

Union Fights for ‘Economic Justice’

Contract Mediation Gets Underway

Representatives of the APWU and USPS met with officials of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) on June 9 to begin mediation on a new collective bargaining agreement.

APWU President Mark Dimondstein, Industrial Relations Director Tony D. McKinnon and staff met with FMCS Acting Director Allison Beck, Deputy Director Scot L. Beckenbaugh, and the USPS vice president of Labor Relations, where they discussed the progress of negotiations and outlined several of the topics that separate the parties.

Contract negotiations ended without an agreement on May 27, following a one-week extension of talks. In accordance with the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA), if bargaining reaches a stalemate, the union and management must participate in mediation unless they agree to an alternate method. Mediation is expected to last at least 60 days.

During negotiations, the USPS destroyed the possibility of reaching a deal by insisting on severe cuts in pay and benefits, Dimondstein said, despite the fact that progress had been made on non-economic issues.

The Postal Service’s economic proposals include:

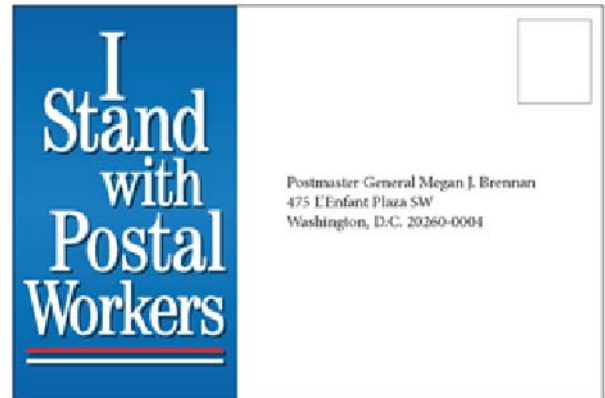
- Eliminate cost-of-living adjustments as they currently exist;
- Increase employees’ costs for healthcare coverage;
- Create a new, permanent lower pay scale for future career employees and reduce benefits;
- Increase the percentage of non-career employees,
- Weaken protection against layoffs.

A Just Future

“The APWU is fighting for a just future – for a strong Postal Service for generations to come and ‘economic justice’ for the workers and retirees of today and tomorrow,” Dimondstein said.

“Across the country, today’s young workers are being consigned to second- and third-class jobs,” he said. “The Postal Service’s contract proposals would perpetuate the downward spiral, with lower wages and fewer benefits for future career employees, including today’s PSEs.

“And under management’s plan, career workers would lose cost-of-living raises and be forced to worry



about layoffs, plant closings and higher healthcare costs,” he added.

“The people of the country would be left to wonder whether there will be a public postal system or whether they will, once again, be ripped off by private companies that have no concern or accountability for the public good.

“Our contract battle is a fight for the entire nation,” Dimondstein said. “That’s what a union is all about!”

The APWU’s proposals include:

- Fair and reasonable wage increases;
- Limits on subcontracting;
- More career jobs;
- Improvements for Postal Support Employees (PSEs);
- Limits on excessing, and
- Better service for our customers.

The protections of the 2010 Collective Bargaining Agreement remain in full force and effect until a new contract is reached, Dimondstein said.

Wear Union Gear; Get Postcards Signed

“Our fight for a good contract has entered a new stage,” Dimondstein said, “but union members continue to play a critical role in the battle.”

The union is calling on APWU members to wear union gear every Thursday to show solidarity. The union is also asking members to continue gathering signatures on the “I Stand with Postal Workers” postcards

“Our struggle continues,” he said. “Stay strong, stay united, and keep Standing Up and Fighting Back!”