

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

Busse Labor Meeting

We had a Busse Labor-Management meeting on 2-11-14 with new A/Plant Manager Adam Nelson who has only been here since 1-16-14. We asked about getting the UFSM Adam spoke about in his Town Hall and he said we are getting one as soon as they can relocate it from Quincy, IL. We asked about the tour 2 0900 details for Scan and he said that time did not work out well so he will probably post some tour 3 Scan bids at 1500. He did not think there would be a need to re-post occupied Scan bids. We asked about Maintenance staffing and he said he has the same amount of staffing as other facilities this size. We do not know what facilities he was talking about but Busse is and has been understaffed. We asked why Busse was not sending anyone for training and MMO Davis said he will try to get training scheduled. We were notified that management will be contracting out work to upgrade the restrooms and the MDO offices.

Since Busse is a leased facility we asked why USPS was doing this work and not the owner, Center Point Properties. They said this came from the Field Services Organization at Headquarters. It looks like Busse will be around for awhile...

C.S. Town Halls

A/Plant Manager Colao held Town Hall meetings on 2-12-14 to talk about service scores, lean mail processing, snow removal and parking lot issues, and the purchase of 12 new Tugs and Forklifts. One thing he did not talk about was the consistent scheduling of PSE's to work six days per week, at both CS and Palatine. Last year management was able to replace some of the retiring employees by hiring non-careers but these districts are at their caps for hiring PSEs and MHAs so they can't hire. They were also able to get career employees from closing plants but most of those employees have been reassigned. They will not hire until the overtime % gets too high or they can't get the mail out, but that day is coming as most career employees are over 50.

Need More Employees

USPS needs more career employees. They have been working PSEs six days per week, calling overtime, and staffing a DBCS with one Clerk. Page 291 of the contract states "When the Postal Service determines in accordance with contractual provisions that it needs to fill vacancies with new career employees, available and qualified PSE employees will be converted to fill such vacancies on a seniority basis." PSEs would like to be converted to career and we have a few former career employees who would like to be reinstated but management is not hiring. Most of the plants to be closed have been already been closed and the Associate Offices have been emptied out. They have all the non-careers they are allowed. The same is true for the Carriers as I heard there was big meeting in Oak Park recently with District Manager Peter Allen and Congressman Danny Davis to address complaints from customers regarding their mail delivery service. More often than not this is because they do not have enough Carriers and they are on the street later.

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Special points of interest:

Busse Labor Management
C.S. Town Halls
Need More Employees
PSEs and Health Insurance
Staples Update
Senate Bill Passes Committee
Things You Should Know...
We Need Correct Addresses

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PSEs and Health Insurance

The PSE Memo states that PSEs are eligible for health benefits after the first 360 day appointment and upon reappointment to another 360 day term. If a PSE is appointed for less than 360 days, they become eligible for health benefits upon serving for a year without a break in service of more than five (5) days. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will mail a booklet titled "Guide to Benefits for Certain Temporary (non-Career) USPS Employees". PSEs must enroll within 60 days of eligibility or they will have to wait until the next FEHBP Open Season at the end of the year. Coverage will be effective the first day of the first pay period after the Postal Service receives an enrollment form if the employee was appointed for another 360 days. Managers cannot give employees a six-day break to prevent them from being eligible for insurance. They can assign a five-day break before employees complete 360 days but they will be eligible when they reach 360 days after that five day break in service. As non-career employees PSEs would pay the full cost for any Health Plan other than the APWU Consumer Driven Health Plan. Per the APWU contract USPS will pay 75% of the premium and the employee will pay only 25%. For more information employees can call **Shared Services** at **1-877-477-3273** and select **Option 5**. We will be meeting with groups of PSEs as they become eligible, and will provide brochures on the APWU Health Plans available. The USPS currently pays 78% of the health plan premium for career employees and that goes down by 1% for each year of this contract. This compares to the 85% USPS was paying in 2010. Every year we are paying 1% more for our FEHBP health insurance plans.

Staples Update

APWU held the first protest of the Staples deal in San Francisco on 1-28-14 with 150 sign-carrying marchers picketing at the store, and attracting media attention. A second protest held in Orlando, Florida on 2-8-14 attracted about 80 protesters to the Staples store. APWU asked for details of the agreement between USPS and Staples from but has received no information from either party. The Union filed an unfair labor charge against the Postal Service. President Dimondstein asked to meet with Staples CEO Sargent in Washington but was turned down. Staples response was "*As a matter of policy Staples does not discuss the terms of vendor agreements with third parties. Given this policy, we think it is appropriate for you to discuss your concerns directly with the Postal Service.*" The APWU wants to know what they have to hide?! President Dimondstein says we have a right to this information but we are not going to win this battle by filing grievances but by motivating our members and the public to fight.

Senate Bill Passes Committee

An amended version of S 1486 introduced by Senators Carper and Coburn passed a Committee vote by 9 to 1 on 2-6-14. This bill is opposed by all four postal unions. It would threaten 100,000 jobs, lead to pension cuts, weaken our ability to negotiate our contracts, require USPS to prefund workers compensation by 17 billion, allow USPS to close more mail processing facilities after two years, allow USPS to reduce service and delivery standards, eliminate Saturday delivery, eliminate door to door delivery for new households and businesses, and terminate OWCP for injured employees as they reach 65. (Long-term injured annuities are based on their salary level when they went on OWCP.)

Things You Should Know...

When called in for a meeting with management that could lead to discipline you have a right to request and be provided with a Union Steward before you start. When called for a pre-disciplinary interview you have a right to have a Steward present and should request one immediately. It also helps to have a witness as to what was said because some people will lie and management will believe the supervisor over the employee. If you are an injured employee with restrictions being verbally instructed to go home as "no work available" you should ask for a written "no work available" letter and get a Steward to witness that management is sending you home. An employee sent home verbally has no proof for OWCP that they were sent home by management, and will need that proof to file a claim for workers compensation. When an employees requests a Steward, the 3-10-77 Charters Memo states "*Requests to interview an aggrieved employee, supervisors, and witnesses during working hours, shall not be unreasonably denied. Reasonable is defined that in most cases the grievant and the steward should be able to discuss the grievance without delay but 95% of the time with no more than a two-hour delay. While circumstances may sometimes necessitate a delay or more than two hours, normally the delay should not extend beyond the tour of duty in which the request is made.*"

We Need Correct Addresses

The NWIAL election will be held in March/April and ballots will be mailed by the American Arbitration Association to your home. In order to receive a ballot we need to have your correct address. If you did not receive a Local Line newspaper by now we may not have your correct address.

