

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

Time Magazine on DeJoy's Post Office

Many question why Louis DeJoy is still the Postmaster General two years after President Trump left office. I read a recent article in Time Magazine that may give the explanation. DeJoy is credited with persuading Republicans, 120 in the House and 29 in the Senate to buy into postal reform, which had failed to pass for years. Union officials believed DeJoy's standing with Republicans could get postal reform passed after being stalled for years. DeJoy came to talk to them in February 2022 from a business perspective on how he would cut losses without harming performance. The next day the Postal Reform Act passed the House with 342 votes. Passage of the Postal Reform Act guaranteed a union-friendly version of six day mail service and stabilized health coverage for 650,000 employees. "There's no way we could have gotten the votes without DeJoy" says the chief of staff for the National Association of Letter Carriers at the time.

DeJoy may be the only person on earth who could have delivered this for the Postal Service.

The bill ended the pre-funding requirement which allowed USPS to be free of 58 billion in liabilities. Republicans saw the bill as a bailout but DeJoy was able to convince them otherwise. That DeJoy would help advance a key Democratic agenda item seems unlikely but to the astonishment of many in Washington he has become one of their most important allies in government. Defying the far right he delivered more than 500 million COVID test kits in the winter of 2022, and he agreed to transition the USPS entire fleet to electric vehicles by 2026. His efforts in helping to pass postal reform bought him a huge mandate to transform the USPS. DeJoy took over a Logistics company from his father and turned it into a company worth more than \$600 million dollars. He is in the process of a 10 year transformation plan to remake the USPS into a delivery service that deals less with traditional mail and more with packages. The plan

grows the agency, building new processing centers and centralizing the delivery network. It converts more than 100,000 part-time employees to full-time. It adds new services to help local retailers compete with Amazon. These major changes are a big reason why the postal unions have now embraced him. While the Unions and the Postal Board of Governors agree with his plan there is some opposition in Congress because it raises rates, and it relies more on trucks and less on planes, thereby slowing service for some first class mail. When he took over USPS was months away from running out of money. DeJoy is trying to make USPS more competitive, and profitable which it has not been since 2006. His 10 year plan is in motion. A new million square foot regional processing plant near Atlanta is set to open next year, and is one of 60 such facilities he plans to open as part of his plan. I did not know any of this until I read Time and ask why our national union does not share this information with the rest of us so we know what DeJoy has done and is doing...

Floor Edition

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Bullying, Sexual Harassment, and Hostile Work Environments

APWU Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy's article in the latest Postal Worker magazine caught my eye which is unusual. She states *"The USPS has never put forth its best effort to protect postal workers from hostile work environments. Employees often experience management failure to resolve cases. They watch management harassers move from one postal facility to another and these cases are often closed as inconclusive. Now an Office of Inspector General (OIG) Report shows that training, tracking and documenting cases have been found to be inconsistent, incomplete, and inadequate...Studies have found that 70 percent of individuals do not report sexual harassment due to pressures and retaliation. The OIG report shows management failed to perform due diligence in investigating, documenting, monitoring, and taking immediate corrective action. The OIG recommended that the USPS conduct periodic Climate Assessment Surveys as a best practice for understanding the prevalence of sexual harassment. The information gathered could help identify facilities that need training, prevention programs, and intervention. Management told the OIG they are not interested in doing climate surveys."*

I just spoke with a Carol Stream Steward regarding an employee being sexually harassed who s/he said will be calling me about this. Female Clerks in Buffalo Grove have complained about a new male supervisor following them to the bathrooms and one of them states he made inappropriate comments in regards to her keeping her job. A sexual harassment complaint at Palatine was ignored for months and the Union had to go to arbitration to get something done.

What is Gas Lighting?

Gas Lighting is a form of psychological abuse in which a person or group causes someone to question their own sanity, memories or perception of reality. People who experience Gas Lighting may feel confused, anxious, or as though they cannot trust themselves. Heavy workloads and long hours can lead to a stressful and unpleasant work environment. At the Glenview Post Office a non-ODL Clerk is being forced to work end-tour overtime when there is no work and forced to work OT on Sunday while ODL Clerks are not being called. This is management abusing their authority and abusing employees. Then they want to PDI the Clerk when she was not able to stay 10 hours one day. This is abuse and to me it fits the definition of Gas Lighting, abusing the employee and then threatening them with discipline because they did not stay 10 hours to do nothing when they are not even on the ODL. This is Narbi Miulli's office and the supervisor who likes to torment this Clerk is Thomas Mathew.

Ballots Were Mailed

Ballots were mailed on Wednesday, 3-29-2023 with the deadline to be received scheduled for 900 AM on Friday, 4-28-2023. Voters with a missing or damaged ballot must request a replacement by calling 312-616-6560, M-F, 9am to 5pm or by emailing request to AAACHicago@adr.org. Voters are asked not to call or email prior to 4-5-2023 to allow sufficient time for the delivery of all ballots by USPS. Ballots will be retrieved by the Administrator at the designated P.O. Box at 9:01 AM and then securely transported to the Administrator's office located at 150 N. Michigan Ave, Suite 350, Chicago, IL 60601. Counting of the ballots will start at approximately 9:30am.

Medicare Integration

A few members at the last membership meeting asked me to include this in the next Local Line. The Postal Reform Act of 2022 did not change a **current** postal annuitant's right to decide whether they want to enroll in Medicare. **Nor would this right to decide about Medicare change for any active postal employee who retires before 1-1-2025**, or for any active employee at least 64 years of age as of 1-1-2025. Active employees under the age of 64 as of 1-1-2025 would (when retired and at least age 65) enroll in Medicare Parts A and B. Currently around 90% of postal annuitants enroll in Medicare A (hospital services) and around 80% are voluntarily enrolled in Medicare Part B. While there are no premiums for Part A, the monthly premium for part B in 2022 was \$170.10. The reason the majority of Medicare eligible (age 65 and over) annuitants already choose to enroll in both A and B when they turn 65 is because doing so virtually eliminates any out of pocket health care costs (deductibles and co-pays) under the FEHB program, and reduces uncertainty about rising health care costs as they age. For current retirees who kept their postal health insurance into retirement and for those who retire before 1-1-2025 and elect to keep their postal insurance, that would be their primary insurance and Medicare would be secondary. Those retiring after 1-1-2025 would not have that option so Medicare would be their primary and would be the first payer. Medicare Integration will reduce the Postal Service's health care expenses by hundreds of millions of dollars annually and reduce its future liability for retiree health benefits by about \$40 Billion by shifting costs to Medicare which all postal employees pay into.

