

The Local Line

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The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

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Palatine Turns up the Heat on Tour 2 Again

With the \$15,000 Incentive on the table and letters in the mail asking all eligible employees to consider leaving the Postal Service, Palatine management has conveniently timed the latest attack on senior employees. I say senior employees because this time the elimination of more tour 2 jobs could also affect mailhandlers. Management met with both unions yesterday to present their latest data showing that they have no need for tour 2 operations on the AFSM, Flats, and Low Cost Tray Sorter. They propose to eliminate these jobs by 9-28-09 unless they decide to listen to the APWU and wait until they can identify jobs that need to be filled on the other tours. There is no reason to move a tour 2 employee to another tour unless they can identify a job that the employee is needed for. They said that these employees are not needed on other tours right now.

Do it Right

That is what we argued in our meeting with Senior Plant Manager Johnson, A/Senior MDO Ramion, and the in-plant guys, Alex Nigro and Blaise Steele. According to Blaise who presented the data, there is no need for these operations on tour 2, but these employees are not needed on the other tours. So then they said they want to move them on 9-28-09. We asked how they could be moved when you don't need them on the other tours and you already have 30 unencumbered Clerks now. According to them we (again) have too many Clerks so they don't need the tour 2 Clerks on tour 1, they just want to move them now. Mr. Ramion's response was "We need time to train them on DPS." They did the same thing last January when they moved over 100 abolished Clerks who could not get a bid onto tour 1 (either Letters or Auto), just to move them. They had three and four Clerks on a machine for months.

Attacks on Seniority

The last time Palatine mass-abolished Clerks jobs was in January 2009. They moved over 100 Clerks onto tour 1 even though they said they did not need them. They did not move the junior Clerks being excessed out of the craft until May 9, 2009, so there was absolutely no reason to move the Clerks in January. They knew they would not need them on tour 1 until the excessing was completed, and I don't think it takes months to "learn DPS". We can understand making changes based on volumes etc, but to move employees before you need to makes no sense unless you are just trying to pressure senior employees into retirement. I have made my case directly to Senior Plant Manager Johnson, and I hope he is listening. These employees should not be moved until they are needed on the other tours and to move them before then would be wrong. We understand the Postal Service wants to get rid of people, but the employees deserve better than this.

Jackie Engelhart
President
Alan J. Czerwinski
News Director

Special points of interest:

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Attacks on Seniority

NRP Limited Duty Interviews to begin on 9-17-09 on Tour 1 CS

Operations 741 and 742 in AO's
Dave Baskin Wins Arbitration in Highland Park

Organizing Incentive
Thanks to Jack Pyssler

Northwest Illinois Area Local
American Postal Workers Union
194 W. Lake Street
Elmhurst, IL 60126
Phone: 630-833-0088
Fax: 630-833-0248
Email: nwialapwu@hotmail.com
Web: www.nwial.com

NRP Limited Duty Interviews to begin on 9-17-09 on Tour 1 CS
I spoke with Health and Human Resource Manager Gilbert Lopez on 9-1-09 and he informed me the NRP Phase 2 Limited Duty "work status" meetings would begin on 9-17-09 on tour 1 at Carol Stream. He said the union will be given a list of the affected employees 14 days ahead, but the employees will not be given advance notice. Rehab employees being scheduled for interviews have been given advance written notification of their meetings so why this is different for Limited Duty, I have no idea. Some of this stuff they make up as they go along. I have notified the Stewards and told them they will receive the list as soon as I do. We will notify the employees and we should be getting that list today as we are 14 days away 9-17. Mr. Lopez said the employees will be called in for full-day and partial-day assignments, but he is not sure if those designated as "No-Day Work" will be included at that time. Other districts, Chicago and Central, are not at the same stage of the process as Northern, and Northern cannot go forward with "No Day Work" and "No Work Available" meetings until those districts have identified all their "necessary work". This is because management must look for work within the local commuting area before withdrawing a job offer under the NRP. He stated they may or may not be ready for the "No Day Work" Limited Duty and "No Work Available" MMI on 9-17-09. We will spread this information as soon as we know, but we know its coming soon. Request and wait for a Steward before starting any meeting.

Operations 741 and 742 in AO's
We have been looking at how management in the Associate Offices places Carriers on Clerk LDC 48 and Clerk operations 741 and 742 when they are not on their routes. According to Operations Program Support at the district, "Operation Code 741 is miscellaneous clerk work performed by delivery personnel, such as those carriers on limited duty, which are under LDC 48." (LDC 48 is the Clerk Labor Distribution Code). "Operation Code 742 is miscellaneous clerk work performed by clerk personnel under LDC 48." In some offices reviewed we see Carriers clocked on these operations for 4 to 8 hours daily. It seems management is inflating the number of LDC 48 Clerk hours in the Associate Offices by placing Carriers on Clerk operations 741 and 742 when they are not on the street. The effect if not the intent is to distort the number of Clerk hours actually being worked in these offices with Carrier hours counted as Clerk hours. We have filed a grievance in Melrose Park where this started and one in Glencoe where we also have a crossing craft problem. We will be looking at these operations in all NWIAL Associate Offices. Maybe this is how they are saying the workload cannot support the number of Clerks and constantly reducing AO Clerk complements.
Dave Baskin Wins Arbitration in Highland Park
The Award issued on 7-3-09, stated "The Union established that the Postal Service failed to convert two (2) PTFs to full-time status and failed to post two (2) newly created vacancies. I filed the grievance on 10-16-07 and Dave arbitrated it on 5-29-09.

Organizing Incentive
The national union is offering \$20 for each new member we sign up from now until 11-1-09. We have decided to participate in this organizing drive and to add this \$20 to the \$50 we are funding on our own. From now to 11-1-09 any new member signed up will get \$35 for themselves and for the organizer. It is hard to understand how we pay dues to help support what we have as union members, while a minority continue have no shame in not paying dues. They think they're smart for not-paying dues and defend their action by saying the union is not worth paying dues for. You don't see any of them leaving to work at a non-union job. They demand the benefits and love to criticize but are just too cheap to pay dues. We continue to lose members through retirement (and most of them are members) so we need to ask the non-members to have the integrity to pay their fair share. Their free-loading weakens the union as they continue to benefit on the back of the majority who are members. If they are too broke to pay dues then I would hate to see them work at a non-union job, for a non-union wage. You'd be surprised how quickly long-term non-members sign up when the only thing between them and the USPS removing them is the union that they didn't support.
Thanks to Jack Pyssler
In the last Local Line I asked why Carol Stream has so many fewer bids in Manual Letters and Flats than Palatine. A few people said I should have thanked our last CCD Jack Pyssler for a good job-making sure these bids were re-posted. Thank-you Jack!
Try to Have a Good Labor Day