

# The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the  
Northwest Illinois Area Local

## Local Update by Jackie Engelhart

### **NRP is Here**

We have been talking about the National Reassessment Process since 2004 when the Postal Service notified all postal unions at the national level of its intention to implement an Outplacement Pilot Program. They stated the program is intended to develop work opportunities outside the Postal Service for employees who have sustained job-related illness or injury. Pilot programs were initiated in the Long Island District, the New York Metro Area, and San Diego. In Long Island 67 out of 351 employees evaluated were referred to OWCP, and 22 of 123 clerks were outplaced. In the New York Metro Area 55 of 344 evaluated employees were NWA, none of the 11 evaluated Clerks were NWA. (327 of the 344 evaluated were carriers.) In San Diego 46 of 382 employees were referred to OWCP with 19 of 141 Clerks were NWA. These numbers were provided to APWU headquarters in December of 2006.

### **Northern IL District**

The Northern IL District has identified 548 employees in all crafts who will be evaluated in NRP. Of those 548, 385 have reached Maximum Medical Improvement (MMI) and 72 of the 385 reached MMI within one year. The Postal Service position is that they have a greater obligation to accommodate employees MMI within one year, and they will be accommodated. MMI within one year will be the first ones called in for interviews as they are being given priority. The interviews will be conducted at Palatine and Carol Stream beginning on 10-15-08 and letters will be sent 14 days ahead. As stated in the last Local Line management will have three people in the room, one from operations who will conduct the interview, and one each from Labor Relations and Injury Comp. They will also have someone from headquarters or the Area observing to make sure they follow the script and do it right.

### **Our Team**

Your letter says you have the right to have a union steward present during this meeting. We advise all employees to request and wait for you union representatives. We will have stewards available on all tours at both plants and we intend to have an officer present to observe. We will have copies of the "Employee Interview Protocol" available at both Palatine and Carol Stream to better prepare affected employees for NRP Phase 2 - the Job Offer. **Their "Team"** Management "team members" for the Carol Stream interviews are Leroy Patterson from operations, Stella Bishop from Injury Compensation, and Mary Ann Gocha from Labor Relations. Team members at Palatine are Luz Moreno from operations, Connie Pierce from Injury Compensation, and Jerry Hoagland (Libertyville Postmaster) for Labor Relations. Melvin Dean is the NRP Operations Team Leader. Before you talk to their team make sure you have your team present.

## Floor Edition

September 30, 2008  
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President  
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### **NRP is Here**

### **Northern IL District**

### **Our Team**

### **Their "Team"**

### **"Necessary Work"**

### **Empty Worksheets**

### **Good -bye Mr. Kalisz**

### **Problems at Busse**

### **“Necessary Work”**

On 1-26-06 management of the Northern IL District listed eight employees in the entire district as being considered unproductive. Of the eight most were carriers and none were clerks. The Postal Service is now saying that all job offers must consist of “necessary work” for which there is an operational need. This position is inconsistent with their successful position in a national 2002 case filed by APWU. Their position that job offers are assignments created specifically for the injured employee and would not otherwise be posted for bid was sustained. A rehab assignment is created from a subset of clerk craft duties and would not exist but for the obligation to find work for the injured employee. The Postal Service has historically recognized it’s obligation to accommodate employees injured on the job. The NRP uses the term “necessary work” to dispose of injured employees in spite of the fact that they have been performing productive work in their assignments. For the past several years management has reverted jobs in manual letters, flats and the nixie table because these were the areas injured clerks were assigned to. None of this work is included in the necessary work sheets prepared by management at either plant. In fact very little necessary work is listed because they will not include work that is part of a bid. They won’t post bids in these units because they’re accommodating injured employees and now they won’t accommodate the injured because the work is part of a bid. The dirty trick and the premise of their plan is that productive work is no longer necessary work.

### **Empty Worksheets**

A/Senior MDO Ramion filled out the necessary worksheet for tour 2 at Palatine and the only necessary work he identified was in security. The other tours are not much better with only enough work identified to accommodate the MMI one year who are already written in on the worksheets. No necessary work has been identified in Maintenance at either plant and none in MVS at Palatine. It looks like management has identified just enough necessary work to accommodate the employees MMI within one year. The worksheets contain very little work, with Palatine having the least, Rockford the most, and Carol Stream in the middle. Necessary work at Palatine and Carol Stream for Clerks is confined to scanning, tagging, Nixie, Postage Due and PARS mail. When we met with Phyllis and Gilbert two weeks ago we asked why manual letters, flats, and Nixie were not included in the worksheets and they said they would find out and meet with us again. We were told by Phyllis and Gilbert that employees who are working in their bid with accommodation will not be affected by NRP. They will be interviewed in the second round after the MMI one year. “No Work Available” employees will be interviewed last and they’re not saying how many will be designated “NWA”. Carol Stream has 17 Clerks MMI within one year and 65 MMI over one year, Palatine has 9 Clerks MMI within one year and 48 MMI over one year. The NWIAL Associate Offices have 3 Clerks MMI within one year and 9 MMI over one year. The Associate Office NRP interviews will begin on 10-22-08, and we will have Stewards and/or Officers available for NWIAL member interviews in the Associate Offices.

### **Good-bye Mr. Kalisz**

Palatine P&DC Labor Relations Specialist Joe Kalisz is retiring on 10-2-08 and we wish him a happy and well-deserved retirement. I speak for most if not all NWIAL Stewards and Officers when I say Joe will be missed. Its unusual for the union to think so highly of a manager but Joe has earned our respect because he has conducted himself with honor and integrity. Joe probably denied hundreds of our grievances over the last few years but he also resolved many. He stuck his neck out enough on behalf of the employees over the years to fall out of favor with some managers. No Labor Rep. in the Northern IL District worked harder over the last few years in a more thankless job than Joe. In spite of the pressure-cooker environment at Palatine he tried to meet on as many grievances as he could and was unfailing decent with all of us in the process. Joe is the last of a dying breed, a Labor person who actually thinks he has the authority to settle grievances! The Postal Service is losing a dedicated employee and the employees are losing a good friend.

### **Problems at Busse...**

We hoped Ruby Branch would make things better at Busse but we don’t see it yet. She continues to run the SPBS with illegal details and promised bids that are yet to be posted. Recently she has worked Clerks and Maintenance employees from O’Hare at Busse and worked Mail Handlers in the Racks because we are at least 10 Clerks short of complement. Ruby has been nice but we need action!

