

# The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the  
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

## American Rescue Plan

The ACT includes more paid leave for COVID. Effective 3-12-2021 the Act provides employees with up to 600 hours of paid Emergency Federal Employee Leave. The leave is available to all postal employees beginning on 3-12-2021 through 9-30-2021 or until the Leave funding is exhausted. Employees are entitled to leave if unable to work due to the following COVID-19 related reasons:

- 1) Subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.
- 2) Has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.
- 3) Caring for an individual who is subject to such a quarantine order as in (1) or has been so advised as in (2).
- 4) Experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis.
- 5) Caring for the employee's son or daughter if the school or place of care of the son or

daughter has been closed, requires or makes optional a virtual learning instruction model, requires or makes optional hybrid of in-person and virtual learning instruction models, or if child care provider of the son or daughter is unavailable due to COVID precautions.

- 6) Experiencing any other substantially similar condition.
- 7) Caring for a family member with a mental or physical disability or who is 55 years of age or older and incapable of self-care, without regard to whether another individual other than the employee is available to care of such family member, if the place of care for such family member is closed or the direct care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19.
- 8) Obtaining immunization (vaccination) related to COVID-19 or is recovering from an injury, disability, illness, or condition related to such immunization.

Full-time employees can receive up to 600 hours of paid leave, at your normal rate of pay, capped at \$2800 per pay period. NTFT, PTF, PTR, and PSEs weekly hours paid will be based upon the average numbers the employees worked the 26 pay periods prior to the leave being taken up to a maximum of 40 hours. Employees will not earn credit towards retirement, retirement contributions, contribute to TSP, or receive TSP matching funds on hours paid under EFEL. To take this leave, employees should submit a PS Form 3971 and indicate they are requesting EFEL on the form. Employees must identify which of the 8 qualifying conditions they qualify under for the leave. The TACS code is 086-21. Management is taking the position that qualifying reason 1 does not apply to postal employees and there has not been any other substantially similar condition identified at this time that would qualify under number 6. OPM has instructed all government agencies, including the USPS, not to issue their own policies until OPM guidance is released.

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### Special points of interest:

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The End of 6 Days for PSEs?  
Palatine A/Plant Manager  
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Palatine Skills Bank  
APWU COLA on 3-19 Checks  
Arlene Thomas-Benford is the new  
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### **Postal Reorganization...**

The USPS has just reorganized, replacing the Areas with Divisions and reducing the number of Districts from 67 to 50. Northern IL is now District 1 and consists of 600-603, 606-608, and 610-611. Northern Illinois District was eliminated in 2010, and is the same as the new District 1 with the addition of Chicago, and replaces the Chicago, Central and Lakeland Districts. For the first time all three plants that we represent, Palatine, Carol Stream and Busse, are in the same District. Most of Illinois is District 2, and Indiana and Wisconsin are each their own districts. Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin make up the new Westshore Division. Chuck Scieurba, former Palatine and Carol Stream Plant Manager is the new Westshores Division Director. Elizabeth Wulf is the Director for Logistics for Westshore Division. USPS offered a Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) to EAS employees at the Headquarters, Area and District levels because of the reorganization that will reduce the number of overall EAS positions.

### **30 More CS Conversions**

On 3-22-2021 APWU National President Mark Dimondstein informed us that Carol Stream will have 30 more PSE conversions per the national MOU. CS had two conversions on 3-13-2021 per the MOU and three more will be converted locally on 3-27-2021. Carol Stream has been converting PSEs all along while other plants have not, due to the PARS mail.

### **The End of 6 Days for PSEs ?**

At our Labor-Management meeting on 3-24-2021 we asked Plant Manager Pam Bronson if the conversion of 30 more PSEs would put an end to the 6 day work week for PSEs and she said "it would take care of that". CS PSEs have been working 6 days forever, but other plants get two days off.

### **Palatine A/Plant Manager**

Charlesten Anderson is the new A/Plant Manager at Palatine and she is trying some "new" things. A Plan 5 - Service Talk was put out for the Low Cost Tray Sorter titled "LCTS Sort Program for Mailer Letter Trays" and it said "Letter trays will be inducted and containerized on the LCTS by available Mail Handlers and or MHAs, as determined by MDO and/or SDO." We reached out to her and informed her that the LCTS is Clerk work and she responded that Clerks will be completing the task on the LCTS lanes instead of Mail Handlers. Since her arrival Automation supervisors have been instructed to keep the DBCS running through breaks, meaning one Clerk is supposed to feed and sweep while the other Clerk is on break. We asked her about this in Labor-Management on 3-17-2021 and she said she would check with the supervisor we named, but in actuality, all supervisors on all tours are now doing this, so where did it come from? I would assume it came from the new A/Plant Manager and asked her about this via email on 3-24-2021, with no response. Grievances should be filed on this.

### **Thank you Yolanda Safsaf!**

Yolanda is the tour 3 Chief Steward at Busse but volunteered to detail to tour 2 when we lost our last tour 2 Steward. We have trained several Stewards in the last few years and they either resigned or transferred. Yolanda covered tour 2 for the last two years and did a great job for all three crafts. Plant Manager Dan Halfman has approved her details so APWU had representation on tour 2 and we appreciate his cooperation.

We still need her on tour 2 but her detail is disapproved by Dan. There is no operational reason for this, but he does not look favorably on APWU and the Clerks.

### **Palatine Skills Bank**

All three plants have a Skills Bank in their Local Memo. Palatine management has been playing stupid on Skills Bank details and picking whomever they want for details of one week or more, which is what the Skills Bank is for. At our 3-17-2021 Labor Management meeting we brought this to the attention of the A/Plant Manager and she tasked In-Plant Support Manager Moore to work with 600 CCD Lloyd to update the Skills Bank, which has not been updated since 2005. If you are interested in being in the Skills Bank fill out a form which should be available at the Union office.

### **APWU COLA on 3-19 Checks**

Per the 2018-2021 contract, APWU career employees received a 20 cent per hour cost of living (COLA) effective 2-27-2021, which should have been on pay checks dated 3-19-2021. This 20 cent COLA adds up to \$416.00 per year and all COLAs for the 2018 contract total \$1,414.00 per year. PSEs do not receive COLAs but receive general wage increases. Their next increase is 20 cents to be effective on 5-22-2021.

### **Arlene Thomas-Benford is the new NWIAL Secretary**

Arlene Thomas-Benford was appointed to fill the remainder of the term of Secretary Linda Retel who resigned at the end of February. Arlene was approved unanimously by the Executive Board and by the majority of the members at the March membership meeting. Arlene is also the Franklin Park Steward and the Local Health Plan Representative, a member of the Human Relations Committee, and the Constitution Committee. She has served as the Chairperson of the Election Committee for the last two NWIAL elections. She supports her Union and is willing to take on whatever job she is asked, and in a competent manner.

