



The Hi-Lites



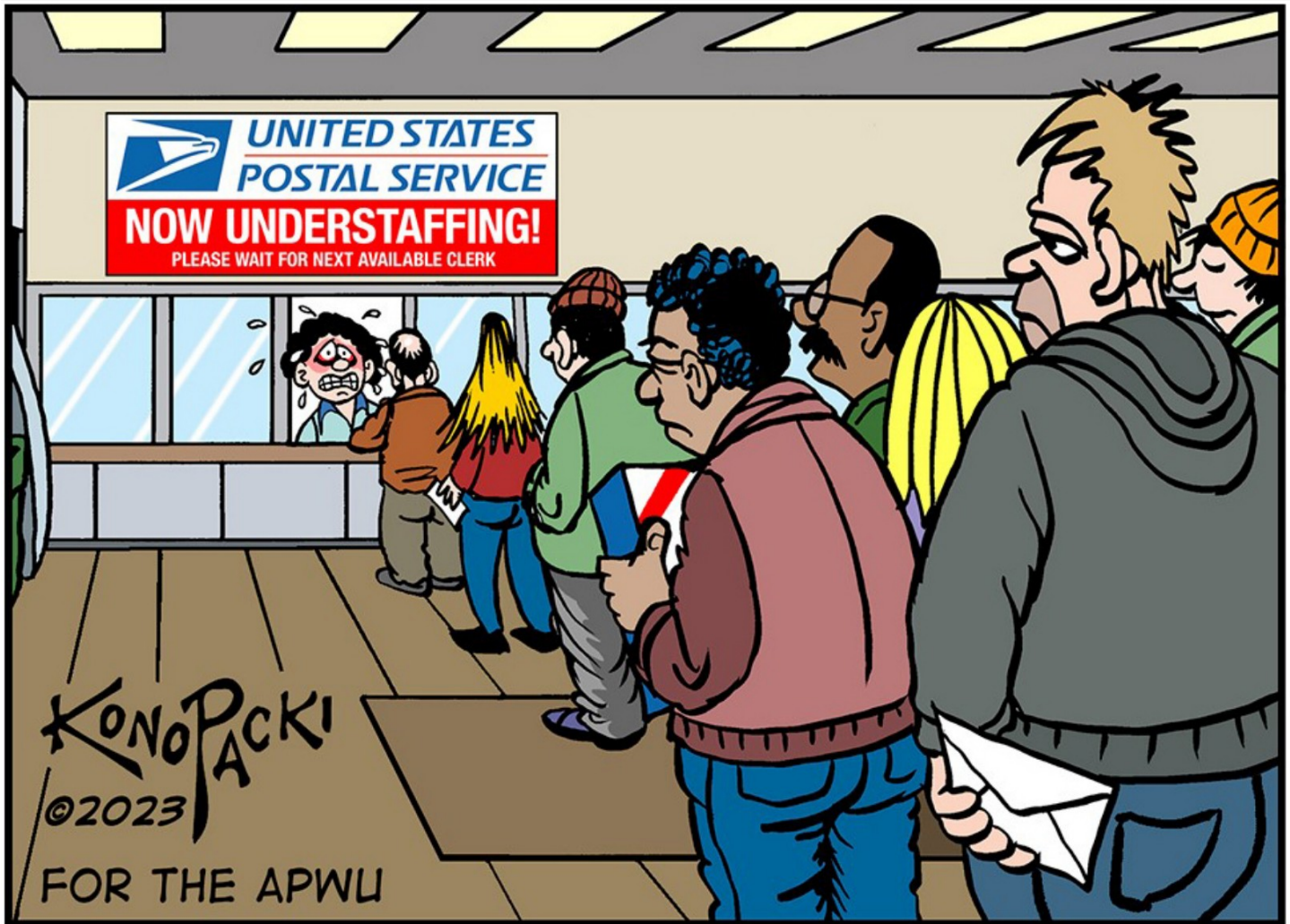
The official publication of Milwaukee, WI Area Local APWU, AFL-CIO
(Proud Postal Press Association National Awards Winner)

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MARCH 2024

VOLUME 46 ISSUE 2

Understaffed & Misunderstood



Milwaukee Wisconsin Area Local

Big Bend Brookfield Burlington Butler Cedarburg Cudahy Darien
Delafield Delavan East Troy Elkhorn Elm Grove Franklin Fredonia
Germantown Grafton Greendale Hales Corners Hartford Hartland
Jackson Kewaskum Lomira Milwaukee Menomonee Falls Mequon-Thiensville
Muskego Mukwonago New Berlin Oak Creek Oconomowoc Oakfield
Okauchee Pewaukee Plymouth Port Washington Salem Slinger S. Milwaukee
Sussex Wales Walworth Waterford Watertown Waukesha Whitewater



**Glenn Griggs
President**

Hello all, In case you haven't heard there is/was a rumor going around about the possibility of relocating the Milwaukee plant out to Sturtevant sometime in the near future. I reached out to the current acting plant manager, and he has told me that he hasn't heard anything about a plant opening up in Sturtevant.

Yet, we all know sometimes management tries to keep the union out of the loop, because they know they will face strong resistance once we become aware of things that will delay mail to the public, or disrupt the livelihood of our members. We will continue to monitor this situation and if we hear anything different we will update the membership at that time.

Speaking of trying to keep the union out the loop...Management allegedly changed the name of the Milwaukee, Wisconsin Annex (MWA) to the Oak Creek P&DC.

The reason I say allegedly is because the union was not officially notified of this change or the exact date of this change. We are waiting on our request for information to get fulfilled to see how management plans to implement this so-called name change. During a brief discussion with management on another issue,

Rumor Mill Self Destruction

"This current Postmaster General is currently trying to destroy the postal service"

they stated that this change would only affect managerial positions. A large part of this could be true, due to the RIFS we have heard from supervisors working out at the MWA.

RIF means the postal service at some point will have a reduction in force for managerial positions. Unlike bargaining unit positions, non-bargaining unit positions, like supervisors, are given letters and are told to find a supervisor job somewhere or possibility be terminated from the postal service. Fortunately, for us we have a no layoff clause which protects us as career employees from being involuntary laid off.

For The Life Of Me

I never understood why anybody would want to volunteer to be a supervisor for an organization that gives you basically no protection when something like this happens, meaning a (RIF). Keep in mind these RIFS were potentially avoidable. Some of you supervisors played a factor in your RIFS. For example, working employees outside their craft where they are not being given credit for the work they should be performing. Supervisors doing the work instead of calling overtime, writing employees up trying to remove them because you may have a personal issue with them, violating our contract, because you think you could just say you were " following orders".

All these are just some of the causes that may play a factor in supervisors getting a RIF. The less employees you have, the less supervisors are needed. In addition to that, this current 10- year "delayed" mail plan, this postmaster has the postal service on...is the ultimate reason.

This current Postmaster General is currently trying to destroy the postal service and unfortunately a lot of managers around the country are helping him. I believe the purpose of the changes where he is separating installations and shutting some down is not making the mail more efficient. It is actually delaying the mail because its being double handled.

I personally sent a letter a few weeks ago from the plant to an address out in Brookfield. Same state...different zip code. It took almost 5 days for that letter to arrive. This would normally arrive the next day or the day after at the latest. I believe the purpose of his restructuring plan is for the public to start having an unfavorable opinion of the postal service.

One way to change the public's opinion about the postal service is to not provide service. If you worked at a station I'm sure you seen or heard stations being closed because there is no one to work the window.

If you work in a plant, I'm sure you are wondering why management is

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not moving all the mail we see just sitting there in timely fashion. I'm sure if you know a letter carrier then you probably heard a story or two about customers being rude to them because their check, medication or package they were waiting on hasn't arrived yet. See, all these complaints or factors would leave the door open for privatization. See, right now this postmaster knows the public opinion on the postal service is around 90% of people having a favorable opinion of the postal service. In order to change the narrative he needs that opinion number to decline significantly in order to convince the public the only way to save the postal service is to privatize the service. If that happens there would be massive jobs lost for the bargaining unit. Possible having our contract voided by congress, and changes for those of us that chose to stay that would not be safe or tolerable in a workforce with union protection.

So, I asked my union brothers and sisters. What are you doing or willing to do to prepare for a storm that will be headed our way at some point? The storm that is going to come will not be avoidable. We will need all hands and resources on deck in order to just minimize what we have coming our way. The time to engage is now. Here are some of the things we all must do.

Sign up new members!!! We will need the resources here nationally and locally to continue to fight these changes. Continue to write statements on contractual violations!!! Come to meetings held by our union to keep up to date on what is going on!!! Read your newsletter!!! Make calls when asked to your political leaders for support!!!

Keep the lines of communication open with the union, and we will do the same with you" our members. There will be more updates coming during the year concerning the storm that is headed our way. We will keep you posted.

House Cleaning Issues

The no lunch case for the clerks and maintenance employees - Despite the rumors you may have heard or the service talks that were given by several supervisors our no lunch grievances have not been settled as of yet. I believe we are close to some form of a resolution though. I am still optimistic about a positive outcome. So, I ask you all for a little more patience. I am just as frustrated as you all are when it comes to this issue. Once again the union has not been officially notified about the rumor of the no lunch being restored. However, if this rumor is true, our position is that it should be restored for all of our union brothers and sisters.

Although if the no lunches are restored, I believe it's only a gimmick. It would be short lived, because I think management knows they violated the past practice of our previous no lunch grievances, and are only trying to restore the no lunches in order to stop the clock on the current grievances we have waiting to be resolved. I personally think they are going to try to take it away again which will probably create another grievance in the future. I have come to realize that anything employees like, management finds a reason to be against it. Then they wonder why this place is the way it is. Hopefully soon I will have a final resolution to the no lunch grievances.

FYI in case you get your HI-LITES a little later than normal, we are still in the process of getting a new printing company for our news letter. The printing company that we previously had, just up and shut down their business without giving us any advance noticed. So, we apologize in advance if your HI-LITES are received later than normal. We are working quickly to get another union made printing company which we should have within the next week or so at the latest.

Thanks again for all you do, and thanks for being such dedicated union members!!!

Everyone in America liked the post office a lot
But a Grinch named Louis DeJoy did not!
 Since getting the job, he's had only one plan
 Sabotage the post office wherever he can
 So, call your Senators and demand that they act
 The post office must be saved & DeJoy must be sacked
 Come on 2024, we must keep up the fight.
 - Robert Reich



Chris Czubakowski
Local Business Agent

COLA

In accordance with the 2021-2024 Collective Bargaining Agreement, career employees represented by the APWU will receive a \$0.17 per hour cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), effective March 9, 2024.

The increase is the result of a rise in the Consumer Price Index (CPI-W), and will appear in paychecks dated March 29, 2024 (Pay Period 07-2024). The COLA for full-time employees in each step and grade will amount to \$354.00 annually, and the hourly rates for part-time employees will be adjusted accordingly.

COLAs are separate and in addition to general wage increases. This is the fifth cost-of-living increase under the 2021 contract.

The first increase, effective in February 2022, amounted to \$0.63 per hour or \$1,310.00 annually. The second, effective in August 2022 was \$1.18 per hour or \$2,455.00 annually. The third, effective in March 2023, was \$0.10 per hour, or \$208.00 annually. The fourth, effective August 26, 2023, was 0.48 per hour, or \$998.00 annually.

The total cumulative COLAs received so far during the 2021-2024

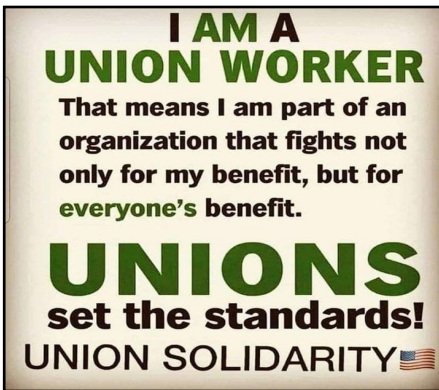
5th COLA Announcement

“COLAs are separate and in addition to general wage increases.”

National Agreement is \$2.56 per hour, or \$5,325.00 annually.

Though Postal Support Employees (PSEs) do not receive cost-of-living increases, they have received several additional increases beyond the general wage increases for all employees in the APWU bargaining unit under the 2021 contract. However, when PSEs convert to career, the COLA increases are also included in their base wages going forward.

Rising inflation underscores the importance of our negotiated Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLAs) within our union contract, made possible by the strength of our membership. COLAs are our best protection against inflation.



Postal Workers are some of the few U.S. workers who receive COLA increases. Even in the postal world, we are the only postal union that has maintained full COLA in our union contract.

Maintenance Craft Eligibility

Every year, during the month of March (March 1-31), ALL career employees may request to be tested for Maintenance Craft eligibility ratings and placement on In-Service Registers.

Also, during March, those career employees already on the In-Service Register have the right to submit a written request to remain on those registers and avoid the annual purge that occurs on April 1.

Below is a list of all questions and answers:

Is the March annual service wide opportunity to test for Maintenance Craft eligibility ratings limited to once per year during the month of March? **Yes.**

Who is eligible to participate in the annual eligibility ratings? **All career employees are eligible.**

Can Maintenance Craft employees participate in the annual opportunity to test for Maintenance Craft eligibility ratings? **Yes.**

If In-Service Registers do not exist, where are the exam results placed? **The HR MSS Coordinator is responsible for placing the results in the employee's eOPF.**

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What form must career employees complete when submitting a written request to participate in the March annual In-Service opportunity? ***Management shall provide an Employee Maintenance Position Selection (EMPS) form as found in the EL-304 to employees.***

What occupational group can career employees request to receive eligibility ratings for? ***Maintenance Craft occupational groups. (MSS and non-MSS) that require an examination, except National Service Technician ET-11.***

Can non-Maintenance Craft, career employees that have already received eligibility ratings request to be tested again in subsequent years in an attempt to improve their scores? ***Yes.***

What options are available for non-Maintenance Craft employees who have failed the structured interview, but received an eligibility rating on examination 955? ***In subsequent years, the employee may (1) request to retake the examination for the structured interview only or (2) can request the opportunity to retake both the examination 955 and the structured interview. If the employee retakes examination 955, the highest achieved score is used as the eligibility rating.***

Can current Maintenance Craft employees that have received In-service eligibility ratings for occupational groups that are not in their facility, request to be tested again in subsequent years in an attempt to improve their scores? ***Yes.***

What happens if an employee is a “no show” for the proctored exam or structured interview during the In-Service process? ***The employee is deemed ineligible and may request to take the exam/structured interview during the following year’s annual opportunity.***

Are there any changes to the way employees are ranked on In-Service Registers? ***No, there are no changes.***

If non-custodial In-Service Registers exist, how will employees be added in subsequent years? ***Merged in score order.***

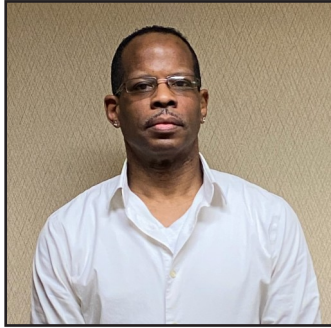
If an employee on an In-Service Register declines to accept a position in the Maintenance Craft, is that employee’s name removed from the In-Service Register? ***No, the employee will be bypassed for that position.***

When will In-Service Registers be purged? ***Every year on April 1, beginning in calendar year 2023.***

What must employees on In-Service Registers do to avoid the April purge and remain on In-Service Registers? ***Employees must submit a written request by March 31st to the District HR MSS Coordinator. The exception is employees on custodial In-Service Registers, which are not purged.***

Is there a specific form that employees must use to submit their notification to management of their intent to avoid the April purge and remain on In-Service Registers? ***No, any written/emailed request to remain on the In-Service Registers will be accepted.***

MAINTENANCE



Kenni Liggan
Customer Service
Director

As I stated in my January article, we did file labor charges on management for not giving us our information requested on the 204B and carriers in our craft. We gave our affidavits this week on that issue. Hopefully, we will hear something from the labor board in the next few weeks.

It has come to my attention that management is falsifying uptimes at the city stations. This is considered fraud. For example, mail is scanned as being out with the carriers but actually is still in that the station being worked by the clerks.

If this is happening to you in your station, please contact Kim or myself immediately so we can contact the OIG. The Union has filed labor

OIG - Labor Charges

“when you see a carrier doing our work, I need you to write a statement on what they are doing.”

charges against the postmaster of the city station for not filling the Unions information request, which has been an outgoing problem. Hopefully, this will solve this problem.

If you are a T-7 at any city station and have not been trained on doing TACs, please let Kim, or myself know immediately. This is a part of your job duties.

Remember after you pass your SSA training, you cannot report to the city station until you get a report letter. You are to go back to your old bid position until you receive a letter or get instructions by management to report to your new bud job.

Just a reminder, please make sure that you are punched in the right operation. We have a new Postmaster that the union has not met with yet. When we do, we will inform you. Just to piggyback on us not getting our information requests, I

am asking our members at the city stations to list any 204b or carriers doing work at your station and get me their names so we can try to keep up with them.

Also, when you see a carrier doing our work, I need you to write a statement on what they are doing, how long they have been doing it and who is doing it. Please make sure you are signing your statements. We must make sure they are not violating the contract.

If management is putting you in on a schedule change without your knowledge or changing your time without you knowing please let your steward or myself know if they are doing this to avoid overtime.

Lastly, the union has seen a spike in attendance disciplines. You are only allowed three occurrences within 6 months. Being tardy is also considered an occurrence so keep that in mind!

Consider cutting out this wallet-sized card and keeping it on you just in case you need it.



Make the Call!

USPS Employee Assistance Program
1-800-327-4968
 (1-800-EAP-4-YOU) TTY: 1-877-492-7341
 www.EAP4YOU.com



New Bill In Congress Would Help Protect United States Postal Workers

Scrippsnews

The U.S. Postal Service has its own uniformed law enforcement agency, but officers have been working under limited authority.

Mail theft has been on the rise. More than 400 letter carriers were robbed in the 2022 fiscal year, and more than 300 were robbed just in the first half of the 2023 fiscal year. The United States Postal Service has its own uniformed law enforcement agency — the Postal Police — to help combat the problem. But since 2020, those officers have been working under limited authority.

"The Postal Service decided to bench the postal police force," said Frank Albergo, the National President for the Postal Police Officers Association. "They stripped us of our jurisdictional authority and basically relegated us to protecting buildings. We no longer can protect the mail, and we no longer can protect letter carriers."

An August 2020 memo restricted Postal Police officers' jurisdiction to 'real' property, and that means USPS facilities and the immediate perimeter. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy defended that decision to Congress in May 2023, saying the agency doesn't have the statutory authority for mobile patrols. "I don't have the authority to patrol the streets," DeJoy testified. But Albergo says the Postal Police is more effective when officers can be out in the community and protecting letter carriers on their routes. So Congress is trying to get them that authority.

Sens. Dick Durbin and Susan Collins recently introduced the bipartisan Postal Police Reform Act. A similar bill has been introduced in the House of Representatives. Both versions would give the Postal Police the authority to protect letter carriers on their routes. Albergo argues those mobile patrols would help take pressure off local law enforcement. "We're not out there to stop bank robbers. We're out there to deal with postal related street crime," he said. "We were protecting letter carriers. We were responding to mail theft. We were patrolling blue collection boxes."

Groups like the National Association of Postal Supervisors and the National Association of Police Organizations support the bills that would get the Postal Police back out in the community.

LINKS TO FREQUENTLY REQUESTED RESOURCES, LINKS AND DOCUMENTS

[Pay Scales](#)

[Employee and Labor Relations Manual](#)

[Collective Bargaining Agreements](#)

[USPS Handbook and Manuals](#)

[PSE & Casual Compliance Reports](#)

[Everything You've Always Wanted to Know About Postal Support Employees \(PSEs\) & Where to Find It](#)

[APWU Union Official ID Badge Verification](#)

[APWU Search](#)

[BQnet](#)

[Electronic Grievance System](#)

[Grievance procedure and downloadable forms.](#)

[Work Year List](#)

[LMOU for Offices without a Union Structure](#)

[OWCP Issues](#)



Larry Brown Jr
Vice President

When something happens on the workroom floor it is, or it should be, procedure for any discussion concerning said incident to be had in the office. Going into the office is your right and that is something that I need you to understand from this point going forward.

It's funny because from the moment I talk with a newly hired PSE I tell them to consult with their steward if they have any questions. Most of the time they don't. Instead, they come with a story of what someone else told them. When I finally get the chance to talk to them, I get to give them the "contract" answer, that they weren't looking for.

We as stewards have to plead with the membership too much to get them to come and get the answers they need. But there is one time I never have to ask anyone to talk to me and that is when the supervisor says that they want to see them in the office.

Why is going to the office the equivalent of looking into a mirror and saying Candyman five times? If you know your rights, and you actually come to work and do the work that is expected of you, going into the office should be nothing. It actually protects you. I'm pretty loud as a per-

The Office

"We all know hard work is its own reward, sometimes you have to let management know that you feel taken advantage of."

son. I am a naturally loud talking person and my laugh is even louder. I'm loud when I'm happy, upset, or any other emotions that you can throw in between. Supervisors know this, but that wouldn't stop a supervisor from making a claim that I yelled at them on the workroom floor, when they know that is not the case.

I just had a supervisor on tour three claim that I was getting loud with her when I accompanied another employee in the office. At that meeting, I was actually whispering because I know how paper thin the walls are in that office, but shady management officials will attempt to discipline you by any means necessary.

I have arbitration awards where the arbitrator made the exact same point, but the question is, how did those cases end up at arbitration in the first place? When a supervisor does not like what is being said, the first thing they will say is the employee yelled at them, or disrespected them in some way, while on the workroom floor.

In my 25 years of working here that has always been the case. Who goes into management normally? If they weren't hired off the street and you actually worked with them, who ended up in management? Now, there are always exceptions to the rule, and it has always been a pleasure when I encounter those excep-

tions, but most supervisors were horrible workers. We've worked with them. We know.

So, when you are afforded the opportunity to visit the office with one of your fearless leaders, as I like to call them, don't get all bent out of shape. Half of the time it is going to be a conversation. Article 16 of the CBA, which defines our discipline process says, "For minor offenses by an employee, management has a responsibility to discuss such matters with the employee. Discussions of this type shall be held in private between the employee and the supervisor."

Private is in the office. This is the normal explanation I will give you if you come to me saying your boss wants to see you in the office. Go into the office and have the conversation. If it ends up being an official discussion, then the supervisor should keep personal notes stating what was talked about and what day you had the discussion.

Not the end of the world, right? Now that you know this, and you're not afraid of it anymore, let me give you some office etiquette. Let the supervisor finish speaking before you start explaining.

We get so defensive whenever we are questioned about anything. If the supervisor states that you did something that you didn't do, or says

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something that you don't agree with, let them finish talking. When they are finished, ask them how that pertained to you. Then give your explanation. Nothing says that you cannot talk to a steward about what was said in that meeting and if management tries to give you an official discussion for something that you didn't do, the Union will address it.

Going into the office gives you a chance to state your piece. Although, you can probably get away with saying a tad bit more than you would get away with on the floor, it is not the time to act as if the job does not matter to you. You can go in the office, get too upset, do something out of line or speak your mind a little too recklessly, and still end up getting put out the building. Emergency placement and the zero-tolerance policy don't cease to exist just because you are in the office with the boss encouraging you to speak your mind. Don't go into the office and not say nothing at all. Speak, especially if you know management is misinformed about something. Always take up for yourself.

We all know hard work is its own reward, sometimes you have to let management know that you feel taken advantage of. They have been trained to ask good workers to work a little bit harder while ignoring the people that give them problems. I was told this by a management official years ago. To me, that's not a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. So, if you are ever a victim of this, the office is where you speak on this issue.

This is why I speak about doing your job the way you are supposed to. It gives you the right to tell a supervisor when you see them struggling to perform their duties as management. We are tired of the phrase, "Management's right to mismanage." But please remember, you can't be the voice of reason and part of the problem at the same time. You can't complain about working by yourself but have horrible attendance. You can't complain about never getting help, when you don't ever want to help anyone else. Handle your business correctly and you'll probably never end up needing to see the inside of the supervisor's office. In the event that you do, just remember that going in the office is your right.

Contract Information and Frequently Used Resources

 2021-2024 APWU-USPS Collective Bargaining Agreement
 2022 JCIM - Joint Contract Interpretation Manual
 JCIM 2020 - Joint Contract Interpretation Manual
 APWU Constitution and Bylaws Booklet
 2024 Leave Calendar
 2024 Leave Chart
 2022 Dues Disbursement Schedule
 Article and Handbook Assignments
 2021-2024 CBA Work Year List (PDF)
 2021-2024 CBA Work Year List (Excel)



**John Miceli
Treasurer**

(FEDweek)

A successful retirement requires careful, long-term planning. Your responsibilities begin with signing up for a pre-retirement counseling seminar. Your agency may already be offering these. If it isn't, ask if they will pay for one offered by an outside provider.

One key step: get an estimate of what your retirement annuity will be when the time comes.

Then go to your servicing personnel office and look over your Official Personnel Folder (OPF). Make sure that all periods of civilian and military service are recorded there. To take out an extra bit of insurance, ask a benefits specialist to document your service history for you on an SF 2801 -1, Certified Summary of Federal Service (CSRS) or SF 3107-1 (FERS).

With this information in hand (corrected if necessary), you can confer with a benefits officer and determine the date on which you will be eligible to retire.

You can also confirm that you will have been covered by the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB)

Steps To Take In The Run - Up To Retirement

“Start by getting an estimate of what your retirement annuity will be when the time comes...”

program and the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) program for five full years before the date you elect to retire so you can carry that coverage into retirement.

Next, you'll need to do some sound financial planning. Start by getting an estimate of what your retirement annuity will be when the time comes; and, especially for those covered by FERS, what you will likely receive from Social Security.

Your agency personnel office can help you estimate your retirement annuity; you can get an estimate of your Social Security benefit from SSA.

As the date for your retirement comes closer, you'll need to update those dollar numbers, explore your TSP options, and reconfirm your retirement eligibility date (and eligibility to carry your FEHB and FEGLI coverage into retirement), and check your OPF to make sure that your Designation of Beneficiary forms are up-to-date.

If you are married, you'll also need to review the options available for survivor benefits. Your personnel office can help you understand these.

Finally, you need to set the date, fill out the paper work and send it to your personnel office so they can be sure that everything is okay.

You should do this about two months before retirement.

While it might be fun to surprise everyone by deciding today that you're going to leave tomorrow, you could end up having to come right back because your paperwork was screwed up.

Obviously, not everyone will have five years to plan their retirement. If you are one of those who is looking at a much closer departure time – perhaps because of an offer of early retirement – you'll need to compress the above schedule of activities.

That's why it can pay to get your information in order long before you expect you might retire.



To add some muscle to your retirement income, you'll also need to consider maximizing your contributions to the Thrift Savings Plan.

Remember, nothing smarts worse than being eligible to retire, having the urge to do so, and then discovering that you can't afford to leave.

APWU Announces Dedication Of Headquarters Boardroom To President William H. Burrus

APWUnews

APWU has honored the legacy of former President William H. Burrus by renaming the National Executive Boardroom at APWU Headquarters in his memory.

President Emeritus Burrus was elected as APWU President from 2001- 2010, following a role as Executive Vice President between 1980-2001. The first African-American president of a national union directly elected by members, his leadership and decades-long dedication to postal workers has left a lasting impact on the union.

In 1958, he began his postal career in Cleveland, OH where he began work as a mail clerk before transferring to the Maintenance Craft soon after. He rose through the ranks of his local union and participated in the Great Postal Strike of 1970. In 1974, he was elected president of the Cleveland Area Local, and later became the founder and first president of the APWU National Presidents' Conference. He took pride in his role and protected the economic well-being of generations of postal workers by leading the successful fight to protect COLA increases in the 1978 Collective Bargaining Agreement.

In 1980, he joined Moe Biller to run for and win the union's highest two offices. Ultimately, Burrus served as APWU Executive Vice-President under President Biller for 21 years.

Burrus negotiated many of the union's most important achievements, including the "maximization clause," which resulted in the conversion of hundreds of thousands of part-time flexible employees to full-time positions; the return of Priority Mail, which had been subcontracted; the application of the Family and Medical Leave Act; and securing the Martin Luther King, Jr. federal holiday for postal workers, who were among the first federal workers to fight for and secure the observed day.

During the 2006 negotiations, Burrus helped make significant advances for postal workers. The Part-Time Flexible (PTF) category was eliminated from large offices, thousands of PTFs were converted to full-time, and all APWU-represented employees were upgraded.



Well-respected across various communities, Burrus served as a Vice-President of the AFL-CIO, named multiple times by Ebony magazine as one of the 100 Most Influential Black Americans and was regarded as a champion of the public postal service by Congressional representatives.

The dedication was made at the suggestion of Clerk Craft NBA, Vince Tarducci. President Mark Dimondstein noted at Burrus's memorial service in 2018 that he is still a guiding force in the union today. "He was responsible for countless arbitration settlements and memorandums of understanding.

Local and state officers throughout the country still rely on what we affectionately call the 'Burrus Book,' a compilation of hundreds of settlements

The GOP's Making Workers Miserable While Collecting Every Dime For Billionaires

Daily Kos

The Republican Party might have changed a lot between Ronald Reagan railing against “Mr. Gorbachev” and Donald Trump being a starry-eyed fanboy of Vladimir Putin, but some things never change. Republicans were anti-worker 100 years ago, and they’re still anti-worker today.

In fact, some of the bills now being pushed by Republicans would repeal worker protections that are more than 100 years old, including rolling back child labor laws from before World War I. Republicans seem intent on taking horrific conditions suitable for a Dickens novel and treating them as a goal. If that’s what it takes to squeeze every last dime for their billionaire masters, they’re happy to go there. And if it means making people suffer ... well, that’s just a bonus.

At this moment, the two richest men in America are engaged in the biggest act of union-busting in history. Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos may be rivals when it comes to space, but they’re perfectly simpatico when it comes to their effort to blow up the National Labor Relations Board and make it much more difficult for employees to organize.

Both SpaceX and Amazon have responded to charges of labor law violations by arguing that the entire NLRB is unconstitutional. As Fast Company notes, “If SpaceX—and the other companies like Amazon and Trader Joe’s that have joined in this argument—win, the consequences for labor organizing the country could be disastrous.”

This effort from Musk follows the successful strike by the UAW, which earned workers a large raise and improved benefits. With the union taking aim at Tesla and Tesla workers already receiving a pay bump as Musk’s company attempts to tamp down desires for a union, it’s understandable that he’s frightened about the possibility of a labor win. Likewise, with a stack of labor violations and a fleet of drivers protesting “brutal” conditions, Bezos has a good reason to join with his rival.

Not to be left out of the fun, Republicans in the House have also advanced a bill that according to the Center for America Progress would undercut workers’ ability to form unions. House Joint Resolution 98 would rescind regulations that allow outsourced or franchise workers to organize. Many workers find themselves in a position where the name on their paycheck doesn’t match the company where the decisions about their work and employment are made. These employees are still allowed to organize. For now.

But keeping workers divided and powerless isn’t all that’s in the works. Republicans have set traps for workers large and small. A bill before the Kentucky House would allow employees to shuffle workers between work sites without having to pay for the time they are in transit. The bill features a provision that would exempt from the minimum wage 14 different categories of workers, including farm workers, home health care workers, home child care workers, and workers at small retail establishments.

Just to underscore its completeness, it includes babysitters and people delivering newspapers. No minimum wage for you. Now, get out there and learn about capitalism, kids.



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But the hidden kicker in this bill is the way that it would allow employers to avoid paying employees for transport time, not just at the beginning and end of the workday, but when moving between job sites, even if the move is inside a vehicle provided by the employer.

Why would that be important? Perhaps because the author of the bill is Republican Rep. Phillip Pratt, and because the only line on Pratt's bio reads: "Pratt's Lawn & Landscape." This definitely seems like the kind of business that could be much more profitable if Pratt didn't have to pay workers during travel. While that Kentucky bill is underscoring just how few of the jobs open to younger Americans are protected by minimum wage laws, a growing number of states are working to drop laws that protect underage workers, including those 110-year-old laws in Florida.

Most of the time, when laws that old are being written out, it would be nice to think that they are outdated because they included regulations that were bigoted against someone based on race or gender. Or because safety rules needed to be improved. Seeing states eager to erase laws that protect children from being exploited for labor is a lot less encouraging. Attempts to expand child labor laws have expanded to West Virginia, Indiana, and Kentucky (which could make Pratt's business even more profitable). Arkansas is ahead of the pack: Gov. Sarah Sanders signed a law making it easier to put children to work last March. That law is supposed to expand the age range for many jobs down to 14, but since it also removes any requirement about checking children's ages, it's hard to say what the real limit might be.

Finally, to show they are really thinking ahead, Florida wants to block local jurisdictions from making any rules that protect outdoor workers from the effects of working during extreme hot weather, including eliminating any requirements for shade or water breaks. This is especially far-sighted as no local jurisdiction has so far passed such a law. But workers should know that just in case some city or country does try to get in the way, Florida Republicans are there. There to make sure workers stay hot, miserable, and underpaid.

Postal Workers Speak Out About Short Staffing, Mail Delays

MSN.com

Members of the American Postal Workers Union are calling for more staffing and better pay to reduce turnover. They say the problem is affecting mail delivery, particularly in rural areas.

An audit by the Office of the Inspector General last year found the U.S. Postal Service lost almost 60% of its non-career employees in 2022. APWU California president Gaare Davis said smaller, rural post offices - in towns such as Alturas and Truckee - are hit hardest. "These offices are understaffed in the northeast corner of the state," he said. "Due to the fact of not enough housing in those areas, the wages are not high enough for the people to work in that area."

The Postal Service did not respond to a request for comment, but in a speech in November, Postmaster General Louis DeJoy said the agency is trying to reduce labor costs because it lost \$6.5 billion in 2023. And that is an improvement over much bigger losses in prior years. Davis said many workers see DeJoy's 10-year-plan to make the Postal Service more efficient as misguided because the move to centralize mail processing has, so far, only led to more delays. "He's spending billions of dollars trying to 'transform' the Postal Service into mega-plants, but he's crossing a couple of states to get the mail," he said. "That should be overnight or two days - now, it's three to five days. That's not service."

The U.S. Postal Service's goal is 95% on-time delivery. However, the agency's most recent performance report shows about 83% of first-class mail and about 92% of marketing mail is delivered on time. Most recently, winter weather has been a factor in the delays.



By Idowu Balogun

Successful Maintenance Craft Conference in 2023: We successfully completed the 2023 APWU All-Craft Conference held in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Maintenance Craft Conference started on Monday, October 2, 2023, and lasted for three days. The Saturday before the conference, we attended the Maintenance Council meetings. The conference itself took place on Monday, Maintenance Regional Breakouts were held on Tuesday, and Maintenance Division Workshops (Article 32 Subcontracting and Line H in small Offices) followed on Wednesday. During the craft conference, we were addressed by several guest speakers, held a meaningful, lively debate about all of the maintenance craft issues among the body, and ended in solidarity to return home and continue to conduct the business of the Union.

FMO Restructuring and Work Ticketing Pilot: The Postal Service made the decision to split field maintenance operations away from USPS Maintenance and into Customer Service and Delivery Operations in an effort to increase efficiency. In addition, FMO no longer assigns and tracks work in eMARS. A new program was developed in RADAR to collect more information than eMARS, track work assignments and identify problem areas across the country. This created a nightmare for our Area Maintenance

National Maintenance Craft Director

Looking Back At 2023

Technicians, with changes to finance numbers, domicile Office and Local union affiliation in disarray.

Bulk Mail Center Conference: The BMC Conference convened on April 17, 2023, in Riverside, Missouri and was chaired by Assistant Maintenance Director (A), Terry B. Martinez and was hosted by the Kansas Kaw Valley Area Local. 21 BMCs were present, as well as 120 delegates.

955 Exam Employee Discussions: USPS has begun conducting working sessions with employees to revise the Maintenance Examination (Exam 955) and Maintenance Interviews (Ex-

also be provided a tool bag containing the most commonly used tools on a daily basis.

MS-47 Handbook Revisions and Self-Laundering Pilot: The Postal Service initiated a Self-Laundering Pilot program that ultimately was approved and formally implemented. This pilot gave local maintenance management the opportunity to insource previously subcontracted work involving the cleaning and laundering of custodial rags and mop heads. Insourcing details can be found in MMO-095-23. Several unilateral changes were also made to the MS-47 handbook that removed negotiated language and added unnecessary glossary terms. We recently filed a national dispute.

e4776 Pilot Program: This program has been limited to Maryland state so far

USPS has begun conducting working sessions with employees to revise the Maintenance Examination (Exam 955) and Maintenance Interviews (Exams 970 - 974).

ams 970 - 974). These sessions will be conducted with employees, supervisors, and managers. The purpose of the working sessions is to generate assessment content and develop test items such as examinations and structured interviews. Ratings of job-related employee behaviors may also be gathered to be used in correlation with developing the test items. Critical to note is that participation in these activities will be voluntary.

Shared Community Tool Pods: APWU was notified of the Postal Service's plans to standardize the workroom floor maintenance work areas and reduce the number of large rolling toolboxes by implementing multiple "pods." These maintenance pods would be strategically located on the workroom floor to provide coverage for all equipment in its general vicinity and would require badges to enter and access. Affected employees would each

and is testing using an electronic tablet to track the same information that would otherwise be handwritten on paper form 4776. The tablet contains the same information as the paper 4776 and also allows operation moves and tracks driving time. However, the back of form 4776 requires as signature annotation whether the route was completed in whole or in part was removed, that is problematic for Line H calculation.

\$59 Per Diem while attending NCED.

Effective November 7, 2022, APWU-represented bargaining unit employees attending training at the National Center for Employee Development (NCED) will receive the full per diem rate of \$59 per day. Employees who do not have an individually billed travel card may request an advance of money to pay for travel, in accordance with Handbook F-15, *Travel and Relocation*, Section 4-2, *Getting Advances*.

AS WE READY FOR WHATS IN STORE IN 2024



by **Western Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez**

The holiday's of 2023 are upon us as we near year's end. In USPS we are already in FY 2024 and we face daunting events in our careers and lives. Let me go over some highlights:

Thanksgiving – We have a lot to be thankful for. Our American holiday is so rich in symbolism and good food. But in our postal reality we need to be thankful and pray for our Union (you, I, all of us). We are blessed to be covered by a negotiated agreement what ensures our rights for our labor given to the postal service. Yes, we struggle against managerial abuses but we have so many protections the vast majority of working people do not enjoy. I hope you enjoyed this holiday, thank you for being a Union member. It is not too late to give thanks and pray!

Christmas – this season of Advent is a religious and cultural celebration. Many celebrate by gift giving. And sure, there is some commercialization, this is America after all. For us, there is "Peak Season" and a relaxation of OT rules. But it gives us an opportunity to demonstrate to the nation the true 'essential workers' American postal workers are. Our labor is a gift to this country. Despite many of the trials and tribulations we face daily on the workroom floor

Sinterklaas could not get all those gifts delivered in time for the day of celebration without us. Merry Christmas to All and the Season's Best for all the other holidays.

New Years – this celebration of new beginnings is a great public holiday. Resolutions abound and we say goodbye to the old year and look forward to a New Year of prosperity and good health. May The New Year Be Good To You and Your Loved Ones. In the Post Office we ready for the new leave year and we get to relax (a bit anyway) after peak. But 2024 will be quite a year for postal workers. We face so many career and life events that will impact our work life and homelife. Such as:

- **Forced Reassignments** – The PMG's misnomer Delivering for America plan will disrupt the lives of many postal workers in February, June, September of 2024. Postal consolidations of retail and mail processing facilities will create a tidal wave of work and homelife disruptions. The contractual principles of seniority and reassignment will be in the forefront as we work at lessening the inconvenience of dislocation of employees. The PMG's efforts have:

- Raised postage that creates a sense of hostility pointed unjustly at postal workers.
- Slowed down mail delivery standards that often is blamed on postal workers.
- Created even longer lines as staffing is undercut with the elimination of millions of workhours.

- **Contract Expires** – negotiations begin in May for the our contract that expires in September. On the table is our 'lay-off' protections and the protections against being forced to relocate beyond 50 miles (possibly 100-500 miles away) which expose hundreds of us under the PMG's restructuring plan. Of course our wages and other working conditions are also on the table. We need your support now, during and after these critical negotiations.

- **America's Elections** – we are a part of the Executive Branch of our government and elections have consequences. Far too many of our members do not realize how much depends on who is elected to head our government. Efforts to Privatize USPS could erupt. Labor laws affecting our work life are at stake with changes that could alter the National Labor Relations Board. Compensation for disabling work injuries with changes affected by the leadership of the Department of Labor. Protections against discrimination undercut by changes to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Veteran Rights undermined by changes to the Veteran's Administration and Merit Systems Protection Board etc . . . Pray Our Members Don't Vote Against their interest.

SO YES, celebrate the holidays and be prepared like never before for a roller coaster year that is 2024 ! Support Your Union and make it a year where we survive and thrive.



**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
AND THE
AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO**


Re: Annual Leave Exchange for Leave Year 2024


The parties agree that APWU career employees will be allowed to sell back a maximum of eighty (80) hours of annual leave prior to the beginning of leave year 2024 provided the following two (2) criteria are met:

1. The employee must be at the maximum leave carryover ceiling at the start of the leave year, and
2. The employee must have used fewer than 75 sick leave hours in leave year 2023.

In all other respects, the provisions of the Annual Leave Exchange program will remain unchanged.

This MOU will expire December 31, 2024.


 Thomas J. Blum
 Vice President, Labor Relations
 United States Postal Service


 Mark Dimondstein
 President
 American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

Date: May 2, 2023

MEETING NOTICE
Wednesday, 7:00 pm
March 27, 2024

Proud Postal Workers Union
The Hi-Lites

P.O. BOX 1995, Milwaukee, WI 53210-1995

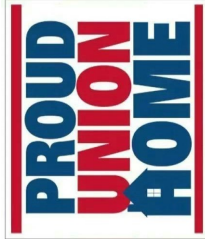
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Time Dated

2024 GMM Meeting-

- January 29 - 6pm
- March 27 - 7pm
- May 31 - 7am
- July 29 - 6pm
- September 25 - 7pm
- November 22 - 7am



Deliver To:

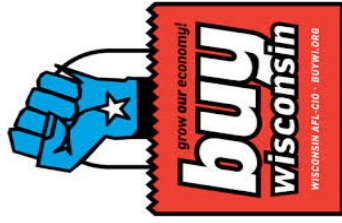
FIGHTING TODAY
for a BETTER
TOMORROW

Milwaukee Area Local 3

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