

Communities and Postal Workers United (CPWU)

Spring, 2016 -- *No Closures! No Cuts! No Delay of the Mail!* - www.cpwunited.com

PLANT CLOSURES "DEFERRED"

In response to pressure from the communities and postal workers of Tucson, which included a city-sponsored residential and business survey about delay of mail, Arizona Rep. Martha McSally organized 33 other members of Congress, in a March 4th letter, to demand that the US Postal Service revisit the scheduled April, 2016 renewal of mail plant "consolidations."

USPS' own rules require an Area Mail Processing study to determine if a consolidation (closure) is warranted. The AMP studies completed at the beginning of the "Network Rationalization" are three years old and much has changed during that time, including the increased use of lower-paid postal workers (Postal Support Employees and Mail Handler Assistants) as well as major revenue gains from increased parcel volume. The Congressional letter referenced the Appropriations Act of 2016 (signed into law on December 18th) which encourages new AMP studies prior to continuing phase II of consolidations.

On March 18th, McSally received a letter from Deputy Postmaster General Stroman stating that "consolidation activities remain in a deferred status. Prior to resumption of these activities, the Postal Service will update and review the Area Mail Processing feasibility studies using the most recent available data..."

The American Postal Workers Union has also demanded that the USPS hold new community hearings (the last were held in the fall of 2013), to provide the USPS with new information about current delay of mail, plus possible further impacts on residential and business customers and vote-by-mail. New community hearings will allow the 50 towns & cities where mail plants are threatened to agitate, educate and mobilize support to save our postal service.

GRAND ALLIANCE FIELD HEARINGS

Five "field hearings", in cities across the country, have been organized by A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service (agrandalliance.org), a coalition of over 80 national and many local union, civil rights, senior, veteran, rural, consumer, and faith-based organizations.

A Grand Alliance came together to take a stand against the unprecedented corporate assaults on our public postal service. The hearings are an opportunity to examine postal issues important to the public, including delivery delays, hours and staffing at retail windows, and protection of six-day and door-to-door delivery. The hearings also explore how the USPS can adapt to thrive in the digital age, including offering financial services (postal banking) and access to high-speed internet.



STOP STAPLES activists "ruined Staples' day" on March 15, protesting in front of the NASDAQ building in Times Square, while Staples executives gathered to ring the stock market's opening bell. The same crew of nine postal retirees logged their 500th Staples protest on March 29th. Postal unions and allies are boycotting Staples Office Supply stores until they close their knock-off post offices, staffed by low-wage, high-turnover, non-union, non-postal employees (photo APWU News)

VOTE-BY-MAIL ENDANGERED

The first Grand Alliance field hearing, in Baltimore on March 23, brought forward concerns about vote-by-mail delay. TrueBallot — a private elections company that runs labor union, tribal, homeowner, and professional association elections — testified that plant consolidations and reduced delivery standards had made some elections impossible in the two-week window commonly used for sending and receiving ballots.

At about the same time, the USPS Office of the Inspector General released a "management advisory" estimating that the USPS could lose hundreds of millions of dollars in political mailing revenue this election year because customers who typically send out large batches of political mailings have expressed concerns about "mail delays and service quality." A

whopping 75% of the mail service providers voiced concerns about USPS operations. A USPS official conceded to the OIG that concerns over missed delivery standards "have led many mailers to shift from mail to other forms of advertising."

MORE HEARINGS COMING

A Grand Alliance has scheduled field hearings in San Jose, California (April 21), New York City (May 12), Cleveland, Ohio (June 28), and Greensboro, North Carolina (June 29). For those cities not on the list, we suggest you organize your own (see "Fighting Consolidation" toolkit on organizing a Town Hall, box on this page).

FIGHTING CONSOLIDATIONS

The American Postal Workers Union is encouraging its members, other postal workers, local unions, businesses, veterans, seniors, rural communities, elected officials and all who depend on the timely delivery of the US mail to organize pressure on local, district and national postal officials ...see apwu.org/sites/apwu/files/resource-files/OrganizersToolkit-Consolidation.pdf

CALIFORNIA LETTER CARRIERS ORGANIZE FROM THE GROUND UP

(excerpted from The Postal Record, April 2016)

Last fall, California letter carriers worked from the ground up to help convince the state legislature to pass a resolution supporting six-day delivery and door-to-door delivery.

Before approaching lawmakers in the state capital, carriers from union branches throughout the most populous state in the country went to their local government officials to push for similar resolutions. Soon, 60 cities and counties, large and small, had adopted resolutions calling for preserving door delivery six days a week.

The local-level strategy gave carriers a platform, since many presented before city council meetings attended by concerned local citizens. "It allowed us to speak in front of many people," said National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) State President John Beaumont. "People start asking all sorts of questions, and pretty soon you have a groundswell of support."

The effort was especially useful for spreading the word to the public about efforts by USPS to replace door delivery with cluster-box delivery. "That's the one thing people don't seem to know very much about," Beaumont said. "The local resolutions were our base," he said, "and we took that to Sacramento." The California State Association teamed with local American Postal Workers Union (APWU) members to lobby for a state resolution to oppose any postal reform legislation that does not continue the mandate for six-day delivery service, to protect door-to-door delivery as it currently exists, to restore USPS service standards in effect as of July 1, 2012, and to place a moratorium on planned shutdowns of mail sorting centers.

The resolution also urged California's secretary of state to publicly oppose changes in the U.S. Postal Service that negatively affect the rights of California voters who vote by an absentee ballot.

The measure was introduced last May and adopted by both houses of the legislature in September. It was then sent to all members of Congress and the postmaster general.

POSTAL SERVICE LOSES MONEY ON FACILITY CLOSURES

(excerpted from article in Government Executive, Feb. 26, 2016)

The U.S. Postal Service has long sold its decision to reduce the size of its physical footprint as a necessary evil, a painful cost-cutting measure required to adapt to the changing landscape of mail delivery.

One problem: It did not cut costs.

The second phase of the Postal Service's consolidation plan actually lost money in 2015, according to a report USPS filed to its regulatory body and first reported by *Dead Tree Edition*. The agency suspended its plan to shutter 82 mail-processing facilities in May, which officials said has prevented the Postal Service from reaping the full benefit of the cuts.

In fiscal 2015, USPS spent \$130 million on increased transportation costs as a result of the closures the agency did make. It reported a net savings in labor and parts of \$64 million -- meaning the Postal Service actually lost \$66 million last year due to the consolidation plan.

ASK YOUR REPRESENTATIVE:

Co-sponsor HR 784 & H.Res 54 for recovery of delivery standards, H.Res. 28, which supports retaining door delivery for businesses and residents, and H.Res. 12 which backs 6-day delivery.



United Students Against Sweatshops staged a National Day of Action against Staples on March 24 (photo from Boston, USAS)

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CANADIAN POSTAL WORKERS IMAGINE GREEN, SUSTAINABLE POST

(excerpted from The Hill, by Rona Fried, March 23, 2016)

Imagine... a public postal service that "delivers the sustainable infrastructure of the next economy" by delivering food from farmers straight to homes, finances green energy, checks in on seniors and provides coast-to-coast charging stations for electric cars. "Our post office can deliver" the "equitable, climate-friendly economy." The USPS and its vehicles would be powered by renewable energy. It could sign people up for community-owned wind and solar projects across the country, and make banking much more affordable for people in rural areas, in addition to the profitable service it currently provides delivering packages.

While all this certainly could apply to the USPS, these proposals are from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, which faces similar pressures...

But as Martin Lukacs writes in *The Guardian* about Canada Post:

In many places, especially rurally, the post office already serves as a community hub; but now it could also help power a new economy. This is exactly the kind of transformative public services we need in an age of overlapping crises — fostering more caring communities and sustainable economic development, while helping bring down carbon emissions.

That this sounds faintly utopian is not a reflection of its lack of practicality. It is a reflection of how far to the right the political spectrum has shifted. In the last several decades we have been fed a steady diet of market fundamentalism: that public services are inefficient; the private sector knows best; and cuts, deregulation, and privatization will improve our lives.

In France and Australia, the post office delivers food directly from farmers; in Norway, postal service vehicles are electric; in Japan, it provides help for elders; and in the U.K., France, New Zealand, Brazil and Italy, it offers basic banking services.

Canadian postal workers' visionary plan is also what the U.S. needs today: respect for cherished public institutions, more community and renewable energy that cleans our air and water and keeps us healthy.