

The Local Line

"A PPA Award Winning Publication"

The Official Voice of the
Northwest Illinois Area Local

Floor Edition

Update by: Jackie Engelhart

Review of June 2017 Excessing Impacts...

In June USPS issued Impacts across the country for Clerks and some Mailhandlers. The impact at Palatine was for 6 Clerks which has been met as 10 Clerks have left Palatine since the June Impact was issued. The Impact for Busse was for 5 Clerks and 2 have left since June. The Impact for Carol Stream was for 35 but there was a typo on the first page that said "4". We confirmed that it was 35 Clerks but Plant Manager Mike Kotula said he would not excess any regular Clerks but reduce the PSE hours to 25 -35 per week as it was the right thing to do. I have never heard any manager say they would reduce the PSE hours instead of excessing the regular Clerks even though the contract says they should reduce the number of PSE hours to minimize the FT impact. A month later I called Regional Coordinator Sharyn Stone to ask if the CS Impact had been cancelled and she got back to me saying "no". I called Mike and he gave me his explanation.

USPS Issues a Second Round in October...

In October of 2017 we received a second round of Impacts for the plants. The new Palatine Impact is for 11 Clerks, never mind that 10 have retired since June, they want to cut 11 more Clerks. The first Impact was for 6 and the second was for 11 which is 17, but if you count 10 that have left and add 11 more that is a total of 21 Clerks not 17. Senior Plant Manager Bob Prah said no we cannot subtract the extra 4 who have left from 11. Busse and Carol Stream Impacts are much worse as management issued an Impact for 60 Clerks at CS which is really 71 because they are counting for the attrition of 11. CS has 72 PSEs, more than Palatine with 52. We stated the obvious that CS must reduce the PSE hours as they plan on keeping 61 PSEs working 7516 hours per month which is the equivalent of 46 FT jobs! District Manager Mark Tovey said the contract states they are to reduce PSE hours to the extent possible" which means they play games with "to the extent possible".

Busse and AO Impacts

The first Impact for Busse was for 5 Clerks and the second one is for 18 but that includes the original 5 so the total is 18 Clerks. Busse is not a P&DC and works Priority packages on the APPS and Non-Machine-able Outsides on The High Speed Sorter. Busse lost 600 mail since Palatine got an APPS machine in May of this year. Busse lost mail which is worked by Mailhandlers so why excess 18 Clerks? Package mail volume is up so this makes no sense. Most Associate Offices are under-staffed and rely on PSEs. Many offices issued impacts for excessing after recently hiring PSEs or more PSEs than they need based on decreased volume. This is exactly the opposite of what the contract calls for, which is to reduce PSEs. The excessing and reduction in career jobs is bad for regulars and bad for PSEs who will wait longer to be converted to career as more jobs disappear. Excessing and reversions are based on what USPS calls "earned complement". Our contract calls for a fair days work for a fair days pay but they want more, more, more!

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Special points of interest:

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Next "Move Date" in February

We don't have an exact date but USPS agreed to postpone moving employees until February as they could have moved them already. The unions at the headquarters level asked for a delay which USPS agreed to because they did not have places for them to go. Before USPS can issue 60 day letters to employees for excessing they must meet at the Area level with Regional Coordinator Stone and Local Union representatives. Impacted (excess) employees must be given letters at least 60 days in advance of being moved. We have negotiated a contract that says "*Dislocation and inconvenience to full-time and part-time flexible employees shall be kept to the minimum consistent with the needs of the service*"... How do they accomplish that? "*In order to minimize the impact on employees in the regular workforce, the Employer agrees to separate, to the extent possible, PSEs working in the affected craft and installation prior to excessing any regular employee in that craft out of the installation.*" That is what the contract says and Mark Tovey made sure to emphasize "*to the extent possible*" part because they play games with that sentence.

Mailhandler Impacts?

During the Lakeland Area meeting for Palatine I asked the Area Complement Coordinator if there were any impacts for the MHs since management states they are due to volume decline and plants are staffed with Clerks and MHs. She said there are 400 impacted-MHs in this area, including CS, Chicago, and Milwaukee and that MH jobs have to be held for them. According to the Palatine Impact the facility is short 41 MHs, due to the addition of the APPS and the transfer of some Clerk work when the new High Speed Sorter replaced Low Costs # 2 and #3.

Wulf Strikes Fear at Palatine

Elizabeth Wulf is the A/Plant Manager at Palatine for now. I can honestly say I expected the worst and I think most will agree that is exactly what we are seeing. She closed Leave Control with no discussion with the unions and no consideration for the employees. At our Labor-Management meeting we took issue with her action and asked for the new procedure. She said she would provide it by 10-20-17 but we have yet to see it. Close it down, figure it out later, and inform the employees later. Next she changed starting times for employees with no discussion with the Union in violation of our LMOU Item 22, and gave the least possible notice to the employees. The Union found out when some of the Stewards got their letters. Its funny but Ms. Wulf made a little speech at the end of our Labor-Management meeting saying she wanted to get along with us. Actions speak louder than words and her actions show a total lack of respect for the union and craft employees we represent. I'm sure the Mailhandler Union can agree. We have had hard-nosed people running Palatine before such as Ron Woodall but I believe we've not seen anyone like Ms. Wulf. She is bringing in long-term injured employees to prep Flat mail because the facility is short MHs. She would be putting them in the Clerk craft if she could but she can't because of the excessing. She states she has a responsibility to accommodate injured on duty employees but the real reason for this is to cut Palatine overtime. I have heard somethings she has allegedly told supervisors which are not good and I do believe it. Quintin Mayberry worked hard to improve Palatine P&DC and he did not go out of his way to make things worse for the employees. Happy days are here again!!!

Toxic Work Place Park Ridge

Recently Management conducted a workplace climate survey at the Park Ridge Post Office, not because of complaints by the unions, but because of a postal inspector who was a customer at this office. This has been a bad office since Postmaster Ruby Brooks retired because she could not take the stress of working for her boss. Elizabeth Wulf replaced her with Calamidy Winbush and the work place environment has gone down ever since culminating in the work place climate survey which I have read and which I call horrendous. Clerk and Carriers were interviewed and most said the environment was bad, some used the word "toxic" but many said the postmaster should be removed. Park Ridge violates the contract by using Supervisors, Carriers, and the Custodian (a former Clerk) to do Clerk work, with the Custodian working the window! They have to borrow PSEs from other offices, and a FT Clerk just took a PTF job to get out of there. Another regular may do the same. You cannot get worse than that. Glenview and Northbrook are other offices that have gone down under the MPOO. I get calls from Des Plaines, which is not part of our Local, from employees as that office is supposedly messed up. Sometimes being hard-nosed does not result in the office improving. When you prefer mean to good, violate the contract, and degrade the work environment for craft employees you could end up with a dysfunctional and toxic office.

Why be a Retiree Member?

NWIAL Retiree Chapter President Bob LaFoe reminds us that it only costs \$36.00 to remain a member. We have thousands of members nationwide who can be mobilized when politicians propose a budget that will reduce our retirements such as the scary Trump budget.

