

The Local Line

1 PPA Award Winning Publication

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

APWU Negotiates new PSE Health Benefits
“Postal Support Employees will soon be able to sign up for health insurance during the first year of employment. Currently, PSEs can enroll only after they complete their first 360 day appointment. Beginning with a Special Enrollment Period from 5-16 to 6-30-16, PSEs will be eligible to join the USPS Health Benefits Plan.

Coverage will be effective on 7-9-16. USPS will contribute at least \$125 per pay period toward the cost of insurance. This benefit applies to all PSES, regardless of the number of hours they work. This is significant because the Affordable Care Act requires employers to cover only those workers who work a minimum of 30 hours per week. After the first 360-day appointment, PSEs can switch to the APWU Consumer Driven Health Plan, where the USPS pays 75% of total premiums costs for self-only, self-plus-one and self and family. To find out more visit <http://liteblue.usps.gov/benefits> or call 1-877-

477-3273 and select option 1; TTY 866-260-7507. To enroll by mail, complete the PostalEase worksheet available on LiteBlue and mail it to: HRSSC Compensation/Benefits, PO Box 970400, Greensboro NC 27497-0400.” Your next opportunity to enroll in will be during Open Season in November and your insurance would be effective in January 2017.

Local to Provide Shirts for PSE Members...

The national APWU used to provide organizing shirts to new members when they joined which were mailed to their homes. APWU stopped giving shirts in 2013. The Local was informed after the fact that APWU was no longer providing the new member gifts. The Local has decided to buy shirts for all PSE members who did not get a shirt from the national. If you are PSE member and want a shirt please come to the union room and give us your name and shirt size so we can place the order for shirts. Career employees got their shirts years ago, but for career non-members we offer a \$25 incentive to get back in the union.

More Clerks Returned From MH at Palatine...

We are at the end of the list with over 100 Clerks returned but there are still a few that must return. The Retreat Right List shows five employees as being Mailhandlers at the International Service Ctr. with no retreat rights, but they are not at ISC, they are Palatine Mailhandlers. If they were excessed from the Clerk Craft to the Palatine MH Craft and then excessed to the ISC, and retreated back to the Palatine MH Craft, then they would have to return to the Clerk Craft. If they were excessed from the Palatine Clerk Craft to the MH Craft at the ISC, then they would have retreat rights to Palatine Clerk. Aside from these five, there are three other employees listed who show as having retreat rights. With Clerks retiring there should be more residuals generated to finish Clerk retreat rights at Palatine. **PSE Conversions...** Busse management posted 10 newly created jobs that will result in residuals to convert PSEs in the near future. Carol Stream will be converting 13 PSE Clerks to career status on 5-28-16. Congratulations!

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Jackie Engelhart
President
Walter Elerby Jr.
Vice President
Alan Czerwinski
News Director

Special points of interest:

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Local to Provide Shirts for PSE Members...
More Clerks Returned From MH at Palatine
PSE Conversions
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Problem Postmasters
Ergonomics does not matter?

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: nwial7140@yahoo.com

Contract Arbitration Update

On 4-5 and 4-6-16 the APWU finished the opening round of its case before the arbitration panel that will decide the terms of the next contract. President Dimondstein argued that postal workers deserve to be fairly paid for their work. APWU members testified about their jobs, including PSEs who testified of the hardships of being paid a lower rate with no benefits. Union economist Kathryn Kobe used a set of charts and graphs to support APWU proposals for wage increases and a continuation of Cost of Living Adjustments. Union experts showed APWU member wages are comparable to other large unionized workforces in the private sector. Testimony was given by an official from the United Auto Workers on the bad effects of creating lower-wage pay scales for newer employees and its negative effects on morale. APWU strongly disagreed with USPS attempts to use the 2010 contract as a baseline to demand additional concessions, countering that USPS saved millions on that contract agreed to based on the dire finances created by the 2008 financial crisis and the congressional mandates costing billions. Management is pleading poverty and trying to undervalue the work APWU members are performing. USPS demands including a new lower-tier career workforce, the elimination of COLAs, and weakening the no-layoff protection are not acceptable to APWU leaders. The 2010 contract was ratified by APWU members because it protected pay and benefits for career employees at the time, but some Locals, like ours, did not agree with the creation of NTFTs and increased use of non-careers. The creation of the PSE was a big improvement over the old Casual. PSEs make more \$, have rights, and a path to career employment.

Postal Pulse Survey Results...

Our News Director Al Czerwinski sent me an article that he pulled off the "Inside Sources" website. The article dated 4-28-16 led off with **"Exclusive: Survey Finds Turmoil in Postal Workforce"** *"A survey of postal employees conducted last year for the USPS paints a dire picture of the organization's workforce. Gallup, which was paid \$1.8 million by USPS to conduct the survey, presents a comparison to the results of similar surveys of millions of workers at hundreds of other companies. Across a range of questions for satisfaction in the workplace, the USPS scores in the 1st percentile, the very bottom of survey results. The results were obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request after USPS declined to provide the data to Inside Sources. Postal workers reported strong job dissatisfaction, and in comparison to other organizations surveyed by Gallup, USPS employees say they rarely receive recognition for good work, their supervisors don't care for them as people, they don't feel their job is important, they lack opportunities to learn and grow, and their fellow workers are not committed to doing quality work. USPS said they were disappointed with the results and there is much room for improvement. Only 47% of all postal employees responded to the survey which was started in 2015 to improve employee engagement, which would in turn increase productivity, workplace safety, and value for customers. USPS said they are laser-focused on finding ways to make improvements in postal work teams and their work environments".* The Gallup survey replaced the "Voice of the Employee" but whatever its called, employees continue to say they do not feel they or their work are valued by postal management.

USPS Loses Money on Closures

The USPS admitted to the Postal Regulatory Commission that Phase 2 of the plant consolidation and closures increased the cost of transporting mail by \$130 million, which is double the \$64 million in savings from the consolidations, for a total net loss of \$66 million. The \$66 million dollar loss does not account for revenue/customers lost due to slower mail service.

Problem Postmasters...

Management moved Ms. Darling out of Glenview shortly after she became postmaster because this problem office became worse. Calvin Williams did Northbrook a favor and reassigned out of state, so we have OIC Katie Levernier, who should be a big improvement. The last problem office we have is Park Ridge where a postmaster who got along with everybody was replaced by Calamindy Winbush, who does not get along. I went to Park Ridge on 5-11-16 after two PSE Clerks were put out. I talked to the supervisor but she said she was not handling it, so I asked to speak to the postmaster. The supervisor returned from the postmaster's office and told me I will need to make an appointment. I hate to call the MPOO but with postmasters like Calvin Williams and Calamindy Winbush, I need to have Mr. Principie on speed-dial. **Ergonomics does not matter?** Carol Stream Clerks are being required to take trays out of BMCS to load ledges in Automation, bypassing the LO-11 prepping unit. The Union thinks this is unsafe but the plant manager disagrees. At Busse management requires to Clerks keying on the new High Speed Universal Sorter to stand all night instead of providing chairs, and has no rotation from keying to sweeping. They say there is no handbook for the machine so this is all local management's doing. Survey: employees don't matter.