

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

7 Return from Mailhandler Craft...

7 employees returned to the Clerk craft from the Mailhandler craft at Palatine on 11-28-15. Most had been in the MH craft for ten years and did not want to come back. We have only eight names left who have to come back so we can end this. At least 250 Clerks have been excessed out of Palatine starting in 2005. There are 364 Clerks on the 3rd qtr. Palatine seniority list and 52 PSEs. Management says they are at complement per the Function 1 scheduler so apparently that means calling constant overtime to get the mail out. Headquarters is using the Function 1 scheduler to understaff P&DCs and the plant managers do not have authority over the plant staffing. For those who like OT understaffing is good but for PSEs its bad. We have grievances for bids at Step 2 but Labor Relations is backed up so we are not getting decisions very quickly. We will continue to use the grievance procedure to get more bids so we can end retreat rights and get to the PSEs.

The Numbers at CS

We were informed that the Function 1 scheduler calls for 362 Clerks and 72 PSEs at Carol Stream. There are 416 Clerks on the current Carol Stream seniority list but Clerks are retiring every month at both CS and Palatine. We have two grievances filed in 2014 at the Step 4 level on CS Clerk residuals not being filled but with management using the Function 1 scheduler to whittle down staffing to 362 Clerks, they will fight converting PSEs. I spoke with the union officer who has our cases and she has discussed them with management but has no decision yet. The USPS is under staffing the plants like they do the Associate Offices. USPS is competing for profitable package business but running most offices on skeleton crews. Busse is the Priority hub for the Chicago area and is buried in mail. They do not have enough people to work the Christmas mail let alone staff the Christmas Annex. If this is our season to shine why don't we have the people to move the mail? It is our season for OT!

Busse Universal Sorter up and running...

The massive Universal Sorter for NMO's is up and running with Clerks keying and both crafts sweeping run-off stations. I spoke with one Clerk who said it is tiring standing in one place for hours at a time. From our conversation it seemed that there was no rotation but speaking to one of the Stewards I was told they do rotate from keying to sweeping. The Clerks should not have to stand in one place for hours and I know of no other machine that has keying stations with no chairs for keyers. I sent a letter to Plant Manager Murphy last week on this but have not heard back from her as it makes no sense to make keyers stand in one place when they can key sitting down on a chair which is less tiring than standing. Since they knew when the machine was scheduled to begin operation I don't know why they did not order a few chairs unless they don't care about the employees being fatigued. We consider this a matter of safety and health that should be corrected and hope to hear back from management very soon.

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Special points of interest:

7 Return from the Mailhandler Craft...
The Numbers at CS
Busse Universal up and running...
MVS Bidding at Palatine
Completing Routes and 90%
A Bad Example in Glenview
Merry Xmas NWIAL Members

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MVS Bidding at Palatine

Palatine Tractor-Trailer Operators have received their annual bid packets and length of posting is ten (10) days so if you received your packet late you are still entitled to 10 days. Some drivers are concerned as to why more bids are not being posted with PSE's working 40+ hours and have signed a petition demanding bids. I asked Transportation Manager Mark Wilson why he is not creating more positions and he said he is submitting a new baseline in January requesting three additional full-time jobs based on the addition of 29 runs but that request must be approved. If approved the new jobs will be posted for all Palatine full time TTOs to bid on. I spoke with MVS Director Nigel Thomas and he directed me to page 415 of the contract which talks about new work and states that 25% of the duty assignments created will be assigned to career employees. PSEs cover leave as well as new work, but the 1 in 4 rule means that 75% of new work can be assigned to PSEs and 25% to the career workforce. As Nigel has stated, new work creates new jobs, not the amount of hours worked by PSEs or the amount of OT being worked by the regulars. The Motor Vehicle Craft is different than the Clerk Craft when it comes to creating new positions. Nigel said he is willing to respond to any questions or concerns if you leave a message for him at Carol Stream (630-260-5169) with your call-back number. I shared this information with Palatine MVS Steward Dave Baskin so he is aware of what the Director said. We know PSEs want conversion to career but the contract states how MVS jobs are created and we have to work within that language to get new duty assignments created and PSE's converted to career.

Completing Routes and 90%

National Maintenance Director Raymer signed the MS47 TL5 Implementation and Maintenance Craft PSE Conversions MOU on 7-9-14. The MOU resulted in the conversion of all Maintenance PSEs at that time and required the USPS to provide information to the union at the end of each fiscal year for each installation to show they had performed 90% of the required MS-47 cleaning hours. The MOU resulted in payment to the custodians at each installation where the 90% was not met, and the USPS took steps to avoid such payouts for Fiscal Year 2015. At the end of the fiscal year they started calling OT and moving PSE Custodians to offices where they were way under the 90%. All year the Northlake Station of the Melrose Park Post Office was dirty with overflowing trash by the front door, but towards the end of the year, I saw several PSEs cleaning in the lobby at Northlake. They were trying to get their cleaning hours in so they would not have to pay free money, but we are now back to the same old. The trash container by the front door is once again overflowing. In an article in the Postal Worker Maintenance Director Raymer stated "*Local management will not be able to cover for or make-up for bypassing routes by piling on custodial hours at the end of the fiscal year. Once daily and weekly routes are bypassed, the hours are lost.*" How is the local union supposed to monitor that? The Custodians must report any bypassed routes to the local union. At the end of the year we need to know how many hours of routes were bypassed because the USPS is doing what Raymer said they cannot do, piling on hours at the end of the year to make the 90%. Custodians should not mark a route as complete unless it is.

A Bad Example in Glenview

A few years ago they built a brand new post office in Glenview, IL. Then they moved Winnetka mail into Glenview under what they call a Delivery Unit Optimization. Since that time Glenview has struggled to get the mail out. About that time they got a new Post Office Operations Manager, Elizabeth Wulf, and the long-term postmaster was moved to another office in what began a revolving door of postmasters in and out. It used to be that you would have the same postmaster in an office for years and they would know the office, employees, and customers. Wulf moved postmasters around a lot for some unknown reason, and Glenview had several in and out. I worked with most of them and they were decent but finally the titled postmaster decided to retire. She was not at Glenview anyway, she was at Palatine on a "detail". Finally, Ms. Wulf appointed a new postmaster and actually allowed her to remain in Glenview. The new PM is LuVada Darling. I have tried to work with her but she has Carriers and Supervisors doing Clerk work and says "tell me where it says I can't have Carriers throw and scan parcels?! In the past we could not get the Clerks to write statements, as in many offices, but they decided they had better write statements because of the constant violations. Glenview keeps me very busy. **Merry Xmas NWIAL members** We are again giving Jewel gift cards (\$15) to all NWIAL members for Christmas. The cards will be available at the Union offices at Carol Stream and Palatine this week. The Busse union room is closed and under repair so the gift cards will be available as soon as we can get back into the office. AO gift cards will be passed out within the next two weeks and we wish all a very *Merry Christmas.*

