

Postal Worker ***West***

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Affiliated with the Postal Press Association

ISSUED BY
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Western Area shows no sign of stopping

Pacific Area Cancels Most Involuntary Reassignments Sparing 740 plus workers

SAN DIEGO CA- Area postal officials have issued the Region written and verbal notice canceling most of the “excessing” impacts scheduled for implementation in California in April and July of this year.

Still targeted at press time are the Oakland installation, Redding P&DC and North Bay PDC. Oakland is a 24 hr. Wall impact while Redding and North Bay are Area Mail Processing (AMP) impacts. Spared for now is Los Angeles, Fresno, Sacramento, San Diego, Industry, Santa Ana, Moreno Valley, San Jose and San Francisco. However Hawaii impacts are still on the radar.

Speculation swirled as to what caused management to change direction and cancel the impacts. “For now, the important thing is that hundreds of postal workers will not have their home and work life disrupted anymore than the tour realignments already have,” said Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez cautiously. Many areas of the country face major disruptions by summer.

WESTERN AREA STILL ON TRACK

“There is as of yet, no “moratorium” on the closure and consolidation of plants nationwide,” he warned. The Western Area is proceeding with their planned impacts in Bend, Pendleton and Eugene Oregon. Also on target is Pocatello Idaho and offices all over the western states including Colorado, Montana, Arizona, Washington and New Mexico. What may be slowing them down is the 50 mile radius restriction. “But slow does not equate to stopped,” quipped Gonzalez. “Improper Article 7 details should be grieved”, he added.

UP THE WALL TO WALL

Most of the current excessing impacts are related to the 24 hour Clock which in 2008 was originally intended to facilitate structured managed mail. Combined with “Staffing Optimization” tools and Automated Workload Planning Systems, such as, Mail Processing Variance (MPV) models the 24 hr. clock also served to reduce staff. continued on page 3



The San Jose Contract Action Team hosted a "Sweet On The Union Day" to help mobilize members in the union's contract campaign. See page 5 for more on CAT.

ADDED DELIVERY TIME AT NO EXTRA CHARGE??

Postal management is great at coming up with positive sounding jingles that camouflage what they are really up to.

The delay of the mails, by their service standard changes, is being called “added delivery time.” By use of such a term, the American public is duped into believing management is improving service.

Such lingo goes hand in hand with management's Network Rationalization timeline to finalize consolidation of Phase 2 targeted consolidations by October 1, 2015.

While the major mailers are being acclimated to RIBBS (Rapid Information Bulletin Board) and EWS (Early Warning System) to track their mail, the majority of the American public that uses USPS (estimated by critics at more than 118 million) have to deal with the 2-5 day delays in what otherwise would have been overnight delivery service.

Management is experimenting with so called “Suburban Box and Urban Box” pilots. Metro Post (same day delivery) and “Early Bird” delivery are being tested as well. The reality is service standard changes have actually slowed the mail down in many parts of the country.

California To Urge Congress to Support Postal Worker Cause

SACRAMENTO CA– Following personal visits by Cal State Union Officers, the State Legislature is set to urge the US Congress to take action to restore service standards and put a moratorium on shutting down mail sorting centers.

The legislators also will call on Congress to oppose any postal reform legislation that fails to continue the mandate for 6-day delivery. These elected leaders realize that a robust USPS is essential to providing prompt and timely delivery of all mail even online purchases.

Important to these state political leaders is the protection of the VOTE BY MAIL process which is also essential to our democracy.

Pocatello Mayor Holds Town Hall

POCATELLO, ID– Mayor Brian Blad's Town Hall meeting is on the Postal Service's closure of Pocatello's mail processing center.

Mayor Blad made it clear their community depends on prompt delivery of the mail. The community expressed their concerns over the economic impact the plant closing will have on rural Idaho. Participants realize that closure will result in delayed mail services.

Scheduling conflicts did not permit the Coordinator to attend but the Union was adequately represented by Local President and AMP Organizer B.C. Morris. Coordinator Gonzalez also sent the Mayor written information on the negative effects of the closure.

Baltimore Supports Our Staples Fight

BALTIMORE, MD– City Council members expressed their support of the Union's effort to protect living wage jobs and higher standards of customer service by adopting a resolution. The civic leaders expressed their opposition to efforts to privatize postal operations and asked citizens of the city to consider this when and if they decide to patronize Staples.



Coordinator Omar Gonzalez and Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake in Washington D.C.

More and more, city and state chambers are adopting the cause of postal workers to fight against privatization.

AND THE SURVEY SAYS- Area retail officials are set to have window clerks (SSAs) take the POS Customer Service surveys which is not condoned by the Union.

Q2 of the survey asks– Is the most important thing for customers, the Sales Associate's: "positive" attitude, courteous treatment, work efficiency or knowledge of postal procedures and services? Q 4 asks the patron how long was his/her wait was.

A recent OIG report cited the union contract as one reason for the rudeness of window clerks which was rejected by Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez. The Coordinator, suspicious of the Area's intent in having SSAs take the survey being given to customers, contacted DC. HQ postal officials claimed **NO SSA IS REQUIRED** to take the survey they're only told to identify a section on the customer receipt.



CALIFORNIA'S DELEGATION LOBBYING CONGRESS (L-R) Larry DeNayer Redding Local, Rich Cantu Southwest Coastal Area Local, Sonia Canchola Cal Area Local, Congressman Lieu (D-CA), Cal State President Mike Evans and Ed Peralta San Jose Area Local and San Fernando Valley Local's Tim Maynard (not pictured).



REGIONAL OFFICE LEASE SET TO EXPIRE

Burlingame CA– The 5 year lease on the Regional and NBA Offices expires at the

end of October 2015. In addition to the lease expiration, Equity Office Management (Landlord) advised the property was being acquired by Hudson Pacific Properties. An estoppel letter has been issued.

Unlike other Regional Offices (i.e., Houston TX, Sicklerville NJ, Rockville Centre NY) the Burlingame CA and Chicago, IL offices are leased. With an increase in rent and the sale of the property the Regional and NBA offices will be seeking different accommodations. "Our effort will focus on being more economical in our relocation," said the Regional Coordinator

WHO'S EYEBALLY YOU?- Alarming reports are surfacing about managers installing webcams in work areas.

The revelation follows a news report of odd surveillance activities at a Denver Post Office. In some installations, when challenged, the managers are claiming the web cams are for monitoring of the mail.

"Any employee who discovers a webcam on the work floor poised towards workers should report it to a Shop Steward for possible violations of Section 273.172(b) of the Administrative Support Manual," advised Regional Coordinator Gonzalez.





99 Bottles of Sneer on the Wall

Information reveals management is procuring bottled water from Staples for use at various offices.

The Union continues to oppose management's arrangement with Staples which exposes 1,200 post offices near Staples to closure, undermining the community and jobs. Management is scornfully procuring stuff from Staples like the bottled water.

USPS cancelled their "Preferred Provider" retail expansion plan with Staples switching to "Approved Shipper" expanding their privatization scheme. The union continues to fight and the STAPLES BOYCOTT is still in full swing.

When the announcement was made that Staples was buying their main competitor Office Depot, the Union took action toward blocking the acquisition.



24 Hr. Clock continued from page 1

The 24 hr. clock Wall to Wall process is now being used to implement the relaxed service standard changes that allows 34% of the mail to be deliberately delayed and postal plants to be consolidated.

Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez, in several presentations to locals, warned that when reviewing local management's MPV Targets and Full Time Equivalent Reduction plans, to pay special attention to Labor District Code (LDC) target goals.

To begin with, MPV achievement plans can not be 100% since that will violate contract Article 34 Work and/or Time Standards and the principle of a fair day's work for a fair day's pay.

Locals will have to challenge the LDC target as to what such a percentage is based on. Mgt. operating plans use data from the MPV target hours to determine "earned hours" vs "actual hours." They take actual hours and subtract target hours then divide hours to come up FT equivalent jobs to eliminate. "Bottom line is we can not just stand by. We have to challenge their calculations especially if they impose a work standard," said Omar.

Americans Prefer Their Bills In the Mailbox

A recent report by the OIG reveals that 91% of utility company customers prefer to receive their bills in the mail.



The research, done in conjunction with InfoTrends, shows that physical mail is still important and will continue to be important in the near future. The so called "transactional mail" translated into more than \$18 billion according to a report issued in May 2014.

While Americans prefer getting their bills in the mail, only 37% pay their bills via US Mail. Either way, the motivating factor behind companies sending bills in the mail is of course- "*Customer Satisfaction.*" In a report issued in December 2014, of the 24 billion bills and statements received by American homes, almost 80% were delivered by USPS.

"It goes to show you just how important and relevant the US Mail is to the average American. Recently, I had a problem with my cable company. My server was not functioning. When I called the cable company rep., she asked me to refer to my electronic bill for info which I promptly quipped I couldn't- 'I don't have service.' So I know I am one of those 91 per-centers and for that matter one of the 37% too," said Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez. ***Where do you fit in?***



The Western Region Wishes You

A Blessed Easter



CONTRACT MATTERS

WHEN THE SUN SETS ON OUR CONTRACT

Engaged postal workers realize our national agreement, aka as the contract, expires at midnight May 20th.

But many members may not realize critical protections “end” at the midnight hour on May 20, 2015.

Such protections “sunset” (i.e. end) at the stroke of midnight unless the parties reach agreement on them, or agree to freeze the clock.

Two such critical protections are:

LAY OFF– Thousands of postal workers hired on or after **November 20, 2010** and those who have not acquired the protections against lay-off provided in Article 6 of the contract can have their protections against lay-offs **terminated** at midnight May 20th.

It is employees who were employed in the regular workforce as of September 15, 1978 that are protected hence forth against any involuntary layoff or force reduction.

Employees hired after Sept. 15, 1978 have to earn lay off protection by working at least 20 pay periods out of 26 pay periods for six continuous years. Thousands of recently converted former PSEs are also exposed to lay-off.

EXCESSING– currently involuntary excessing outside a postal installation is limited to 40 miles from the losing installation, or 50 miles if reassignment within forty is not feasible.

If this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) expires the provisions of Article 12 (unless modified) will apply which references a **radius exceeding 50 miles** and involuntary reassignments within **100 miles** of the losing installation or **more distant** installations.

The restriction of a 50 miles radius has served postal workers relatively well during the life of the current contract in light of management’s constant staffing mess.



GIVING AWAY OUR WORK

Our management gives billions of dollars worth of our work to private companies. Big private contracts are granted to companies to do Maintenance and Motor Vehicle Craft work, as well as, other services.

Ironically two major postal competitors (FedEx and UPS) are also two of UPSP’s largest contractors. “To add insult, we deliver a good percentage of their packages in the so called last mile,” said Coordinator Omar Gonzalez.

FedEx was paid more than \$1 billion to transport mail last year while Salmon & Sons, Inc. got more than \$226 million to haul mail. Sub-contracting undermines postal worker job security. The MVS craft is constantly targeted for elimination.

“I advocate that management should be made to comply fully with the Competition In Contracting Act and the Truth in Negotiations Act,” said Omar. Article 32 of the Contract covers subcontracting.



How Negotiations Normally Work

Negotiating with a \$65 billion quasi-government enterprise can’t be easy but federal laws govern the process and how the parties (Union and management) go about resolving their differences if a negotiated contract is NOT reached at midnight May 20th.

- ◆ The parties set “ground rules” on how negotiations will be conducted as well as how many days a week the parties will conduct talks. These rules also identify who can bind the parties if agreements are reached on submitted proposals.
- ◆ Proposals can either be written as “draft” contract verbiage, usually shunned in negotiations, or via “conceptual proposals” that identify issues that can have solutions to general problems posed by either side.
- ◆ Under federal labor law, management is obligated to negotiate over wages, working conditions and terms of employment.
- ◆ At midnight May 20th if no agreement is reached, the parties can “freeze” the clock and continue talks. A “Tentative Agreement” requires a Vote of the Rank & File Advisory Committee (who cannot be on the Natl. union payroll) for the Tentative Agreement to be sent out for member ratification. Members vote YES or No!
- ◆ If no agreement is reached there is a cooling off period which may lead to the involvement of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service if both sides agree to use the agency.
- ◆ If an impasse can’t be broken the issues go to what is called “Interest arbitration” and the impasse is decided by a 3 member arbitration tribunal with a neutral arbitrator rendering a decision.

CONTRACT ACTION TEAMS

The Union has embarked on an ambitious effort to establish local CATs (Contract Action Teams) to help build communication networks, keep our members informed and mobilize members to action on the workroom floor and in our communities.

A national level CAT has been established but for the most part the responsibility for mobilizing our members is at the local and state union level.

In the Western Region, after the initial session in San Diego, the locals who could not participate received CAT training from the Regional Coordinator. Seattle, Portland, Denver, Oakland, Phoenix and Albuquerque Locals volunteered their Union Halls. "It is really great how these Locals got into the campaign and are committed to engage their membership and the public in our effort to get a decent contract and improve postal services,"



The Support Services Director joins the Five Regional Coordinators at the start of contract negotiation talks in Washington DC.



San Jose members show unity on National Sticker Day



Local/State activists and CATs participate in brainstorming on how to engage their members throughout the Western Re-



ON THE LEGISLATIVE FRONT

WASHINGTON DC:

PMG Brennan has expressed a need to secure comprehensive postal legislation. Unlike her predecessor, Brennan seeks the cooperation of unions, mailers and other stakeholders. According to the *Federal Times* one issue most can agree on is the need for elimination of the prefunding mandate that costs billions.

Local Union Presidents took the lead in visiting their Congressional representatives to lobby for support on issues critical to postal workers.

Plant Consolidations, post office closures, deliberate delay of the mails were foremost on the agenda as these union activists hit the halls of congress,

"It is outstanding that our local leaders are lobbying Congress. We should have all been doing it," said Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez.

BANKING ON THE P O

The coalition pushing for postal banking may have an uphill battle with bankers but history is in our favor on the effort to provide postal financial service to the people of America.

The Post Office offered a savings system from 1911 to 1967 established by Congress.

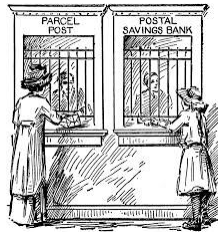
Deposits were limited but when the banks failed during the depression the Postal Saving System was viewed to be a much safer place to save money.

Despite a well reasoned paper issued by the Office of Inspector General favoring a postal Non-Bank Financial Service, former PMG Donahoe voiced opposition to the effort. So far PMG Brennan has not publicly come out on postal banking one way or another.

Under Served Exposed To Sharks

The OIG report revealed that 8% of American households have no bank services and 20% are under banked. Meaning that many families in America have no checking or savings accounts. This has given rise to predatory Pay Day Loan companies. Some of them recently have come under fire for imposing a 1000% interest rate on loans.

"The US Postal Service is set up for the task of providing non bank financial services even according to the OIG report," says Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez. The OIG report outlined the four basic



criteria for offering "new" products:

- It fulfills the product needs that are not market met.
- The product is consistent with the Postal Service's competencies and assets.
- The product would cover its costs at full maturity.
- The product fulfills an important purpose.

59% of US Post Offices are in zip codes with one bank or no bank branch. 44% of Americans favor the Postal Service offering basic financial services like check cashing, small loans and paying bills.

At one time the banks and financial institutions opposed the Postal Savings System of yesteryear but soon realized the services complemented their banking system. Today, the banks oppose Postal banking under the pretext that a failing business could not provide viable financial services. "Of course USPS is not a failing business. It may be mismanaged but, it makes a profit," says Coordinator Gonzalez.

"Americans trust the USPS. We must all support the effort to expand services at our nation's post offices -*not close them!*", said Omar.



WHO IS ON OUR SIDE?

Contract Action Teams are mobilizing to secure the support of the public and of the various service organizations within our community as we fight for our contract and to improve service. Such organizations have joined our cause. Here are highlights on some:



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Founded in 1950 the National Council of Churches from 37 different communions works together on a wide range of ministries and cooperate in many joint programs of advocacy and service. The NCC also promotes harmonious relations among Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, traditional Native American religion and many other faiths. The NCC believes that genuine unity demands inclusivity and a respect for diversity.

NATIONAL CONSUMERS LEAGUE



Founded in 1899 the NCL has a basic founding principle that the working conditions they accept for their fellow citizens should be reflected in their purchases, and that consumers should demand safety and reliability from the goods and services they buy. The League has a mission to protect and promote social and economic justice for consumers and workers in the United States and abroad.

US ACTION



Founded in 1999 US Action organizes for power to guarantee all Americans the self evident rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. They also organize for democracy, promote open debate, diversity and respect for individual rights because everyone can contribute to the common good. US Action further organizes for change and to bring an end to an unjust status quo and allow all people to live their lives in peace.

Please support the organizations that support us! If you or your family belong to an organization willing to help Save the Peoples' Post Office please contact your local Contract Action Team Coordinator. [The organizations above are part of the 64 (and growing) Grand Alliance to Save Our Postal Service formed by mandate of our National Convention.]