

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

eRMS System Change

On 10-25-19 we received a email from the national union regarding a change to the eRMS System. "Please find attached the latest notification on the eRMS System. The system went live to all employees on 10-15-19 and we did not receive notification until 10-15-19. The notification provides very little information but does include a stand-up talk. We have requested a meeting. There is great concern over this program and we would advise employees to continue to use the 800 number when requesting unscheduled leave."

The USPS Stand-Up Talk states "The Postal Service is providing you with a new method to request unscheduled leave. You can now use Enterprise Leave Request Application (eLRA) to submit these requests. The eLRA is an online app available through LiteBlue that you can access from a computer, smartphone or other mobile device. You can request unscheduled leave by logging into LiteBlue, clicking the eLRA icon in

Quick Links, and then following the on-screen prompts to submit a request. The system will securely transmit your information to your manager, and provide you with a confirmation number for your request. The eLRA is an alternative to the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, and both systems can be used for unscheduled leave.

The eLRA aims to make these requests quick and easy by allowing you to visually interact with the system. The eLRA also aims to reduce submission errors by allowing you to see the request before submitting." To log in to the eLRA you must click on "agree" to the following terms "All information on this computer system or mobile device to include gps location service may be monitored, intercepted, recorded, read, copied, captured and disclosed by and to authorized personnel for official purposes, including criminal prosecution. You have no expectations of privacy using this system or mobile device. Any authorized or unauthorized use of this computer system or mobile device sig-

nifies consent to an compliance with Postal Service policies." The fact that you have to agree to the no privacy notice to access the eLRA may be the concern of the union. For now, the Union is advising employees not to use this new system to report unscheduled absences and to continue calling in.

Health Fairs...

The Open Season enrollment period to sign up for or to change your health plan starts on 11-11-19 and ends on 12-9-19. Health Fairs will be held as follows:

Chicago Metro L&DC on Friday, 11-1-19,
Carol Stream P&DC on Friday, 11-8-19,
Palatine P&DC on Friday 11-15-19

All are from 6am to 6 pm.

Palatine Low Cost

From Saturday, 10-19-19 to Monday, 10-28-19 the Low Cost Tray Sorter will not be operational due to an upgrading process.

The LCTS will receive a new computer, control panel, pushers and other improvements. We did ask Plant Manager Wulf if the LCTS was being replaced with a High Speed and she said no. It will be the same LCTS but with some new parts, that's all.

October 28, 2019

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Special points of interest:

eRMS System Change
Health Fairs...
Palatine Low Cost
Serious Accident
What is the ALPS?
Grievances Filed on Universal
National Election Turnout...
Local Election in March 2020

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Serious Accident...

A Palatine Maintenance employee was involved in a serious accident while working on the APPS machine on 9-19-19 at 14:45 pm. Other employees heard him calling and stopped the machine. Then they noticed his body was hanging from under the conveyor. The SDO contacted 911 and the Plant Manager. The Maintenance Supervisor and employees began to cut the conveyor belt away from the machine in order to release him from the machine. Plant Manager Elizabeth Wulf got the employee talking and communicating his condition to ensure he stayed responsive until the paramedics arrived. Local Responders from the Fire Department and Police responded within less than 5 minutes. He was transported to Northwest Community Hospital, accompanied by Maintenance Manager Ricky Hilliard and was kept overnight. He had surgery for a broken humerus on 9-20-19. A Safety briefing was held on the work floor at the APPS immediately with all employees in the building to address the safety issues. Follow ups were held with the employees who witnessed the accident or assisted in the rescue to ensure that everyone was aware that EAP was contacted and available if then needed someone to talk to. Restricted Area Signage has been added stating no entry while APPS machine is operational to prevent any similar accident. Plant Manager Elizabeth Wulf explained what happened to the Safety Committee members at the 10-21-19 meeting per my request. Present for APWU were myself, Maintenance Craft Director Joe Golden, and Safety Captain/Ambassador Johnny Love Sr. We all wish the injured employee a full recovery from his injuries and are glad it was not worse. Safety is everybody's business.

What is the ALPS?

The USPS provided the APWU with information dated 3-30-2016 for the Advance Letter Processing System or the ALPS. This information was shared with the Local Unions at that time. The ALPS was to replace the aging fleet of Delivery Barcodes. The ALPS was tested in two sites, Oklahoma City P&DC and Richmond P&DC ending in August of 2018, but has not been deployed anywhere else. The impact of replacing the DBCS with the ALPS would be heavy on the Clerk Craft as it takes only one Clerk to staff two machines or 1/2 employee per machine. We knew if this machine was deployed nationwide the Clerk craft would lose a significant number of jobs. No more was heard about ALPS, but recently a supervisor at Palatine allegedly made comments to the two Automation Clerks that Plant Manager Wulf would like to get some of these machines to get rid of Clerks. We contacted our Assistant Clerk Craft Director to find out what is the current status of ALPS and she responded that from what she heard the machine is being scrapped as the cost of the hard-sided trays was too much. As we know Clerks have lost work in the plants over the last few years on the AFSM and FSS based on national level decisions by USPS to award/assign work to Mailhandlers that should be Clerk. Automation is the last machine that is entirely staffed by Clerks. If the DBCS were replaced by the ALPS and the staffing reduced from 2 Clerks to 1/2 Clerk per machine that would be a loss of jobs. The good news is the ALPS is nowhere near ready to be deployed. The other good news is that many senior Clerks will be retiring in the next year or two as they finish out their postal careers. USPS has not shared any further information on the ALPS with the APWU.

Grievances Files on Universal

As even some Mailhandlers wonder how this work was assigned to them we are filing cross-craft grievances for Mailhandlers performing Manual Distribution of the mail on the Universal Sorter. APWU at the national level has filed a dispute on this national level USPS jurisdictional decision. The new RI-399 MOU states the dispute must be scheduled for arbitration within six months of when the operation began so that would mean the arbitration should be scheduled/held in early 2020. This is another example of USPS taking Clerk work in the plants and assigning it to Mailhandlers.

National Election Turnout...

As expected the turnout in the national APWU election was low. Per the American Arbitration Association who conducted the election, 190,382 ballots were mailed to APWU members and 36,190 ballots were returned. That means less than 20% of eligible APWU members voted in this election. I know the booklet sent out with the ballots may have discouraged some from taking the time to vote. The candidate articles should have been printed in the Postal Worker magazine prior to the election but this new format was decided at the last national convention. When I opened my ballot and saw the booklet I did not want to read it but I knew who I was voting for. Most of the incumbents were re-elected and most of them deserved to be re-elected but there were a couple changes where the incumbent was not doing a good job.

Local Election in March 2020

Our Local election is in March of 2020 and we need all members to have their correct mailing address on file with us. If you have moved you need to fill out a change of address form at your union office so we have the correct information on file for elections mailings.

