

# The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the  
Northwest Illinois Area Local

## Update by: Jackie Engelhart

### Impact at Fox Valley for 37 Clerks

On 4-15-16 management issued an impact for 37 Clerks to be excessed out of Fox Valley but there are very few jobs within a 50 mile radius at this time. The reason for the excessing is the movement of their DPS mail to South Suburban, and LO-11 mail to CS. Fox Valley's impact will affect facilities within a 50 mile radius as their residuals will now be withheld for excessing. The floor space freed up by removal of the DBCS machines will be home to an FSS machine and the Carol Stream FSS will be going sometime this year, with removal starting possibly in July.

### Palatine Retreating

Palatine is working on returning/retreating the remaining Clerks from past excessing, with the Lakeland list showing ten Clerks left but some do not have to, and may not want to come back. Management is in the process of locating the remaining Clerks and verifying their contact information so letters can be mailed to them. Management knows they need more Clerks.

### Heavy-handed Tactics

Palatine is working PSE Clerks six days per week and requiring them to work over eight hours on many of their workdays. Management claims that PSEs all walked out when overtime was called on Mother's Day, and since then they have been threatening PSEs with discipline if they do not stay end of tour OT. I spoke with one PSE who said she could not stay one night because of a childcare issue and she was called in for a PDI. I wrote to Mr. Mayberry that this reaction was harsh and extreme, but both the PSEs and the Stewards say they are being threatened with their jobs if they cannot stay when OT is called. One PSE said their start time was changed from 1600 to 1200 and since then they are being told they have to stay beyond eight hours more often. USPS said in January of 2015, when they made the tour changes, that the mail should be finished by 1200 and there was no need for bids on tour 1. Time has shown that the plan is not working the way the said it would and tour 1 bids are needed.

### Sexual Harassment

There are a few bad apples who engage in this type of conduct but those few are responsible for most of the harassment. Palatine management is investigating a complaint against a supervisor who had a similar complaint filed last year. The supervisor was moved so that employee would not have to work for him but this supervisor has generated another sexual harassment complaint.

*Under federal antidiscrimination law, harassment is defined as unwelcome verbal or physical conduct that demeans or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group of individuals because of their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age (40+), mental or physical disability, or in retaliation for EEO activity. To be considered harassment under the law, the behavior must also (1) result in an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; (2) unreasonably interfere with an individual's work performance; or otherwise adversely affect and individual's employment opportunities. Once you have told the harasser to stop, if they do not stop, report it.*

## Floor Edition

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President  
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Vice President  
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### Special points of interest:

Impact at Fox Valley for 37 Clerks  
Heavy-Handed Tactics at Palatine  
Sexual Harassment  
DBCS Ergonomics  
Safety and Injured on Duty  
When Injured at Work ...  
Mimi, Vivian, Elaine, and Chris  
Big Win for MVS...  
Methane at Michigan Metroplex  
Organizing T-Shirt Order  
Congratulations to Al Modi  
Next Union Meeting is on 6-12-16.

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### **DBCS Ergonomic Risks...**

*In 2007 OSHA conducted an assessment of DBCS operations at the Denver P&DC. OSHA's review documented that ergonomic risks associated with the DBCS operation are still present, and that some of the findings are similar to the findings of two prior National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Health Hazard Evaluations. Despite the OSHA reports, the Postal Service has refused every attempt by the APWU to discuss the hazards, and continues to willfully expose postal employees to risks associated with the operation of the DBCS. In addition to ignoring OSHA and NIOSH reports, the Postal Service ignores its own handbooks, manuals, and training programs, as well as the DBCS manufacturer's manuals for the safe and healthful operation of the equipment. The USPS insists that it is making progress in reducing injuries, and that the DBCS is not the cause of Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD). This information provided in 2009 by the APWU. What has changed since 2009? I am not aware of USPS making any changes in response to the findings of OSHA and NIOSH. The Ergonomic Risk Reduction Program rolled out with much fanfare several years ago, is no more. ERRP was a victim of the budget and not a priority for the USPS. Ergonomics is ignored in DBCS as management continues stacking the 1226F rolling rack system (pie-rack) higher than the manufacturer recommendation of two-high. They continue to work one Clerk to a machine for hours in violation of the DBCS Staffing agreed to in the Joint Contract Interpretation Manual. CS has Clerks loading ledges from BMCs increasing the potential risk to the lower back from torso bending and twisting, and the union is filing grievances.*

### **Safety and Injured on Duty**

Employees are being called in to meet with management to review Limited Duty Status Reports at Carol Stream, and at all offices as part of the new "CARE" program. Stewards are available to assist you in any meeting with management if you request one, as any meeting could result in discipline. The CARE program targets what they call "at risk employees" for quarterly CARE team meetings. "At risk employees" are those with two years or less of service, those observed working unsafely (deficiencies), and those who have had one or more accidents in the past two years (avoidable or not). Management says the CARE program will not be used to take action against employees but they have been known to issue discipline to employees for working unsafe if they have an accident. If you are identified to participate in the CARE program you can request a Steward be present at any meetings with management.

### **When Injured at Work...**

If you report an accident management should fill out an accident report and either a CA-1 for a Traumatic Injury, or a CA-2 for an Occupational Injury for a repetitive injury (it occurred over time). Supervisors do not like filling out this paperwork and are not there to assist you in filing your claim. They fill out their portion but do not assist you in filing the claim. If you have questions and or need assistance filing a claim the union will assist you but this is an extra service for union members only.

**Mimi, Vivian, Elaine, & Chris**  
These are our Stewards who assist Our members with OWCP claims. Vivian and Elaine are at CS and Mimi and Chris are at Palatine. Mimi and Vivian have been helping employees for a long time but will not be here forever so they are passing on their knowledge.

### **Big Win for MVS...**

*The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration denied a request from a private subcontractor seeking exemption from a federal safety rule. The request by the National Star Route Mail Contractors Association would have permitted private commercial drivers that haul mail for the USPS to operate trucks after more than 14 hours on duty following a break of less than 10 hours. The APWU opposed the request stating it would lead to more fatigued drivers and potentially an increase in commercial motor vehicle crashes. This was a victory for the union, the MVS craft, and for safety.*

**Methane at Michigan Metroplex**  
*Over the past 14 months five workers at the Michigan Metroplex P&DC have died. The facility, located in Pontiac, sits on the site of a toxic former car manufacturing plant. A gas-venting system was installed at the facility to stop the buildup of methane. According to a 2-22-16 alert issued by the USPS OIG, a methane detection system at that facility has not been working properly since March of 2015 and multiple attempts at repair have been unsuccessful. The Local Union is seeking information and answers. This is a new plant that replaced the old Detroit plant and resulted in major excessing at the time Palatine was excessing in 2010.*

**Organizing T-Shirts Order**  
We will be placing the first order for the red organizing shirts for new members this week so if you have not put your name on a list, do it now, or you will have to wait for the next order. We have to have names and shirt sizes to place the order for these shirts.

**Congratulations to Al Modi**  
Al is the NWIAL Treasurer and was recently elected State Treasurer at the State Convention.

**Next Union Meeting on 6-12-16.**

