

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

PMG Statement...

On 8-18-2020 Postmaster General DeJoy put out a statement in response to widespread criticism of efforts to slow down the mail and informing the states that mail in election ballots may not be delivered in time to be counted...

"The United States Postal Service will play a critical role this year in delivering election mail for millions of voters across the country. There has been a lot of discussion recently about whether the Postal Service is ready, willing and able to meet this challenge. I want to make a few things clear: The Postal Service is ready today to handle whatever volume of election mail it receives this fall. Even with the challenges of keeping our employees and customers safe and healthy as they operate amid a pandemic, we will deliver the nation's election mail on time and within our well-established service standards. The American public should know that this is our number one priority between now and election day. The 630,000 dedi-

cated women and men of the Postal Service are committed, ready and proud to meet this sacred duty. I am announcing today the expansion of our current leadership taskforce on election mail to enhance our ongoing work and partnership with state and local election officials in jurisdictions throughout the country. Leaders of our postal unions and management associations have committed to joining this taskforce to ensure strong coordination throughout the organization. Because of the unprecedented demands of the 2020 election, this taskforce will help ensure that election officials and voters are well informed and fully supported by the Postal Service. I came to the Postal Service to make changes to secure the success of this organization and its long term sustainability. I believe significant reforms are essential to that objective, and work toward those reforms will commence after the election. In the meantime, there are some longstanding operational initiatives, efforts that predate my arrival at the Postal Ser-

vice, that have been raised as areas of concern at the nation prepares to hold an election in the midst of a devastating pandemic. To avoid even the appearance of any impact on election mail, I am suspending these initiatives until after the election is concluded.

I assure all Americans:

1. Retail hours at Post Offices will not change
2. Mail processing equipment and blue collection boxes will remain where they are.
3. No mail processing facilities will be closed.
4. Overtime has and will continue to be approved as needed.

Since DeJoy took over the mail got slower and mail boxes have disappeared. 671 mail sorting machines have been removed from postal facilities but this was already in the works. House Speaker Pelosi credits public pressure for DeJoy's change of plans, and says she will call for a vote on 8-22-2020 for \$25 billion for the Postal Service to boost funding and stop the organizational changes. She states the USPS is a service and not a business. PMG DeJoy would like to change that.

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DBCS Stacker Extension

Carol Stream notified the Union on 7-23-2020 of the plans for the DBCS 302 Bin Expansion Project. The Article 32 Notice states *"This memorandum presents due consideration given to the five Article 32 factors with respect to contracting out the electrical data site preparation work necessary to facilitate DBCS 286/302 Bin Expansion Project at Carol Stream. In House Maintenance Craft employees involvement in this project will entail isolating and disconnecting power from 16 DBCS machines scheduled for expansion, installing circuit breaker upgrades, move each machine approximately 12 feet forward to accommodate additional stacker modules to achieve the 286/302 expansion requirement. The local maintenance craft employees are also responsible for reconnecting power and data to all relocated machines by running electrical power and data from contractor pre-installed electrical data junction boxes located above the expanded machines. Given USPS dire financial situation, mail volume has declined more than 43 billion pieces in the past 5 years and now with additional impacts due to COVID-19 volume is continuing to decline. With this dramatic loss of mail volume, maintaining the Postal Service's infrastructure at its current size is no longer realistic. This reality has forced the Postal Service to propose a comprehensive reduction of its processing equipment fleet. The decision made by headquarters to remove from plants a select number of DBCS machines to adjust for declining mail volumes. Headquarters set an aggressive time line to complete the DBCS expansion project of 9-9-2020."* They are removing DBCS machines from plants nationwide but why the bin expansion project?

No Additional DBCS Staffing

I asked Carol Stream management at the 8-10-2020 Safety meeting if there would be additional staffing for machines with the additional stackers and they indicated "no". I spoke with two Clerks at CS on 8-18-2020 who are rightfully concerned about working on these extended stacker machines, 12 more feet, with no additional help. I said I would contact our national union for guidance on this issue. I was told that there is no contractual violation to management adding stackers and the issue is staffing. I also was told that Clerk Craft Director Lamont Brooks will address the staffing concerns. If you are assigned to an extended stacker machine and you have safety concerns, please write a statement and we will file a safety grievance each time this happens. I will continue to follow up with the national on this safety issue.

The IPP/Priority Belt is Back!
We have been pushing to get the IPP belt back at Palatine since it was removed last year at the same time we got a Universal Sorter. We file safety grievances on the removal of the belt every 2 weeks. We argued that the belt is more efficient and safer than walking the mail around in a walk around. After months of hearing that they were looking at it they finally decided to put the IPP belt back. I don't know what took so long but thank you for putting it back. Tour 3 IPP bids are now at 1300 after being posted with an 1800 start. We filed a grievance for unassigned Clerks being assigned to IPP with earlier starting times so management agreed to change the time for the bid employees.

Automation Time Changes
We have a grievance at Step 2 and have discussed the issue with the Plant Manager regarding moving senior T2 and T3 Automation Clerks back to 0700 and 1500.

Palatine Line H Settlement

Maintenance Craft Director Joe Golden reports the 2019 Line H grievance he filed was settled on 8-10-2020 for 6318 hours for not meeting the 90%. The settlement also states management will pay an additional 7593 hours for the consecutive year violation...

Palatine 204B Settlement

Last year Palatine Clerks were paid almost a million dollars for 204 B violation grievances filed by Dave Baskin and he reports a step 3 settlement for \$117,000.00 was made at Step 3 in July 2020.

No to Postal Surveys!

The Union has been against employees participating in USPS surveys for many years since USPS used employee responses against the Union in contract negotiations, saying employees felt they were fairly paid when the Union sought to increase wages. The Union is still against participation in USPS surveys, whatever they call them.

2020 NWIAL Scholarships

Chief Trustee Ray Wience reports that the drawing usually held at the August meeting is delayed by one month and will be held at the next union meeting on 9-13-2020. Scholarship forms are available at the union offices and union hall. Rules and instructions are on the back of the application form.

Four \$750.00 scholarships winners will be selected by random drawing at the 9-13-2020 meeting.

2020 NWIAL Election Update

The counting of the ballots will be held on 9-1-2020 so you have less than two weeks to return a ballot. Ballots were mailed on 7-24-2020 so you should have received one. The number to call for a duplicate ballot is **312-616-6560**, which is the office of the American Arbitration Association, the company hired by the Election Committee to conduct this year's election. Please make sure they have your correct craft and mailing address.

