

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Local Update by Jackie Engelhart

Floor Edition

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USPS & Meetings

Postal Management are in constant meetings, looking for ways to be more efficient. A/District Manager Nancy Rettinhouse calls it "being successful", but it almost always means reducing the number of craft employees.

Function 4 Meeting

We thank A/District Manager Nancy Rettinhouse for setting up a Function 4 meeting as requested by NWIAL. The meeting on September 14 was scheduled to go from 10 am to 1230 pm, but it went to 230 pm, because there were so many questions and comments from the APWU union officials from around the Northern Illinois District. We know that the USPS is cutting Associate Office staffing to the bone, but no one, including many of the Postmasters understand how "Operations Program Support" generate their data. We heard from the people who actually work with the "models" and programs that USPS uses to justify the con-

tinuing cuts in Function 4 Clerk staffing.

We heard from Julie Oakes, whose name we have heard many times when Postmasters tell us a vacant job must be reverted because the complement went down. We also heard from Alan Rutherford, and Larry Diegle, the new Manager of Operations Programs Support, or as they call it "OPPS". They work with programs called AWPS and PUFs, which are programs that use USPS productivity rates and apply them to all work performed in the office. The only problem is how the amount of work in the office is arrived at. We were told that this data comes from the "ROVER" sheet filled out by the Postmaster. Nobody, even OPPS, fully understands all of this, but the Associate Offices are being given less credit and thus less hours for the clerk work. Window Clerks must input not only every retail transaction, but every function they perform, or the data will be used to cut their jobs.

Lombard as an Example

The Postmaster of Lombard is on detail as head of the Function 4 Team. F-4 goes into an office and assigns a postmaster to follow each Clerk for an entire day. If the Clerk is not busy for every minute of that day, you can expect that the Review may call for a reduction in the complement or number of jobs. USPS does not send F-4 in to increase staffing. I have a friend at the Lombard Post Office, and I hear what goes on there. Clerks have been excessed out of Lombard, and supervisors are now performing clerk work. I asked about this and was told about one day when 3 clerks called in, but I am told supervisors do craft work in Lombard on a regular basis. Senior Clerks volunteered to leave in place of excessed Clerks to get out. While clerks are getting out and supervisors are doing clerk work, the Postmaster is leading the "F-4 Team." (I hear the POOM paid a visit to Lombard today, and after he left the supervisor resumed passing out mail.)

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No Meeting at Palatine P&DC

We were scheduled to meet on September 19 with Palatine Plant Manager Greg Johnson, to discuss the 39 clerks still excessed to the mailhandler craft. This meeting has now been canceled due to his schedule and we have requested that it be rescheduled as soon as possible. In the meantime 600 CCD Jack Pyssler will be filing the grievance on managements hiring of clerk casuals at Palatine. Casuals are to be used as a supplemental workforce and not in lieu of career employees. Some of the 20 casuals management plans to hire at Palatine are already in the building, assigned to the AFSM-100 on tour 3.

No Meeting Necessary.

Clerk casuals are being hired at Carol Stream also, but Carol Stream management has always relied on casuals. When we were told they would be gone once the SPBS was gone, we believed that. After all of the light/limited duty interviews were done, and the permanently injured were assigned, those bids were to be posted. We were assured by management that sufficient jobs were posted after the SPBS abolishments to back-fill where casuals had been assigned. On July 5, 2006 all Clerk casuals were separated. I am hearing that more Clerks have gone on light or limited duty and once again, casuals are needed to back-fill. Casuals are to be used on a temporary basis. For management at Carol Stream, doing without casuals is temporary. We have requested all relevant information on the Clerk casuals hired at both Palatine and Carol Stream, and have received no information. With the SPBS and CFS gone, how can casuals be justified?

Chicago District Meeting

The Northern Illinois District has been holding quarterly meetings with the unions to share information on service and finance. Since service and finance drive just about everything else, the information shared at these meeting is useful. The Chicago Local attended the last meeting, and we agreed that it would be nice if the Chicago District would share more information. They must have heard us, because the unions have been invited by Kelvin Mack to attend a District Briefing on September 29. Up to now we have received very little information from the Chicago District, which includes Metro.

Metro Plant Manager Detailed

Metro Plant Manager Melvin J. Anderson has been detailed to an assignment in Chicago, and he does not know for how long. In his absence, Shanteau Anderson is the Acting Plant Manager. Melvin was trying to work with us on bids and other issues, so we hope he will be back. We will be working with Shanteau and we will be able to reach Melvin if necessary.

Data Collection Bid Re-Post

CCD Calvin Taylor reports that a data collection bid at Carol Stream will have to be re-posted due to the fact that the posting included typing, which is no longer required.

Palatine Key Handling

Maintenance Director Chuck Olson has finished the list of employees to be paid for the Palatine Key Handling settlement, and this list is being reviewed by Vice President Dave Baskin. The settlement is for 11,246 hours at the overtime rate applicable on 12-8-96 and will pay employees in ET, MPE, MM-5, Electrician, & Welder occupational groups who were on the ODL.

New Steward at Park Ridge

Steve Given has been appointed at Park Ridge and he will be monitoring the bargaining unit work being performed by supervisors in that office (due to short-staffing).

Retirement Counseling Returns

The APWU & USPS signed an agreement on Aug. 4 requiring the Postal Service to restore individual and group counseling, which management had discontinued. Previously established local counseling methods will be reinstated. The settlement is in accordance with provisions of the ELM, which outlines management's obligation to provide retirement counseling to employees.

Open Season Health Fairs

Palatine will be on November 15, from 6 am to 12 pm and 3 to 6 pm. Carol Stream will be on December 12, with the same hours as Palatine.

"The Hope Quilt"

The Hope Quilt is the project of the (Northern Illinois) District Advisory Committee (DAC) for the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The actual quilt was unveiled at Palatine P&DC on September 8, and it was stunning. I had seen one section, but the quilt was actually made up of many sections from offices throughout the district. The Hope Quilt honors postal employees & families touched by suicide, and is the result of the hard work and dedication of the "DAC" led by Alice Crawford.

COLA on Sept 22 Paychecks

The final Cost-Of-Living adjustment under the National Agreement will give APWU craft employees an annual raise of \$812, \$31.20 per pay period, or 39 cents per hour. This is the largest COLA increase under the current National Agreement. Non-members continue to shamelessly take union benefits paid for by the members. Is saving a few bucks that important?