

# The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the  
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

## Treasurer Appointed

Due to the resignation of Treasurer Al Modi, we appointed a Treasurer at the January membership meeting who had to be approved by majority vote of the Executive Board and by the membership at the meeting. Bhupendra Patel was approved as Treasurer by the EB and all but one of the members at the January membership meeting. He began to perform his duties the next day by meeting with outgoing Treasurer Modi for the transition. Bhupendra has served as a Steward at Busse for years and has shown himself to be dedicated to serving the members. He has made it a point to attend rallies as do many of the Busse Stewards. He is smart and will put in the time necessary to learn the job. His business background will help him in learning the duties of the Treasurer. He is a person of integrity and a true union-man, who has the energy to perform the duties of this demanding position. I believe we will be in very good hands with Bhupendra Patel serving as our Treasurer.

## Human Relations Director is Appointed...

Due to the retirement of Mimi Jackson on 1-3-17 we appointed Vivian Henderson as the Human Relations Director. We are lucky to have such a knowledgeable and hard-working person as Vivian to step up into this job. I have seen Vivian in action at the Union Hall as she meets with members needing help with claims. She is amazing and the members are lucky to have someone like her to rely on when they need help with their OWCP. Aside from helping our members with OWCP, Vivian is teaching those Stewards who are willing to learn so when she goes we have others who can continue this important work. Without Vivian and Mimi all these years our members would not have had the help they needed with their claims. As Human Relations Director, Vivian will train Stewards who want to learn OWCP so we do not lose this knowledge. Elaine Bartlet-Walker at Carol Stream and Chis James at Palatine have been learning OWCP with Mimi and Vivian so they can help members.

## This is an Election Year for the Local...

Every three years we hold an election of officers and 2017 is an election year. Nominations are held at the March membership meeting so anyone interested in running for office must either submit a letter to Secretary Linda Retel informing her of the office they are running for, or they can come to the March meeting and have someone nominate them or nominate themselves. We appointed an election committee at the January meeting which is called for per the constitution. The President appoints the committee members in January subject to approval of the Executive Board and the members at that meeting. The Election Committee was approved by all EB members present and by all but one member at the meeting. In years past we have solicited for the election committee but we have members who have served before and do not have to be taught from scratch, so we didn't solicit this year. Even with a company printing, mailing, and counting the ballots, the committee needs to perform their part of the job.

January 30, 2017

Jackie Engelhart  
President  
Walter Elerby Jr.  
Vice President  
Alan Czerwinski  
News Director

### Special points of interest:

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## Our Election Ballots Mailed and Counted by Outside Firm...

In 2001 the Local Constitution was changed to require an outside firm conduct NWIAL elections. This change was submitted by former NWIAL President Bob Miles and supported by many of us as being the right thing to do to ensure elections are fair and honest. Bob was the first president to be elected under the election change. The outside firm prints, mails, and counts the ballots. The election committee selects the company to perform the election for that year, and they review the membership list provided by the Secretary to make sure it is as up to date as possible. The membership list is constantly changing with members retiring, joining, or leaving. Members do not always update their address with the union which means anything mailed from the union would go to the old address. The Election Committee prepares the Notice of Nominations to be mailed to the last known address of each member to inform them that nominations will be held at the March membership meeting. The Election Committee also has to deal with any protests filed by candidates running for office and in our elections we always have one candidate who files protests. Two elections ago I appointed someone I did not know well to the Election Committee and said how much harm could s/he do? I found out when s/he ruled three officers and candidates for office to be not in good standing because they paid their dues directly to the national union and were therefore not on the Dues Check-Off List. This action created a lot of chaos. \*One candidate always files an election protest with the national union and the Department of Labor, which after investigation have always been denied, with no change in the election outcome.

## Possible Civil Service Changes

The following is from an article by NAPS Legislative Counsel Bruce Moyer... *"Sweeping changes to civil service rules and employee compensation could come about under plans being prepared by President Trump's transition team and the GOP controlled Congress. Last November's anti-Washington mandate has put a bulls-eye on the federal bureaucracy as part of the efforts to drain the swamp and eliminate 'government waste'. Conservative think-tank proposals based on the questionable assumption that federal pay and benefits are overly generous, could become part of the Congressional action plan. Unified GOP Control of Congress and the White House will make enactment of some changes possible... Some changes could affect only civil servants while others could reach to postal employees, particularly those involving retirement and health benefits and new postal hires. Congress will take aim at reducing the defined benefit portion of FERS and move newly hired federal and postal employees to a defined contribution arrangement consisting of Social Security and the Thrift Savings Plan... Also during the first week of the new Congress, Rep. Todd Rokita (R-IN) prepared to re-introduce **The PAGE Act**, that would turn all new federal workers into "at will" employees, permitting supervisors to fire them without due process rights or the opportunity to appeal. Such changes would not appear to apply to Postal Service new hires but would have a profound impact on labor relations throughout the federal workplace. The Rokita bill would also end "official time" practices which permit civil service union stewards to engage in union activity while receiving federal salary..."*

## USPS Part of Hiring Freeze...

Trump's executive hiring freeze for federal employees does include postal workers. Trump's order says "no vacant positions existing at noon on 1-22-2017 may be filled and no new positions may be created, except in limited circumstances". Trump instructed the head of OPM to "recommend a long-term plan to reduce the size of the Federal Government's workforce through attrition" within 90 days, at which point the freeze would expire. The order is to apply "across the board in the executive branch, and the USPS is defined as an "independent establishment of the executive branch of government".

### Who Fights for Us?

As a union member from day one, I did not think twice about being in the union and do not understand not being in the union if you are lucky enough to have a union job. Postal workers have been lucky to avoid much of the economic misfortune of other workers because we have a union to negotiate our pay and benefits with the USPS. There is more to the Union than negotiating a contract, especially under current APWU President Mark Dimondstein. Mark knows that what happens in Congress affects postal workers and he has made that a main APWU priority. Based on the changes in Washington we (the Union) will have to fight harder to keep what we have. "At Will" employment means management has the right to fire you for no reason and not to have to give you a reason. That means your employment is at their will. I have friends that worked hard for a company to be called in on a Friday and told they are fired and when they ask why are told they don't have to give them a reason because IL. is an "at will" state. This is the difference between having a union or not having one.

