have been transferred to a politically appointed board, and unjustified financial obligations would have remained, requiring the USPS to make ongoing payments to an escrow account. Compounding this assault on workers and citizens was an 11th hour "compromise" concerning workers rights when they are injured on the job. An earlier version of the bill would have required postal

workers who are injured on the job to use annual or sick leave for the first several days of their recovery and would have required eligible injured employees to retire. This amounts to employees being forced to pay for injuries they suffer in the performance of their duties. Through *compromise*, supporters of the bill agreed to eliminate the retirement requirement but retain the requirement that injured employees use annual leave or sick leave for the first three days of job-related injuries.

In addition, a provision APWU had worked so hard to have included in the bill, which would have limited excessive work-sharing discounts, was gutted in this final draft of postal reform. This bill would have legalized discounted postage rates for large mailers far below rates that could be justified. Increasingly, our work would have been contracted out to profit-seeking large mailers and consolidators, even in those circumstances where the Postal Service could perform the work more efficiently and cheaper.

October 5, 2006

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#### Special points of interest:

Burrus Update # 14-06

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Save Your Job, Retirement & Benefits Rally on October 20 & 21 at Union Hall.

Union Sets Oct. 26 for Nationwide Day of Picketing

Chicago Metro Surface Hub

Palatine Bids Re-Posted on 10-2

Casual Grievances Filed

Lombard

### **Burrus on Postal Reform**

"This is a bad bill and we are pleased that Congress has deferred final action. However, Congress is expected to return for a "lame-duck" session after the November elections, and we may once again be subject to parliamentary maneuvering designed to pass this terrible legislation. The APWU's position has been consistent throughout the reform process: This bill was never about saving the Postal Service; it is and was about reducing the rates for the large mailers and reducing the federal budget. I want to thank Legislative Director Mike Reid for his diligent work on this issue. We will be equally vigilant following the November elections and can hopefully kill, once and for all, this charade of postal "reform"."

### **Save Your Job, Retirement & Benefits Rally on October 20 & 21 at Union Hall.**

The Legislative Committee will be holding this event at the Elmhurst Union Hall to help educate and motivate our members. The times are Friday October 20 from 11am to 3 am for tour 3, and Saturday October 21 from 8 AM to NOON for tour 1, and 4pm to 8pm for tour 2. There will be food, raffles and movies. In order to ensure enough food, the committee is requesting that members planning on attending fill out a registration form and return it to the union room at your office no later than October 16, 2006. Flyers should be available at all offices, and questions can be directed to Legislative Director Nancy Horan (tour 2 at Carol Stream), Mimi Jackson (tour 2 at Palatine) or any committee member listed on the flyer.

### **Union Sets Oct 26 for Nationwide Day of Picketing**

In accordance with a resolution adopted by the delegates to the national convention, the APWU National Executive Board has selected Oct. 26 for a nationwide day of picketing to protest ill-advised postal consolidations. The coordinated informational picketing is intended to highlight the potentially damaging effects of the USPS consolidation plan, and to expose how Postal Service policy panders to major mailers. These informational pickets are an opportunity for us to express our concerns that consolidations will delay mail to local communities and is being implemented without public input. The last APWU national picket was on July 1, 1996, the Postmaster was Marvin Runyon, and the theme was "Save Our Service." More information on the planned Oct. 26 picketing will be provided as it becomes available.

### **Chicago Metro Surface Hub**

The Chicago District Meeting with the Unions scheduled for September 29 was cancelled by management. Chicago contacted us today to invite us to a meeting with the new District Manager on October 11, 2006. We look forward to meeting with the senior management of the Chicago District and hope the meeting occurs. Chicago Metro Plant Manager Melvin J. Anderson is detailed to Cardiss Collins P&DC as the Operations Manager. We have requested that A/Plant Manager Shanteau Anderson give us a date for a labor-management meeting as soon as possible. Our main question at these meetings is what effect will a third APPS have on clerk staffing at Chicago Metro Surface Hub.

### **Palatine Bids Re-Posted on 10-2**

Several employees informed us that the system would not accept their bids and the system instructed them to contact personnel. I spoke with Personnel Specialist Era Rhodes and she informed me that the posting was re-posted on October 2, and would be posted for 10 days. She stated that the system error caused all bids previously submitted to be cancelled, and that anyone who submitted a bid must re-submit, as their previous bid was not accepted. We asked that this information be posted on the bid board. If you have questions on this, contact the Palatine Union office.

### **Casual Grievances Filed**

Grievances were filed because at Carol Stream AFSM bids have been reverted as unnecessary for operations, yet casuals have been hired to work in the AFSM for the "fall mailing season". Staffing requirements for the AFSM do not change, management is not staffing additional machines, and the casuals are working in lieu of career employees. At Palatine casuals are working in lieu of the 40 clerks excessed to the Mailhandler craft in June of 2005. Casuals are to be separated prior to excessing. I was advised to call Ron Woodall to hear his rationale for hiring the clerk casuals.

### **Lombard**

I was informed that a full-time and a part-time clerk recently resigned at the Lombard Post Office. As 7 clerks were excessed out of Lombard this year, I assumed some would be returned, but I should have known that would not happen. Carol Del-lurti said they are still over complement in Lombard even after the 7 were excessed and 2 resigned in 2006. This is the same office where supervisors work and we may have a clerk casual on the rolls. We are still waiting for requested information.