

# The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the  
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

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## Update by: Jackie Engelhart

**Contract is Ratified!** (APWU News Bulletin) 94% of the members who voted, voted "yes" in favor of ratification. The vote was 36,636 in favor and 2,290 against. The vote ratification process was coordinated by Secretary-Treasurer Powell and administered by the American Arbitration Association. Now that we have a new Contract, USPS will begin the process of implementing pay raises of 1.3% for career and 2.3% for PSEs effective 11-21-2021, the \$1,310 per year COLA for career employees effective 2-26-2022, and the additional 50 cents per hour increase for PSEs effective on 4-9-2022. This contract benefits 165,000 employees represented by the APWU with the pay raises and COLAs, without loss of contract provisions carried over from the last contract, including the no-layoff provision. 40,000 returned a ballot out of 165,000 APWU represented employees so only 1 in 4 voted. Non-members cannot vote but reap the benefits that you paid for, so they don't count.

**From the Maintenance Craft Director**  
MCD Joe Golden reports "In the new contract, effective 2-28-2022, the parties have agreed to an unprecedented opportunity for employees to apply for positions in the Maintenance Craft. Beginning 4-1-2022 through 4-30-2022, all career Postal employees may apply for Maintenance Craft eligibility for placement on an in-service register. Employees must submit in writing a request to the District MSS Coordinator and identify the occupational levels, excluding ET-11, they wish to apply to take the 955 eligibility exam for. Employees must submit a written request that includes the date submitted, employee's name, EIN, Email address, and which occupational group they are interested in. You must submit an email address because this is how the MSS Coordinator will contact you to schedule you for the exam and the interview. You must select one or more of the occupational groups to be tested. Once you receive an eligible rating of 70 or more you will be

*interviewed and if eligible be placed on the occupational level in-service register. If no in-service register exists in your facility/office/station, your rating will be entered in your OPF. Your eligible rating from the 955 exam is valid forever. Normally, employees can only apply in the month of March but this year the month was changed to April. This includes all Maintenance Craft employees in all offices and facilities who have not applied previously or have not applied for a particular occupational group. Be sure to keep a copy of your written request."*

**Occupational Groups**  
Electronic Technician level 10  
Maintenance Mechanic Level 9  
Maintenance Mechanic Level 7  
Building/All other level 9  
**Union Yes!**

Nearly 90% of U.S. workers are not in unions and do not have a contract. Without a contract the law is "employment at will" which means the will of the employer. In a non-union workplace management unilaterally makes the rules, and workers can either obey or quit.

Jackie Engelhart  
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### Special points of interest:

Contract is Ratified  
From the Maintenance  
Craft Director  
Union Yes!  
OWCP Claims for COVID  
Zero Tolerance  
Congratulations Ms. Anderson  
APWU Facts on Privatization  
DeJoy and USPS Disintegration

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## **OWCP Claims for COVID**

Postal employees have a right to file an OWCP claim for COVID. You must have worked at the Post Office during the 21 days prior to your COVID diagnosis. Approval entitles you to medical and lost wages paid and or your sick and annual leave repaid. Section 4016 of the law states that a federal employee who is diagnosed with COVID-19 and carried out duties that required contact with patients, members of the public, or co-workers, or included a risk of exposure to the novel corona virus during a covered period of exposure prior to the diagnosis, is deemed to have an injury that is proximately caused by employment. This means that if you are diagnosed with (positive test) and you file an OWCP claim, it will more than likely be approved. You are not required to prove you contracted the disease at work. In order to receive benefits, those diagnosed must submit a claim. Do not expect management to do this for you and do not expect them to inform you that you have a right to file a claim. When you file a claim for COVID-19 you are entitled to request continuation of pay (COP). This is pay at your regular rate of pay paid to you by the postal service during your COVID-19 illness absence. You are entitled to COP if you file your claim within 30 days of your diagnosis. If you file more than 30 days after your diagnosis you are not entitled to COP, and must submit a form CA-7 to have your lost wages paid by OWCP. You must submit sufficient medical evidence (preferably a laboratory administered PCR test within 10 days of filing your OWCP claim in order to be paid COP. Self-administered tests are not sufficient to have claim approved. You have to file an OWCP CA-1 claim as there is no more EFEL.

## **Zero Tolerance...**

When an employee is accused of a "zero tolerance" incident they are usually put on Emergency Placement without pay by management. This is only for Craft employees as it rarely occurs when a manager is accused. Management will make excuses for their own but will walk out a craft employee for the same thing or less. When a Craft employee is put out they often stay out for weeks while management takes their time deciding what to do. Does it really take 3 or 4 weeks to take statements regarding a verbal disagreement between employees? Once the employee is put out they fall between the cracks as the plant manager may want to make an example out of them or may be too busy to deal with the situation. The best advice in any work place disagreement is for the employee to walk away. Don't be provoked into responding. It's not worth losing your job. APWU never signed the 1992 Joint Statement as other unions did because there was a fear that it would be used only against Craft employees, and they were right. *"We openly acknowledge that in some places or units there is an unacceptable level of stress in the workplace; that there is no excuse for and will be no tolerance of violence or any threats of violence by anyone at any level of the Postal Service; and that there is no excuse for and will be no tolerance of harassment, intimidation, threats, or bullying by anyone."* (From the USPS Joint Statement)  
**Congratulations Ms. Anderson**  
Ms. Charlesten Anderson was appointed the Plant Manager for South Suburban on 2-4-2022, and it's about time for this promotion. She was A/Plant Manager last year at Palatine and was refreshingly fair and honest. She actually talked to the employees and to the union. Congratulations Charley!

## **APWU Facts on Privatization**

1. *There has been talk of selling off the Postal Service for many decades, mostly pushed by anti-government, anti-union, corporate business forces.*
2. *Parts of the USPS have already been privatized. Much of the surface transportation work has been contracted. In June of 2020 the Office of Management and Budget published a devastating report stating that it needs to prepare to convert USPS from a government agency to a private corporation, with major changes in the level of service*
3. *The Task Force issued its report in 2018. It laid out steps to take to prepare the USPS for privatization, including cuts to service, eliminating delivery days, increasing private mail sortation, and franchising of the mailbox.*
4. *The Task Force report called for elimination of postal collecting bargaining rights and cuts to pay and benefits.*
5. *Congress will ultimately decide whether to sell the USPS.*

## **DeJoy and USPS Disintegration**

Below are comments from postal customers printed in an article in the Sunday Tribune about the poor service at Park Ridge, IL. *"We cannot count on getting delivery of mail on a regular basis. Days go by with no mail and when we do get mail it is usually late in the evening. We have lost confidence in the safety of mail being sent through the postal service noting that drive up mailboxes remain closed after mail thefts reported last year. This centuries old service is disintegrating before our eyes, and do not see any proactive action being taken to fix things or at least overhaul the service."* Under Postmaster Calmidy Winbush things go from bad to worse but management does nothing.

