

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

COVID Update

The most recent numbers for the plants for total COVID-19 positive cases to date is 92 at Palatine, 82 at Carol Stream, and 23 at Chicago Metro (Busse).

Lakeland updates via email on a weekly basis and the Carol Stream Plant Manager sends an email when a new case is reported but we do not get information from Busse unless we ask.

From Lakeland District:

"The USPS is recognized by the CDC as an essential service provider which means Postal employees will be eligible for the COVID vaccine before the general public. Vaccination is recognized as an important step in controlling the spread of COVID-19. The USPS has no plans to distribute vaccine to employees. Because the demand for vaccine exceeds the current supply, vaccinations are being administered in a phased approach to target specific groups with a higher risk for COVID-19 infection. Phase 1B includes postal workers and began on 1-25-2021, but there is still not enough vaccine.

OWCP Claims for COVID-19

The following information was provided in a 4-page letter by APWU. "With COVID 19 still raging in the U.S., thousands of postal employees have been diagnosed or quarantined due to COVID-19 related illness. This information is being provided to help bargaining unit employees file an OWCP claim should they decide to do so. For an employee who actually contracted COVID-19 and was regularly working at the time, it may be in their best interest to file a claim to help cover leave in the short term and possible assist with unknown but possible long-term effects of COVID-19. Employees who have COVID-19 claims accepted by OWCP are entitled to all the medical benefits and compensation allowed under the law. More information is available at <https://apwu.org/contracts/feca-bulletin-no20-05> and <https://apwu.org/contracts/feca-bulletin-no-21-01>. We will also make a hard copy of this information available at the union office at each of the plants.

APWU Virtual Health Fair - Newly Converted

APWU will be holding virtual health fairs on line for the 5500 Clerks being converted to career on 3-13-2021. The new career employees will only have 60 calendar days to select their health plan. The new career employees that were on the USPS plans as PSEs will be automatically disenrolled. The PSEs currently on the Consumer Driven Option can remain on this plan to keep those benefits. In order to pay the negotiated APWU Career rate for the Consumer Driven Option the employee must be enrolled in the Federal Employee Health Benefits Plan for one full year as a career employee. The time spent on the Consumer Driven Option as a PSE doesn't count toward the one year in FEHB. The APWU Health Plan will conduct Virtual Health Fairs exclusively for this conversion to brief employees on the benefit highlights for both the High Option and Consumer Driven Option plans. Register for a health fair at www.apwuhp.com/events. Information also available at NWIAL.org or at the union offices in the plants.

March 2, 2021

Jackie Engelhart
President
Dave Baskin
Vice President
Alan Czerwinski
News Director

Special points of interest:

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OWCP Claims for COVID-19
APWU Virtual Health Fair-
Newly Converted
Postmaster DeJoy
Zero Tolerance
Submitting 3971's
New A/Plant Manager Palatine
Thank you Linda Retel!!!

Northwest Illinois Area Local
American Postal Workers Union
194 W. Lake Street
Elmhurst, IL 60126
Phone: 630-833-0088
Fax: 630-833-0248
Email: nwial7140@yahoo.com
Web: nwial7140ayahoo.com

Postmaster DeJoy

Many people are under the impression that President Biden can remove Postmaster Louis DeJoy from office. Unfortunately, the only two bodies that can remove the postmaster general are the postal regulatory commission and the postal board of governors which are both filled with President Trump appointees as is the postmaster general. Louis DeJoy has indicated he has no intention of stepping down pledging to see his cost cutting moves go through no matter who is president. When he met with the Postal Board of Governors back on 11-13-2020 he stated he wanted to slash work hours and mentioned the consolidation of postal facilities and cutting retail hours are other options available to him. DeJoy and the pandemic are definitely hurting the USPS reputation for service. Most of the time we are hearing from friends and neighbors as well as the news media that mail is very slow and not being delivered in some areas for days and weeks. I personally missed three credit card statements in December and had to call each one to remove the penalties and interest. Of course they offer you the option to pay on line to avoid the late or not delivered mail. Normally I do get my mail on time and a lot of it too. DeJoy and the pandemic are the perfect storm to hurt our service. President Biden has stated he plans to nominate three new members to the Board of Governors. They are Ron Stroman, USPS retired deputy postmaster general, Amber McReynolds, the chief executive of the National Vote at Home Institute, and Anton Hajjar, the former general counsel of the APWU, to fill three of the four open board seats. If they win Senate confirmation, it would give Democrats control of the panel that oversees the USPS.

Zero Tolerance

Zero Tolerance is the USPS policy on threats and violence in the work place. It is based on the USPS Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior signed by three of the four postal unions. APWU did not sign it because it was felt it would be used against the craft employees and not against management and that has proven to be true over time. It was signed on 2-14-1992 after a shooting in Royal Oak Michigan that started the term "going postal". It states "*We openly acknowledge that in some places or units there is an unacceptable level of stress in the workplace; that there is no excuse for and will be no tolerance of violence or any threats of violence by anyone at any level of the USPS, and that there will be no tolerance of harassment, intimidation, threats, or bullying by anyone. We also affirm that every employee at every level of USPS should be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness. The need for the USPS to serve the public efficiently and productively, and the need for all employees to be committed to giving a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, does not justify actions that are abusive or intolerant. "Making the numbers" is not an excuse for the abuse of anyone. Those who do not treat others with dignity and respect will not be rewarded or promoted. Those whose unacceptable behavior continues will be removed from their positions.*" Zero Tolerance came about due to management not employee abuse. Management bullying still occurs but the "policy is used against the craft employees, not management. Employees are put out for days and weeks for minor verbal disagreements when they are reported to management. **If you are provoked by any postal employee the best advice is to walk away.**

Submitting 3971's

The supervisor is supposed to notify and time stamp the 3971, and return the employee copy to you. Vice President Dave Baskin states new supervisors at Palatine are not following the proper procedure. **New A/Plant Manager Palatine** Since 2018 Palatine P&DC has had the following plant managers and or a/plant managers : Elizabeth Wulf, Jeff Grendziak, Elizabeth Wulf, Allen Mitchell, Kenyata Moore, and Allen Mitchell. The new A/Plant Manager as of last week is Charlesten Anderson. The revolving door continues... We will be meeting next week. I don't know anything about her except what I hear on the floor. It would be nice to have someone who actually talks to employees. **Thank you Linda Retel!!!** NWIAL Secretary Linda Retel resigned on 2-28-2021. Due to the passing of her husband Dave on 11-30-2020 she decided to relocate out of the area. She has been our Secretary for 16 years and has done a great job. There is a lot to the Secretary job and Linda had mastered the job over the years. She took her job seriously and her duties as an Executive Board member as well. She was retired from the USPS for the last few years but still known by many of our members who knew her as a Steward and as 601 Clerk Craft Director back in 1990's. She states "*It has been a pleasure and quite an experience working with you and rest of the EB, and I will truly miss being a part of the NWIAL. We've shared good times and some not so good times. We've laughed and we've cried. But through it all we did what was necessary to keep the struggle alive. That's what family does. You will always be my NWIAL sisters and brothers. Keep the struggle alive!!!*" Thank you Sister Retel!!! You will be missed!!!

