

THE AMERICAN

APWU

Postal Worker

May/June 2020



**SERVING America
During This Pandemic**





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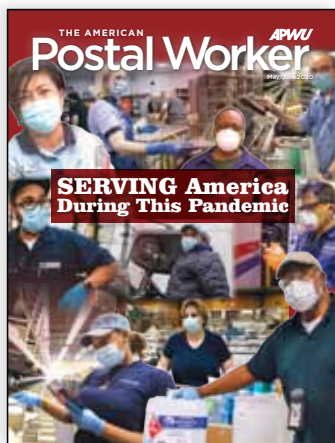
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The APWU's first priority during this crisis is ensuring the health and safety of all postal workers as they serve the people of this country. Thank you for your dedication and stay safe!

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PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN

Pandemic Crisis Brings Double Trouble

This terrible COVID pandemic again reminds us that it is the working people who make the world go round. Essential front-line workers – postal workers, health care workers, transit workers, truck drivers, firefighters, grocery workers and many others – have stepped up under dangerous and challenging conditions to heal, feed, connect and serve the people.

Witnessing the deep commitment and fortitude of postal workers carrying out the vital mission of binding the country together makes me even prouder to be your national president.

Co-workers, family members and friends have been sickened or have perished from this pandemic made worse by a government failure of readiness, including the lack of widespread and rapid testing.

As a union family, we deeply mourn these losses.

Our union leadership's main priority has been the health and safety of our members. The APWU has left no stone unturned under Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman's outstanding leadership. We secured a number of pro-active policies and agreements with management. This includes a strong liberal leave policy enabling workers to best protect their health and safety. *(See pages 8-9 detailing the union's response.)*

Dangerous Economic Troubles

While we work to secure the safety of our members, postal and all workers are now forced to confront a massive economic crisis as well: The pandemic's economic impact is now threatening the very existence of the public Postal Service, our jobs, health benefits, retirement and the right of the people to universal postal services.

With no taxpayer funding, the Postal Service runs solely on postage revenue. But the pandemic is causing a huge reduction in mail volume and a projected 50 percent drop in revenue. Without Congressional relief, the Postal Service could run out of money by summer and cease operations. Shamefully, this needed relief has not been forthcoming.

Our friend and former CWA President Larry Cohen says "watch the feet" – look at what people do, not what they say.

There have now been two massive "stimulus packages" totaling almost \$3 trillion, including over \$1 trillion for private business. With bi-partisan support from the Republican-controlled Postal Board of Governors, the House requested \$25 billion for Postal COVID relief and the Senate \$13 billion. Yet the Trump White House refused to sign a stimulus package with postal relief in it!

Our Congressional supporters failed to "flip the script" and declare that there would be no stimulus package unless the Postal Service **was** included. **Watch the feet!**

With everything postal workers are facing in this crisis, President Trump had the nerve to call the Postal Service "a joke" and demanded package prices be increased five times the present rates as a condition for any COVID relief. The President did not demand Boeing raise the price of airplanes or hotels raise room rates as a condition for bailouts! Excessive package rates would price the USPS out of the package market, literally causing its demise. After getting heat, President Trump then tweeted how much he "loves" postal workers. **Watch the feet!**

WITHOUT CONGRESSIONAL RELIEF, THE POSTAL SERVICE COULD RUN OUT OF MONEY BY SUMMER AND CEASE OPERATIONS.

Backed by plenty of Wall Street and corporate money, this administration has a clear agenda – sell off the public Postal Service to private corporations. They are following the plan laid out in their June 2018 White House Office of Management and Budget report.

It is outrageous that this administration seeks to destroy the people's Postal Service and 600,000 good union jobs, using this pandemic crisis to accomplish their sinister aims.

The Postal Service always is the highest rated agency by the people. Given the heroic and essential role of the postal workers in this pandemic, it stands higher than ever at 91 percent! People power is on our side.

You may have heard the saying, "If we're not outraged, we're not paying attention!" Let's call Congress, sign petitions and spread the word far and wide. We can only win if we are mobilized and together move our feet! Our future depends on it! ■

President Dimondstein Broadcasts Our Message Far and Wide

In response to the urgent crisis facing the Postal Service, President Dimondstein appeared on MSNBC, NPR's "All Things Considered," *Democracy Now!* and in *New York Magazine*, the *New York Times*, *Yahoo! News*, *In These Times*, and other outlets – reaching tens of millions of viewers and readers.

President Dimondstein spoke about the essential work postal workers are providing during this crisis, the public Postal Service's dire situation and the need to demand our Congressional representatives support it in future stimulus packages. Here are some of the highlights:

Postal Workers Showing Up During a Crisis

"In this time of pandemic, I think there is a great appreciation for what postal workers are doing. We have had deaths...Many people have been sick, and many people have been quarantined. And yet, the proud postal workers are still coming to work when they can and serving the American people the best we can."

– April 29, *Democracy Now!*

DEMOCRACY
NOW!

What the Postal Service Needs

"The Postal Service will actually run out of money, whether it's this summer, whether it's early fall. The revenue just isn't there, strictly based on COVID...The Postal Board of Governors, which sets policy, and is a majority Republican board right now, has unanimously asked for robust relief, not a bailout. This is for the people of the country, this doesn't go to any shareholders or any CEOs, but to make up that lost revenue so the Post Office can weather this crisis and at the same time continue to serve the people of the country, both in ordinary times, and in this time of crisis."

– April 29, *Democracy Now!*

The Importance of the Postal Service to Rural Communities

"The post office has a special place in many communities from the inner cities all the way to the most remote outpost. But in rural America, it's often the heartbeat of the town. And if e-commerce is going to work for everybody, you have to have a national infrastructure that has to go to every address. If you're a private company, you can have surcharges if you're going to more of a rural area. You don't have to go where you don't want to go." – April 17, *New York Magazine*

The President's Hypocrisy on Raising Package Rates

"The president never told the airlines to raise the price of airplanes, or the hotels that are getting all sorts of bailouts that they should raise the rate of rooms...but when it comes to the postal service, he's demanding a raise in rates."

– May 3, MSNBC, 684,000 viewers

The White House's Agenda

"At the end of the day, they have an agenda. Raise prices, reduce workers' benefits and reduce services, make it appear more profitable and set it up for sale. The COVID crisis should not be used to achieve political aims." – April 9, *New York Times*

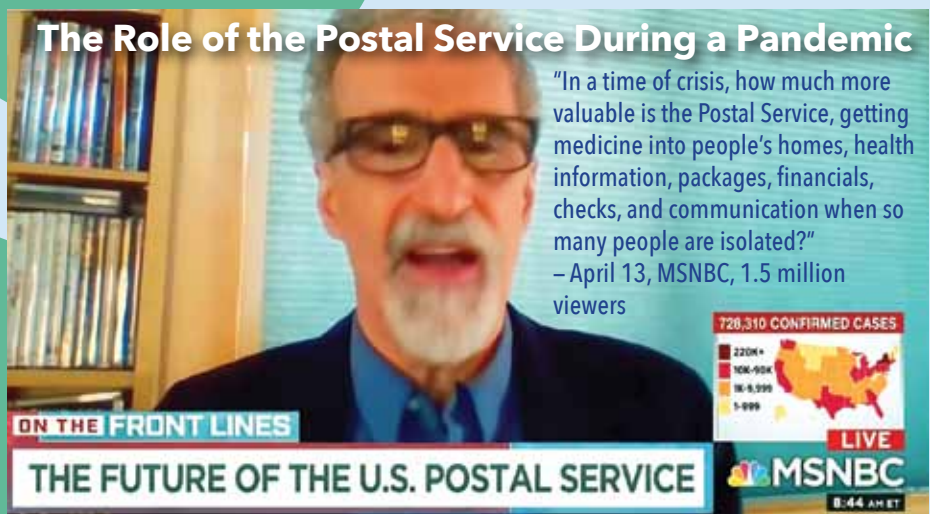
The Political Strategy We Need

"[Treasury Secretary] Mnuchin's script to Congress was that if the Post Office is in [the stimulus legislation], there will be no incentive package. We need for Congress to say to Mnuchin, if the Postal Service is not in there, then there will be no incentive packages, period, until it is. What we need now is for Congress to flip the script." – April 17, *New York Magazine*

The Role of the Postal Service During a Pandemic

"In a time of crisis, how much more valuable is the Postal Service, getting medicine into people's homes, health information, packages, financials, checks, and communication when so many people are isolated?"

– April 13, MSNBC, 1.5 million viewers

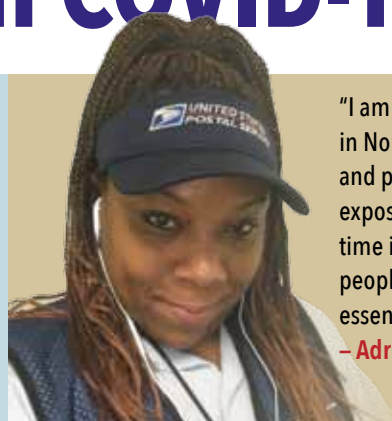


POSTAL WORKERS SHARE STORIES OF > > > > > > > > Working Through COVID-19 Crisis



"Management's attempting to provide us all Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during this time. Working during the pandemic is truly challenging, and at the same time, fulfilling because we provide an essential service to the public; most especially to the vulnerable who are unable to leave their homes and unable to see their loved ones. We are here to keep the mail moving."

– **Cecilia Abuyen**, Portland Oregon Area Local



"I am currently a Tractor-Trailer Operator in North Houston. I go in every day and pray for God's protection. We are exposing ourselves, but at the same time if the mail does not move how will people get their medication and other essential things?"

– **Adriann Albro**, Houston Area Local

"When I started 50-plus years ago in 1969, never could I have imagined I would still be working through such a turbulent coronavirus crisis. Even at my 68 years old, I feel compelled and proud to say that I'm still working even through this pandemic.

I hope that when people read this, they will be able to appreciate what we do, every time they receive their dire medications, Social Security, stimulus checks, and many other vital packages.

We live and stand by our motto: that neither rain nor sleet and not even a coronavirus can keep us from working inside to sort the mail and to deliver our mail. Long LIVE the USPS." – **Yolanda Soto**, Greater Los Angeles Area Local



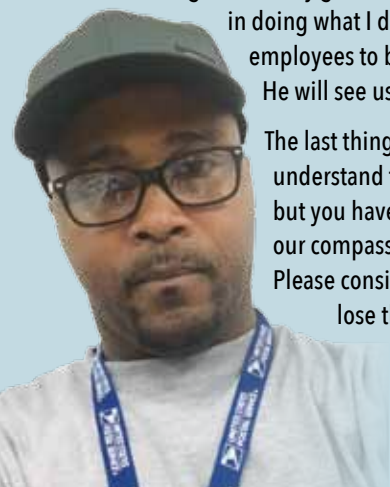
"I want to make sure people know how dedicated we postal workers are. Yes, we get stressed on the job but in the end, we always come together when it matters most. The teamwork my station implements is unfathomable. We are dedicated to ensuring our customers receive their mail and essential packages in a timely matter. We all have families at home praying on our safe return every day, and we have been working vigorously and taking all precautions to ensure we make it home safe." – **Shakeba Parker**, Fort Worth Area Local (TX)



"I'm a mail processing clerk at the distribution center in Mobile, AL. We are on the front line day and night to assure that every citizen of this great country gets their supplies, medicine, etc. I'm dedicated in doing what I do – to step up and encourage other employees to be strong and have faith in God in which He will see us through these tough times.

The last thing I want to say is for Congress: I understand that the government has priorities, but you have families that depend on our service, our compassion, and sympathy to keep hope alive. Please consider helping the USPS stay afloat. If we lose the Postal Service, we lose the dignity on which this country was built."

– **Ben Stallworth III**, South Alabama Area Local



"In my daily work as a window clerk in the Framingham, MA post office I serve community members who turn to the U.S. Postal Service to deliver essential correspondence and parcels. For instance, we have been working with postal patrons to mail a steady stream of documents to the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance.

Since January, we have gone from helping individuals send boxes of face masks to relatives in places like China, Japan, and South Korea to assisting scores of people to ship face masks sewn one at a time at home on kitchen tables to relatives in other parts of the United States.

We mail people's tax returns and deliver their prescriptions. We unite small business owners with the mail held at the post office since they closed their doors weeks ago. We prepare money orders so that people can send money safely to relatives who have rent to pay and now limited income to pay their bills.

It's heartening to have customers tell us how much they appreciate our dedication and dependability. We believe in our work and want to continue to provide such ties that bind us together as a nation."

– **David Frye**, Boston Metro Area Local

> **A**s the coronavirus continues to spread throughout the country, postal workers show they are more important than ever as we do the vital work of moving the mail and connecting the country during the crisis.

Though the White House is using the crisis as a way to further their agenda of cutting jobs, gutting collective bargaining, and reducing benefits for postal workers, APWU members continue to show up each and every day to fulfill

our essential mission of serving everyone in the country, no matter where they live.

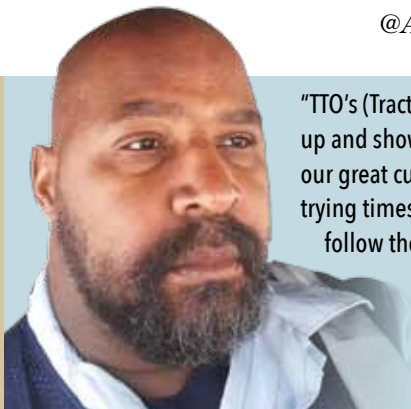
The American Postal Worker asked members to send photos and share

their stories to show the importance of their work in keeping us all connected. We've reprinted some highlights. They have been edited for length and clarity. More are posted on Facebook, @APWUNational.



"I like being part of the Postal Service at a mail processing plant during the night shift. While staying safe, we get the carriers and clerks their mail and packages to get to our customers. WE ARE ALL A TEAM! #Postalproud."

– **Brinden Tomlin**, Lafayette Local (LA)



"TTO's (Tractor-Trailer Operators) are showing up and showing out to remain dedicated to our great customers and businesses in these trying times. We do the best we can do to follow the CDC protocols. Washing hands, using masks and personal distancing." – **Vince Warner**, Atlanta Metro Area Local

"Every day I have to go to work. I am so worried for myself, my family, and all of the most wonderful customers that I have come to care for.

I love my job working at the retail window. The customers drive me to achieve my best me for them. I am all about helping the customers in every way.

Now with the threat of COVID-19 I have a clear wall between myself and customers. They can see my dismay over the fact I cannot be connected to them. They feel it as well when I ask them to stay behind the plexiglass and the line. I have made my area of the window (this includes the credit card machine) closed off to the customers. They can literally come and have a touch free visit.

Like anyone, I am not ready to die, but we have to be here for our country. What would happen if we couldn't get the supplies people need to live? What would happen if it just STOPPED? Really stop for one minute and think on that: No mail. It has STOPPED. Now what?"

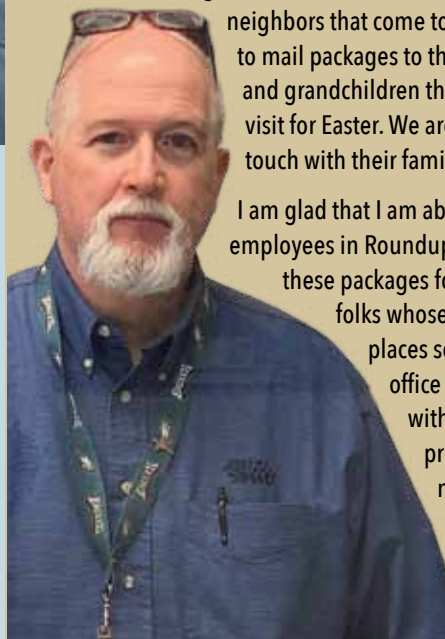
– **Catherine Hackett-Brown**, Topeka Local (KS)



"I live & work in a small town of less than 2,500 people (that includes the surrounding county). The closest city is 52 miles away. We are a community of very close neighbors and friends.

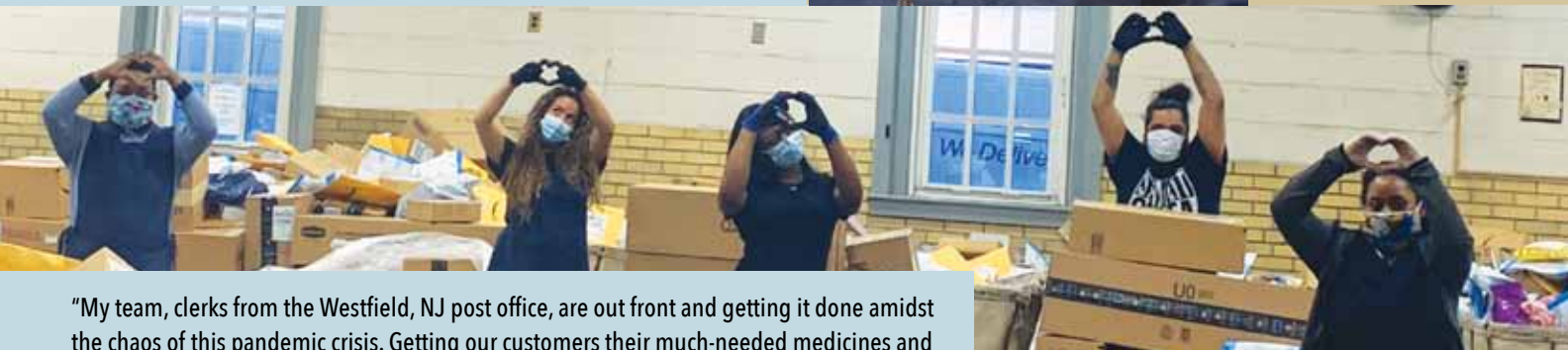
In these trying times, the Post Office is a vital link to children & grandchildren that do not live nearby. I have

neighbors that come to the post office every day to mail packages to those very same children and grandchildren that they will not be able to visit for Easter. We are a way for them to stay in touch with their families.



I am glad that I am able, with the rest of the employees in Roundup, MT, to ship and receive these packages for our neighbors. The older folks whose families live in faraway places sometimes come to the post office just to have a conversation with a friendly person. I am proud to be that person for my friends and neighbors."

– **Francis (Fran) Rodgers**, Montana Postal Workers Union



"My team, clerks from the Westfield, NJ post office, are out front and getting it done amidst the chaos of this pandemic crisis. Getting our customers their much-needed medicines and other essentials without missing a beat!" – **Lisa Padilla**, New Jersey Mid-State Area Local

YOUR UNION IN ACTION

Fighting for COVID Health and Safety Measures

The American Postal Workers Union has been advocating for postal worker safety since the novel coronavirus and the illness it causes – COVID-19 – began to threaten the United States. The APWU started communicating with the Postal Service in late January to find out what they were doing to prepare for COVID-19 and their plans to protect employees.

The union was unrelenting. Management began sharing the few things that they were doing, including the stand-up talks to employees. APWU leadership distributed information we received as quickly as possible with the membership.



“Our very first priority is always ensuring that the Postal Service provides for the health and safety of our members,” said President Mark Dimondstein. “Postal workers are on the front lines of the pandemic response. We need to ensure that the hardworking men and women who keep medicine, medical equipment, food, supplies and other essential goods moving through the mail are protected as the country relies on us in ways they never have before.”

PPE and Increased Cleaning

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was an issue that needed to be addressed as the coronavirus was detected in the United States. In early February, members were reminded that they could use PPE while at work, including wearing gloves and masks in all postal op-

erations and that the Postal Service must purchase and provide gloves and masks to employees.

THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC, THE APWU HAS WORKED TO ENSURE YOUR SAFETY AND HEALTH IS ADDRESSED.

erations and that the Postal Service must purchase and provide gloves and masks to employees. Taking lessons we learned from past events like the anthrax mailings and the H1N1 Swine flu pandemic, the APWU also demanded the USPS re-institute the increased cleaning and sanitizing procedures that had been done in the past. We spoke about the need for additional hand-

washing rights and opportunities in the workplace since handwashing is recognized as one of the most important things people can do to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The APWU Regional Coordinators and the Regional Safety and Health Representatives were involved early to help with our initial response. Regional Safety Representatives reached out to every local president in their area to let them know that they were available for help, to answer questions, ensure management obtained PPE, and give overall safety and health support. Additionally, some Regional Safety and Health Representatives were placed on the APWU payroll to research the pandemic, research responses from around the world, and answer questions that came into the field.

The APWU has spared no expense in making sure our COVID-19 response was and would continue to be done well. This includes consulting two external safety and health specialists with decades of experience to help the APWU’s response, review of CDC guidelines, and review of the Postal Service policies and procedures. They continue to work with us today.

The APWU website dedicated a page for resources and references that are tied to the COVID-19 pandemic. Access to knowledge and the tools you need to have a workplace with lower risk of transmission of COVID-19 was and still is an important part of the APWU response. The page apwu.org/coronavirus has been updated nearly every day with additional information, including USPS documents, policies, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), CDC references, cleaning procedures, etc. This webpage is referenced by the other postal unions and postal workers as an exceptional resource for COVID-19-related postal issues.

APWU's Actions Following Positive Test

In early March, the Postal Service informed the APWU of the first positive COVID-19 case. Within hours, President Mark Dimondstein reached out to Postal Leadership and requested a meeting with the Postmaster General (PMG) to discuss and get a more detailed briefing on the USPS response for what we now knew would soon be a nationwide issue.

During this meeting, that included all four postal unions, the APWU strongly advocated for:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Increased cleaning and sanitization
- Handwashing time
- Stand Ups to be targeted to facilities like International Service Centers, Call Centers, and the National Center for Employee Development
- The Postal Service take the “stay at home if you're sick” policy seriously, and that field managers and supervisors enforce it
- Institution of a “liberal leave” policy

- Administrative leave for employees exposed to COVID-19, so they would stay away from work and help slow the spread of the disease.
- Consideration of telework for employees whose jobs would facilitate this work

COVID-19 Negotiations

Throughout the pandemic, the APWU has engaged in productive and positive negotiations with Postal Headquarters to ensure your safety and health is addressed. To do this, the APWU has signed multiple temporary Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to address various issues. These have included MOUs on travel, training, telework for many different workers, expanded sick leave for dependent care, additional paid leave for PSEs, grievance extensions, and extensions on local negotiation timeline implementations. We also came to further agreements, including an agreement that ensures workers who need to take leave in smaller offices would not be refused because a postmaster would work over 15 hours in a week, and an agreement on additional staffing in mail processing and customer service so employees could utilize the liberal leave policy. We also worked with the USPS to change retail center procedures and install barriers to protect retail workers.



The APWU talked with the USPS daily to address our members' needs, and talks will continue as the pandemic continues and the landscape and needs shift with COVID-19.

“We demand that the Postal Service address the serious safety and health needs that our members face every day,” Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman said. “We will continue updating you when we have a new policy change negotiated.”

“These are unusual times and many of us are understandably anxious – for ourselves, our families, our jobs and our communities,” said President Dimondstein. “I, like so many others, am heartened by the extraordinary courage of postal workers serving their neighbors in times of need. Together, let’s support each other, encourage each other, and fight for safe workplaces together in these extraordinary times.” ■

COVID-19 Reporting Procedure

The APWU instituted a protocol for members and locals to raise their concerns on lack of PPE, cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, inadequate sneeze guards, and any other COVID-19 safety-related items. Members can contact their local leaders who will address it with management. If management does not immediately address the issues, it is elevated to a National Business Agent (NBA), who would raise it with their counterparts at the district level. If that did not address the issue, the NBAs elevate it to the Regional Coordinator to address at the area level or elevate to Headquarters as needed.

Each morning the APWU provides USPS Headquarters a list of areas where it has been reported there is a shortage of PPE or other issues. However, that list is getting smaller each day – because all of you demanded PPE and followed the protocols in place to get what you must have to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in your offices.

The Urgent Need for Congressional Funding to Save the Postal Service

The ongoing COVID-19 crisis places an unprecedented financial strain on the United States Postal Service, with plummeting mail volumes and billions in lost revenue. Without immediate and substantial funding by Congress, Postmaster General Brennan stated before Congress that the USPS will run out of cash before October, threatening the Constitutional role of the public Postal Service, its universal service mandate and 600,000 union jobs.

Post Office Purposely Excluded While Corporations Get Relief

As this issue goes to press, there have been four COVID-19 response “stimulus” packages passed by the federal government. Some packages provided relief to working families, but failed to protect the public Postal Service – while giving hundreds of billions to corporations.

IT IS TIME FOR CONGRESS TO STEP UP AND ENSURE THIS NATIONAL TREASURE ENSHRINED IN THE CONSTITUTION SURVIVES BY PROVIDING THE COVID-19 FUNDING THE POSTAL SERVICE NEEDS TO CONTINUE CARRYING OUT ITS DUTY OF BINDING THE COUNTRY TOGETHER.

On March 27, President Trump signed the \$2.2 trillion *CARES Act* stimulus into law. Much-needed financial relief for the USPS was advocated on a bipartisan basis by the Republican-majority Postal Board of Governors and included in both versions of the stimulus packages of the House of Representatives and the Senate, yet the final bill left the Postal Service out.

The White House insisted there would be no such relief, and only allowed a \$10 billion loan that must be approved by the Treasury Department. More debt only worsens the USPS financ-

es. Our supporters did not insist on real relief.

In another large \$500 billion stimulus bill signed by the President on April 24, there again was nothing for the Postal Service. Between the two bills, private corporations and other business interests received almost \$1 trillion in financial assistance.

Postal Service Needs Aid Now

Talks in Congress are rapidly progressing regarding further stimulus legislation.

Our Legislative & Political Department has been meeting non-stop with Representatives and Senators on both sides of the aisle, and coordinating with the other postal unions, to advocate for funding. In April, the four postal unions authored a position paper detailing the funding crisis the Postal Service is facing and the important role of its services, especially during times of crisis. The demands include:

- Investment of \$25 billion to help the Postal Service weather the pandemic.
- Provide quarterly payments to USPS to cover the difference between postage revenue and USPS operating costs for the duration of the crisis.
- Ensure equal treatment for postal employees in any legislation that authorizes and funds hazard pay for other front-line workers.

The Postal Service employs hundreds of thousands of workers. Small businesses rely on the USPS for delivery, as does rural America, for access to mail and medicine. It is time for Congress to step up and ensure this national treasure enshrined in the Constitution survives by providing the COVID-19 funding the Postal Service needs to continue carrying out its duty of binding the country together.

“APWU members have been crucial in serving the public during this crisis,” said Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard. “Funding for the Postal Service needs to be a top priority in the next stimulus.”

Contact Your Members of Congress

Securing financial relief is a key part of our work to ensure the health and safety of postal workers and the long-term future of the Postal Service.

"Treasury Secretary Mnuchin is refusing to advance any funding packages if the Postal Service is included in the legislation," said President Dimondstein. "We need Congress to push back and refuse to advance any legislation whatsoever unless it includes postal relief."



Write, call and/or email your Congressional Representative. Go to apwu.org for more information. Urge Congress to provide the necessary stimulus relief so the crisis is not used

as an excuse for this Administration to carry out their proclaimed privatization agenda, i.e., selling the public Postal Service to private, corporate interests.

President Dimondstein Issues Press Release Responding to President Trump calling Postal Service "A Joke."



During the signing of the fourth stimulus bill on April 24, President Trump called the Postal Service "a joke," and insisted that no assistance would be given unless the agency significantly raised its package rates. APWU President Mark Dimondstein issued the following press statement later that day:

President Trump's shameful comments today that the Postal Service "is a joke" and that USPS "should raise package prices four to five times" current levels is no laughing matter to the American people.

His comments are an insult to the forty-four postal workers who have died carrying out their vital public service in the midst of this pandemic. It's also disheartening to the 600,000 proud postal workers who continue to carry out our essential mission to the country at a time when

the public needs reliable and affordable postal services more than ever.

Only the U. S. Postal Service reaches 160 million addresses every day to deliver life-saving medicines, vital supplies and important information, at universal, affordable rates.

There's no longer any doubt what President Trump's true intentions are for the country's highest-rated agency, approved by 91 percent of the public, equally among Republicans and Democrats, according to recent data from the Pew Research Center.

President Trump's clear intent is to raise prices and force a crisis at the Post Office so that his political benefactors at the corporate shippers can increase their company profits at the expense of the people.

A President who boasts of his wealth need not worry about pricier mail and packages. He's clearly shown how out of touch he is with the concerns of businesses both large and small in the era of e-commerce and the millions of people who rely on affordable mail and package delivery, especially during this pandemic.

Trump's plan to increase package prices by four or five times would hasten the demise of the public U.S. Postal Service and end affordable, universal delivery to every address in the country.



EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

COVID-19 and EAP Services



Photos Courtesy of USPS

Top: Shaniqua Sims,
Custodian, Winchester
Local (VA)

Right: Danielle
Hodge, Clerk, Trenton
Metropolitan Area Local
(NJ)

During this crisis, stress and fear are becoming all too normal because none of us are sure whether we were exposed, if we are a carrier, or if we possibly will have a mild or serious case that places us at death's door. We are concerned about spreading this virus to our families, friends and other human beings. The fact that getting tested is seriously difficult and vaccines are not available has placed all of us in a vulnerable place.

As essential workers, we continue to report to work and move the mail every day. If you do not have protective equipment, leave benefits, quarantine rights, contact tracing, or facility deep cleaning where there is a test positive case, contact your local union president immediately. Be a union activist.

Employee Assistance Program

For those that need immediate support to relieve stress, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) has support specifically dealing with COVID-19, exposure and coping with death. EAP has 24/7 services:

- Counseling over the phone
- Online video counseling
- Web-based resources
- 'In the moment' support
- Coaching
- Consultation

Find out more by going to www.EAP4YOU.com or calling 1-800-327-4968, TTY 877-482-7341. I cannot stress enough that no one should feel negative in any way for reaching out to their services. This crisis is stressful for every human around the globe, doubly so for all essential workers. Anger, frustration, isolation and family violence, are increasing and everyone deserves support. Don't fight it alone.

Right to Vote by Mail



This pandemic has also made one thing abundantly clear: this country needs nationwide voting by mail and no excuse absentee voting enacted now. Our democracy is at stake as we head into what some are saying the most important federal election in the last 100 years.

We help to deliver the right to vote in America. COVID-19 has adversely affected our right to vote safely. The White House has not only attacked the USPS by failing to provide stimulus money, but has also attacked the right to Vote by Mail. The administration's goal to privatize us demonstrates the importance of postal workers. We must stand up and fight back by helping to get the right to vote by mail during this pandemic.

We must help to push the right to vote by mail in states and in our federal election in November 2020. Vote by mail provides easy, safe, hack-proof voting. We need to help get people registered and to apply for an absentee ballot. *(For more information on the fight for vote by mail, read page 27.)*

Postal workers are essential workers who help protect our country from bio-terrorist activities, bio-medical pandemics, and process and deliver election materials and absentee ballots for everyone, including our veterans overseas.

Can we count on you to be an APWU Activist? Our country needs us and we need them. Together we can save the Postal Service, and provide real democracy. Contact your local/state president to get involved now. ■

MEMBERS IN ACTION



480-481 Area Local member Jeff Kay wearing face shield provided by UAW

UAW LOCAL 245 DONATES FACE SHIELDS TO APWU 480-481 AREA LOCAL

As union members, looking out for the safety of our fellow brothers and sisters is more important than ever during this pandemic. In April, UAW Local 245 showed the meaning of solidarity when they donated 700 hand-made face shields for 480-481 Area Local members to use. The donation was organized by 480-481 Area Local member Christine Copenhagen and her husband, Chris Mabbitt, a member of UAW Local 245 at the Troy Design and Manufacturing facility located in Plymouth MI.

“Thank you so much UAW Local 245!” said 480-481 Area Local President Roscoe Woods. “When this is all behind us, we will find an appropriate way to thank you! Solidarity in safety!”

MAUI AREA LOCAL MEMBERS SEND LETTERS TO SENATORS TO SUPPORT POSTAL SERVICE



Letters from Maui Area Local members at the Kahului Post Office to Hawaii Senators Mazie Hirono (D) and Brian Schatz (D) calling for their support for the Postal Service during the COVID-19 crisis.

COOKEVILLE LOCAL (TN) MEMBERS HELP COMMUNITY AFTER DEVASTATING TORNADOES



Cookeville Local (TN) members and fellow postal workers

On March 2 and 3, a tornado outbreak struck in Tennessee, causing 26 deaths, over 300 injuries, and over \$1 billion in damage across the state. APWU members in Cookeville, the hardest-hit area in the state, came

together on March 15 to replace residential mailboxes destroyed during the storm. Cookeville Local members also donated enough money to cover six months of post office box fees to tornado victims.

SAN FRANCISCO LOCAL HOLDS CELEBRATION FOR STEWARD JOSE RIQUELME RETURNING TO WORK



San Francisco Local members come together to welcome back their steward Jose Riquelme (bottom left), after he was unjustly fired due to his strong representation of the members.



Treasurer Responsibilities During COVID-19

SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

Coronavirus is wreaking havoc on many aspects of our everyday lives and we are collectively adjusting to what appears to be our new norm. Not only will we have to adapt to alternative methods of handling business in our personal lives, but our responsibilities as union officials will also require some adaptations in how we will function while staying within the provisions of the Labor Management Disclosure Act.

Fortunately, the Department of Labor (DOL) and IRS have recognized the unprecedented effects COVID-19 has placed upon labor organizations. As such, the DOL has issued two advisories that affect union elections and filing LM reports. Local Treasurers will want to take a look at whether their local circumstance(s) qualifies for the COVID-19 Employee Retention Payroll Tax Credit under IRS guidelines.

Union Elections

There are DOL advisories on public disclosure reporting in areas affected by the COVID-19 and on union elections if a local or state affiliate has to cancel or postpone their convention when there is an election requirement. The Office of Labor and Management Standards (OLMS) recognized that due to the disruption caused by COVID-19, it may be difficult or impossible for some unions to conduct timely union officer elections.

OLMS issued this advisory for those unions whose principal office is located in the affected areas or whose reportable activities occurred in those areas. The advisory states that affected labor unions must make a good faith effort to conduct elections as required under the LMRDA in those affected areas. However, if local and state affiliates are unable to comply, they would be required to hold the election when reasonably practicable on a certain date.

LM Report Filing Extended

The Department of Labor has updated its advisory extending the LM report filing until June 30, 2020 for locals affected by COVID-19. Local presidents do not need to contact OLMS before the LM report is due if the reporting deadline was prior to June 30, 2020. Local LM reports must be electronically filed by June 30, 2020, absent further notice from OLMS.

COVID-19 Employee Retention Payroll Tax Credit.

An employer (including exempt organizations) is eligible for the employee retention payroll tax credit if an employer's operations were fully or partially suspended due to a COVID-19 related shut-down order, or gross receipts declined by more than 50 percent as compared to the same quartering the prior year.

An eligible employer will claim its total qualified wages and its employee retention credit on its quarterly employment tax return, beginning with the second quarter. Local treasurers may want to refer to the *IRS.gov* webpage to see if there have been any IRS updates pertaining to the COVID-19 employee retention payroll tax credit or send an email to aaugust@apwu.org if you have any questions.

Convention Resolutions

Although the scheduled August 2020 National Convention has been postponed until further notice, the submission of resolutions will continue. Please continue to send any and all convention resolutions to 2020resolutions@apwu.org.

Training Webinars

Training webinars are available for new and current local officers in areas pertaining to officer fiduciary responsibilities. COVID-19 does not prevent locals officers from obtaining necessary training.

After confirming an available date, an invitation to register for each webinar will be emailed to all Presidents, Treasurers, and Secretary-Treasurers before the webinar is scheduled. Presidents are encouraged to invite executive board and committee members to participate when appropriate.

A computer with internet access is necessary to see the presentation and a telephone to call in to hear. The confirmation email contains the link to join the webinar and the toll-free number to call, as well as the access code (cell phone users, check with your carrier to see if charges or minute usage will apply). Please contact the Secretary-Treasurer's Department at 202-842-4215 or email aaugust@apwu.org for more information. ■

Mourning Postal Workers Lost in COVID-19 Pandemic

The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic has tragically claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people in the United States, including over 54 postal workers and a number of APWU members (number as this issue goes to press).

"The APWU extends our deepest sympathies to the families of our members who have lost loved ones during this terrible crisis," said President Mark

Dimondstein. "The APWU family grieves as one. We also hope for the speedy recovery of the many postal workers sickened by this disease."

Throughout this crisis, the APWU leadership's first priority is the health and safety of postal workers, as our members continue serving the people of this country in this time of great challenge. ■

Former Motor Vehicle Service National Business Agent **Russ Knepp** Passes Away



Former National Officer Russ Knepp passed away Tuesday, April 21, of natural causes. He was 73 years old.

Brother Knepp was a Vehicle Maintenance Facility (VMF) postal mechanic from the Pittsburgh Metro Area Local before serving as the Eastern Region MVS NBA.

In addition to his dedication to the American Postal Workers Union, Russell was a proud combat veteran of the U.S. Army, former commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 623, father, husband, brother, and "Pap Pap."

National Executive Board Votes to Postpone 25th Biennial National Convention due to COVID-19 Pandemic

After much thought and consideration for the safety of our local and state delegates, national officers, families, guests and friends – and the ability to have a democratic and fully participatory convention – the National Executive Board made the difficult decision to postpone the APWU 25th Biennial National Convention scheduled in Los Angeles, CA this coming August.

**PLEASE CONTINUE TO SEND ANY AND ALL
CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS TO
2020RESOLUTIONS@APWU.ORG.**

The National Executive Board will soon be discussing where to go from here. There will be no stones left unturned in attempting to re-schedule the convention in late 2020, if possible, or sometime in 2021.

Local/State organizations need to cancel their hotel and travel arrangements as soon as possible.

The postponement of the national convention will allow those local unions who were unable to hold meetings and the state organizations who postponed their 2020 conventions/conferences to hold their meetings/elections prior to the National Convention.

Please continue to send any and all convention resolutions to 2020resolutions@apwu.org.

Questions related to the postponement of the convention can be sent to Hannah Decker or Annette August-Taylor at apwu2020convention@apwu.org.

On behalf of the National Executive Board, thanks for all you do, be well and stay safe in these trying times. ■



Standing Up for Safe Jobs During COVID-19

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR VANCE ZIMMERMAN

The past few months have been challenging for this country, especially for those of us considered essential front-line workers. Postal workers were called upon once again in a time of crisis to help keep communication and commerce flowing. You stepped up, you worked hard, and you showed how dedicated you are to every person in this country and worldwide.

As COVID-19 shut down businesses to regular customer traffic, you delivered the goods those businesses are shipping, including prescription drugs, personal protective equipment (PPE), and gifts from families that can not celebrate birthdays and other special events together. You brought normalcy to the homes here in our great country.

**POSTAL WORKERS WERE CALLED UPON
ONCE AGAIN IN A TIME OF CRISIS TO
HELP KEEP COMMUNICATION AND
COMMERCE FLOWING.**

You proved how essential your day-to-day work is and how essential the Postal Service is overall. There is not a shortage of stories of people who are honoring the work you do and stories from people saying how seeing the Postal Service still operate is calming to them.

I want to thank you for all the vital work you have done before and during this crisis. The stories of your work during the pandemic are amazing and something to be honored. You make this union proud!

Moving into the future beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, we cannot forget the lessons that we learned from it. We saw postal workers *Stand Up for Safe Jobs* and demand the PPE they needed to do their work safely. You stood up to management when you felt your facilities were not cleaned properly, challenging them when you did not have hand sanitizer and when you felt your work environments were risky due to COVID-19.

It was your ideas from the field that the Postal Service implemented, because you suggested and demanded them. Districts buying hand sanitizer from local distilleries turned sanitizer producers was one such suggestion. One of the best and most widely implemented

suggestion also came from the field – sneeze guards. It was your work in standing up and showing management how to create sneeze guards first with shower curtains and then plexiglass that lead to their nationwide implementation. Another office put tape markings on the floor to help customers socially distance, now a nationwide practice. It was you – standing up and demanding safety – that helped push the Postal Service to do these things.

Looking Ahead

When we move forward from COVID-19, we will need to recognize new concerns and changes in procedures. All must be ready to address, pivot and demand changes to problems we confront. For example, when face coverings were ordered to be worn in various states, local members demanded the Postal Service abide by local directives. The USPS is now complying with all local orders.

Remember what you did. You filed 1767s – keep doing so when you see other hazards at work. Demand safe equipment and do not use damaged mail transport equipment. Work safely. Exercise your rights under our contract in Article 14 to have a safe work environment. Remind each other to work safely, like you remind each other to wash your hands, wear your face coverings, and to practice social distancing. No one wants to go home sick or hurt from a day of work at the post office.

You proved that when you *Stand Up for Safe Jobs*, the Postal Service will act. As we move forward, keep demanding safe workplaces. Remember, we are *One Team, One Fight!* ■

COVID-19 safety is of course the focus of much of what has been done over the last few months, but business still goes on. We continue to meet on grievances, schedule arbitrations, and perform the work of the union.

The contract is being finalized and copies of it were sent out to each member. New pay increases were due and pay scales were agreed to with the USPS. These went into effect on April 11 and were in pay checks on May 1 (see page 20 for more information).

Postal Workers Stand Up for **SAFE** on Workers **JOBS** Memorial Day

A PWU members across the country took a few moments on Workers Memorial Day to *Stand Up for Safe Jobs* and remember fallen workers.

“Workers Memorial Day is an opportunity for us to shine a bright light on safety and health on the job, which is doubly important this year during the coronavirus crisis,” said President Dimondstein. “Every day during this global pandemic, our postal worker safety and health is our top priority. We are essential workers risking our wellbeing to keep our communities connected.”

Greater Seattle Area Local, Nation’s Capital Southern MD Area Local, and Des Moines Area Local held powerful vigils highlighting the impact of COVID-19 on postal workers. Portland Oregon Area Local held a social distancing memorial event. Raleigh Cosmopolitan Area Local, Dallas Area Local, Atlanta Metro Area Local and Bakersfield (CA) Local were among the locals who wore stickers, wristbands and signs vowing to *Stand Up For Safe Jobs!*

Safety is a right for every worker and should be honored every single day – especially during this pandemic.

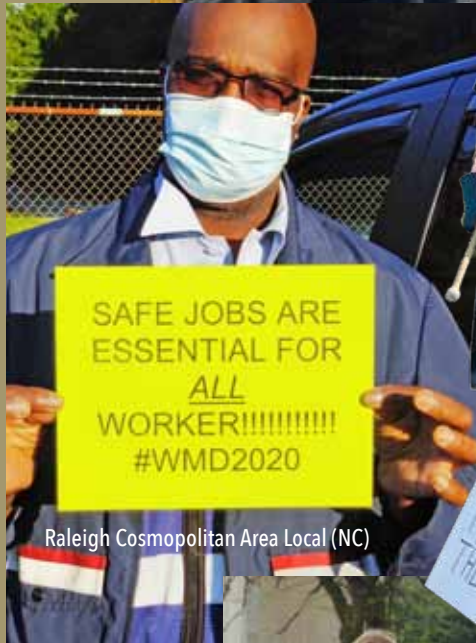
If you recognized Workers Memorial Day, please send pictures of you, your family and/or co-workers to communications@apwu.org for a chance to be featured on the APWU website or in future publications. Thank you to all the Collective Actions Teams who organized actions.



Dallas Area Local



Bakersfield Area Local (CA)



Raleigh Cosmopolitan Area Local (NC)



Greater Seattle Area Local



Des Moines Area Local (IA)



Greater Seattle Area Local





Public Shows Strong Support for Postal Service

Postal Service Remains HIGHEST RATED FEDERAL AGENCY

Customers at the Melrose Post Office in Ft. Lauderdale, FL set up an arch of yellow and butterfly balloons with "front line" on the top in appreciation for postal workers performing essential work during the coronavirus pandemic. Pictured is Jackie Quintana, a clerk in the Broward County Area Local (FL).

In an annual survey from Pew Research Center, the Postal Service was again the highest rated federal agency, with over 91 percent of those surveyed viewing the Postal Service favorably.

The rating is an increase from previous years and vastly outstrips any other federal agency. The poll showed that party affiliation was not a factor in satisfaction with the people's Post Office – 91 percent of Democrats and Republicans alike viewed the Postal Service favorably.

"As a citizen it makes me angry to allow a great piece of federal infrastructure to crumble out of neglect," Kelly Corcoran, a record store owner in Lawrence, KS who relies on the USPS to ship vinyl records, told the *Kansas City Star*. "I can't think of a more popular federal thing."

#SavethePostOffice Goes Viral After Financial Crisis Announced

In response to the dire financial crisis facing the USPS, members of the public around the country have shown their strong support for the public Postal Service and postal workers, writing opinion-editorials, letters to the editor, and sharing their stories. Support has come from a wide range of people across the country, from the editorial board of the *Boston Globe* to those living in small communities in Missouri, showing the importance of the Postal Service's universal service to everyone, no matter where they live.

After Postmaster General Megan Brennan reported the Postal Service would run out of money by the end of this summer, the public started grassroots efforts to save it. So many people went to the *usps.com* to purchase stamps that the website went down for a bit. The hashtags #SavethePostOffice and #SavetheUSPS were on Twitter's "Trending" list. Communities spoke out in mass.

"The Difference Between Life and Death"

For rural communities, the Postal Service is a lifeline, delivering medicine, Social Security checks, and providing a low-cost service for small businesses to ship goods. In an article for the *Kansas City Star*, journalist Bryan Lowry interviewed members of rural communities in Missouri and Kansas, who explained how their lives would be affected were the Postal Service to stop functioning.

"Let's say they cut down on days of service, what happens when you run out of medication and the medication doesn't show up? That could be the difference between life and death," said Jack Bainbridge, 70, of Odessa, MO.

The *New York Times* editorial board also expressed support for the life-saving role the USPS plays during the coronavirus pandemic: "The Postal Service cannot be allowed to crumble in the midst of a national emergency," the board wrote. "As

this pandemic rages, its 600,000-plus employees are working to ensure that Americans receive their prescriptions and protective equipment and other essential items, no matter where they live."

Defending the Universal Service Mandate

Much of the public support for the Postal Service has centered on the universal service mandate that has allowed businesses to function and people across the country to stay connected.

"Rural America (Trump's base) would really be in a bad way if the USPS shut down, as other private delivery services refuse to go where the USPS does... Prescriptions, Social Security checks and many other necessities would be gone," wrote Joe Lucas in a letter to the editor to the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. "Here's to all USPS workers still out there every day helping this country keep running."

The editorial board of Racine, WI's *Journal-Times* argued that the universal service mandate is a vital line of communication during the pandemic. "For less than the cost of a candy bar, you – or your grandmother who doesn't use email – can mail a letter from Key West to Utqiagvik, Alaska. Those two American cities are 4,283 miles apart," the board wrote. "You don't need a particular cruise line or airline to remain in business. But you do need the Postal Service." ■

A Grand Alliance Members Showing Solidarity During COVID-19 Crisis

In just a few short months, the coronavirus pandemic has changed so much about our society. Despite the hardship and loss the pandemic has caused, one force has continued to shine through the darkness of the moment – solidarity. Acts of kindness, generosity and mutual support – both individual and collective – remind us of our shared humanity, our common dignity and the timeless fact that the fates of working people are intertwined.

One place where that solidarity has shone through once again is in the work of *A Grand Alliance to Save our Public Postal Service*.

The pandemic amplified the risk to the Postal Service in two important ways: first, the precipitous decline in mail volume is creating a real financial crisis for the USPS. Second, the privatizers in the Administration are doubling down on the crisis to extract painful changes to the post office, preparing to sell it off to their friends on Wall Street.

As soon as the double crisis became clear to the members of *A Grand Alliance*, they sprang into action once again. As they did when postal workers were petitioning the Postal Board of Governors around the appointment of the next Postmaster General, a number of Alliance partners and allies circulated a petition to their memberships, demanding Congress provide the necessary funding to maintain vital postal services. As this column goes to print, more than 437,000 people have signed that petition.

Social Security Works, Take on Wall Street, People for the American Way and the AFL-CIO led the charge on the petitions, even as the pandemic created critical challenges to their organizations and constituents as well.

And, just as many members of the public rushed to buy stamps to bolster the Postal Service, Grand Alliance signatories naturally turned to the mail to organize support for our national treasure. Public Citizen and Jobs with Justice launched mail campaigns, informing their membership about the threat to the Postal Service and urging them to write to members of Congress.

Former Texas Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower, commentator and host of the *Hightower Lowdown*, took to the airwaves to defend the Postal Service and devoted his column to the threat of the moment, urging readers to visit USMailNotForSale.org.

VoteVets produced a video for their online audience highlighting the important reliance veterans have on receiving their prescriptions through the mail. Other Alliance allied organizations, like Color of Change, shared stories highlighting the heroic work of postal workers as they moved their members to take action in defense of the public Postal Service.

As this magazine goes to press, the APWU and other Alliance partners are in discussions to organize new ways of mobilizing public support for the Postal Service. Hundreds of thousands of petitions must land at the feet of congressional leaders who can ensure the future viability of the Postal Service. While the public health demands of the moment have limited our abilities to congregate and demonstrate in familiar ways, Alliance partners continue their important work using innovative means.

“This pandemic has created enormous challenges in all corners of our society,” said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. “That the Grand Alliance has generated so much solidarity despite these trying times is a testament to the vital role that postal workers and the public Postal Service holds in this country. If we’re to succeed in our struggle to save our national treasure, it will be because of the support of A Grand Alliance and the people of the country rising up to demand it.” ■

A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service is a broad coalition of national, state and local organizations including the NAACP, Vote Vets, Jobs with Justice, National Council of Churches and Rainbow PUSH. These groups have come together to take a stand against the unprecedented assaults on the Postal Service including efforts to dismantle and privatize it. To join A Grand Alliance, visit www.AGrandAlliance.org.



PAY INCREASES in May

New Pay Scales

Please see the new pay scales for career employees and PSEs inserted into this issue of *The American Postal Worker*. The Arbitration Award by Arbitrator Goldberg, awarded on March 10, granted three general wage increases and retained Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLAs).

There are four retroactive increases for career employees: two general increases on November 24, 2018 (1.3 percent) and November 23, 2019 (1.1 percent), and two COLAs. The COLA for August 31, 2019 was \$624 and February 29, 2020 was \$166.

On November 21, 2020 there is another pay increase of 1.0 percent. There are three more COLAs during this contract.

Postal Support Employees, who do not receive COLAs, receive the same three general pay increases as the career employees, and will have two additional increases in May 2020 and 2021 each worth \$.20 per hour.

On May 1, every postal worker in the APWU bargaining unit received a significant pay increase! With the retroactive increases and Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) part of the new 2018-2021 Collective Bargaining Agreement, it pays to be union!

Bargaining unit employees will also get their retroactive pay for the time they worked from September 24, 2018 – April 10, 2020. The date is tentatively scheduled for PP 18-2020, starting August 15. It would then be in pay checks dated September 4, 2020. Go to apwu.org for more information on retroactive pay.

“Congratulations to all APWU members on your well-deserved pay increase,” said President Dimondstein. “These are some of the major benefits from standing together and having a voice in the workplace. Thank you to all the strikers in the 1970 Great Postal Strike for securing the ability for postal workers to negotiate for pay and benefits, and for the APWU members in the decades since who have maintained it.”



APWU members uniting during the 2018-2019 campaign for a good contract. Job well done!

Newly Converted Career Employees

Another big announcement with the implementation of our new union contract is that over 2,200 Postal Support Employees (PSEs) were converted on May 9!

These PSEs have been employed in 125 workyear or larger offices for more than 2.5 years (30 months).

“Being able to achieve career status for PSEs was an important goal during our negotiations,” President Mark Dimondstein said. “These newly converted employees will see an immediate pay increase, an increase in benefits paid for by the Postal Service, guaranteed work hours, and in most cases fixed schedules.”

As newly converted career employees, these PSEs will have 60 days from May 9, 2020 (up to July 8, 2020) to make benefit decisions. New career employees may choose new health insurance plans, enroll in the Federal Employee Group Life Insurance (FGLI) plan, choose how much to contribute to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), where to allocate TSP funds, and other benefits decisions.

The Postal Service is supposed to send each newly converted employee a “benefits” book with all the necessary forms and instructions for making these extremely important decisions. The 60-day limit is a hard limit and cannot be extended. Employees are encouraged to begin looking at their new benefits and not wait until the very end of the 60 days to decide.

Day 1 Paychecks

Improved Step Progressions

Career employees in the post-2010 pay schedule in Grades 5-8 will have new top steps added to their pay scale. Employees in Grade 5 will receive one and in Grades 6-8 will receive two additional steps. Each step is approximately worth \$.50 an hour.

"Bridging the gaps of the divisive two-tier career pay scale was a major goal of the 2018 contract fight," said Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman. "Gaining of additional top steps was a major accomplishment and will amount to thousands of dollars more pay." For more about the top step increases go to apwu.org. ■



Salt Lake City Area Local

New Collective Bargaining Agreement Mailed to Members

The APWU has mailed a copy of the new 2018-2021 Collective Bargaining Agreement to every member.

**IT'S YOUR CONTRACT! KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!
ENFORCE YOUR RIGHTS!**

Benefits in Families First Coronavirus Recovery Act

The *Families First Coronavirus Recovery Act* (FFCRA) extends two new leave types to career and non-career employees:

- Up to 80 hours of Emergency Paid Sick Leave for specific qualifying reasons.
- Public Health Emergency Leave, which amends the *Family and Medical Leave Act* (FMLA), allowing employees to take up to 12 weeks of leave related to the closure of a minor child's school or place of care due to COVID-19.

The law went into effect on April 1, 2020, and covers qualifying absences from that day through December 31, 2020.

You will be paid up to 80 hours at your regular rate of pay if:

1. You are subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolated order related to COVID-19 (state and local "shelter in place" or "stay at home" orders are not considered "quarantines").
2. You have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19.

3. You are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and are seeking a medical diagnosis.

The following reasons allow you to receive two-thirds of your regular rate of pay, up to \$200 per day:

4. You are caring for an individual subject to an order described in numbers 1 and 2 above.
5. You are caring for your child under the age of 18 whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 related reasons.
6. You are experiencing any other substantially-similar condition specified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

FMLA is expanded if the employee meets qualifying conditions above. The following regulations apply:

- An employee only needs 30 days of employment to qualify.
- The usual 12 weeks of FMLA is not expanded.

- For the first two week period, can use Leave Without Pay (LWOP), sick or annual leave you have accrued, or use the 80 hours of Emergency Paid Sick Leave; but if used here, you would not be able to use Emergency Paid Sick Leave for any other qualifying reason or combination of reasons.

- The remaining 10 weeks of FMLA for the indicated qualifying reasons is paid leave, at two-thirds the regular rate of pay with a cap of \$200 per day and \$12,000 for the ten weeks.
- Employees who qualify and use these types of leave may not be removed, disciplined, or discriminated against for lawfully using.

The APWU reached agreement with the USPS that using this type of leave cannot be held against a worker during their probationary procedures. Anyone who believes this has happened should contact their local union stewards or officers.

When we receive updates on additional developments from discussions with USPS, we will provide them to you. ■



POSTPlan PMR/PSE 818 Violation Remedy Payments Scheduled for June 12, 2020

Assistant Director Lynn Pallas-Barber, Director Lamont Brooks and Assistant Director Sam Lisenbe

The first-round payments for the POSTPlan PMR/PSE Usage Remedy have been scheduled to be paid on Pay Period 12-2020 (paycheck dated June 12, 2020). The remedy amounts as identified by the APWU will be included on current employee paychecks. Those individuals who are no longer working for the Postal Service will have a check mailed to the last office of record. The remedy will be identified on the paystub as adjustment/reason code 40/36.

To determine if you are eligible for payment, visit apwu.org. Click on the 'Members Only' link on the top right-hand side of the page or under "For Members" and follow the directions on the page. You do not have to be a member to access the page.

The eligible employees were either PSEs or PTF clerks (over 9000) in the level 4 and 6 RMPO offices and/or all career clerks in level-18 offices (over 100) from PP 02-FY2015 - PP 15-FY2017.

The Clerk Craft reached a \$49.9 million dollar settlement with the USPS on POSTPlan staffing violations. The monetary settlement follows a ruling by Arbitrator Stephen Goldberg that the Postal Service violated Arbitrator Goldberg's previous Sept. 4, 2014 award and a subsequent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) dated Sept. 22, 2014.

The dispute was initiated after the Postal Service admittedly failed to honor their agreement that after December 22, 2014, the 'POSTPlan' Remotely-Managed Post Offices (RMPOs) open 4 or 6 hours a day would be staffed with bargaining unit clerks, and Level 18 offices would be staffed with career employees. Long after the agreement, Postmaster Reliefs (PMRs) were still working in 4-hour or 6-hour RMPOs across the country and Level 18 offices reported still using PSEs instead of career employees.

New Contract - New Q&As - MOU Filling Clerk Craft Residuals

APWU & USPS Questions and Answers Explaining The Mutual Understanding Of The 2018-2021 Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) Re: Filling Clerk Craft Residual Vacancies

With the continuation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Filling Clerk Craft Residuals in the 2018 - 2021 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), the Clerk Craft released a joint Q&A, to provide a more detailed clarification of the steps and procedures for PSE conversions and career transfers into Clerk Craft residual vacancies.

This joint document provides clarification on several issues that have remained concerns for APWU Clerk Craft employees - career and noncareer.

Some of the issues addressed are:

- Employee eligibility
- The number of times needed to apply for a specific post office
- How the ratios are applied in blocks of four or six, depending on office size
- No make-up transfer opportunities within the block of four or six ratios
- PTF retreat rights
- Filling PTF vacancies
- Dual deferment periods for SSDAs
- Controlling language: Filling Residual Vacancies - Clerk Craft MOU vs Article 37.5.D
- PSE conversions with the 2.5 years in 125 or more work year offices per the Goldberg award, with conversions effective 5/9/20
- 1:4 and 1:6 ratios being reset with June 1, 2020 posting in regular eReassign
- First action review with the 1:6 ratio offices
- Seniority date based on a PTF/PSE canvass for PTF vacancies
- A limitation on the number of canvasses an employee can accept

I want to commend and personally thank Assistant Director Lynn Pallas-Barber for all her efforts in the implementation of this MOU and to our newly elected Assistant Director Sam Lisenbe for his valuable assistance and input. I would be remiss if I did not thank our NBAs for their input and guidance over the years on issues related to this MOU. I want to thank former Clerk Craft Director Clint Burelson, who relentlessly pushed for clear ratio language. Last, but not least, I want to thank APWU President Mark Dimondstein and Director of Industrial Relations Vance Zimmerman.

COVID-19 Emergency Considerations for Fiscal Year 2020



Assistant Director Terry Martinez, Director Idowu Balogun and Assistant Director Jimmie Waldon

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, parties agree the following conditions will be applied when determining any MS-47, TL-5 Line H liabilities for Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20):

- Custodians should be utilized to the maximum extent possible, including overtime, in order to ensure all necessary cleaning is completed.
- Due to custodians needing to complete regular custodial team cleaning (CTC) routes and the cleaning requirements as stated in MMO-031-20, Influenza and Coronavirus Cleaning Contingency, each day a custodial employee worked his/her duty assignment between March 3, 2020, and May 17, 2020, will be given full Line H credit for the hours worked.
- While a facility, or portion of a facility, is closed due to non-usage in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and a custodial route is subsequently suspended, the workhours associated with the suspended route will be deducted from the Line H liability.
 - Any custodial routes that are suspended in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic will be suspended through the Custodial Workloading (CW) Software and will be unsuspended once the facility, or portion of a facility, is operational, but no later than the expiration of this agreement.
- In FY20, once a custodial employee exceeds sixty (60) hours of sick leave, any COVID-19 related absences between February 29, 2020, and May 17, 2020, will reduce the Line H liabilities for that facility by seven (7) hours for each day the employee was unavailable.

The above identified emergency considerations will expire on May 17, 2020. The parties will revisit this issue immediately prior to this MOU's expiration to determine if extension is appropriate.

This agreement does not establish precedent in any future negotiations regarding Line H liabilities.

Maintenance: 2020 National Interest Arbitration Summary

The Maintenance Tentative Agreements listed below from the Craft Table are incorporated into the Award and 2018-2021 Contract:

- **Article 38.6. A.2:** The local APWU President will be provided a copy of the training allocations before solicitation of volunteers.
- **Article 38.5.B.6:** Waiving of 30-day limitation currently placed time frame to request to be placed on Promotion Eligibility Registers (PERs) for new employees.
- **Article 38.B.7:** Elimination of the three-year Open Season. Now, Maintenance employees may request to be placed on PERs at any time and the results will be generated no later than 60 days, instead of the previously existing 150 days.
- **Article 38.5.B.4.B:** Electronic Technician ET-11 will be filled from Electronic Technician ET-10 with at least two years of experience.
- **Article 38.6.A.1:** Involuntary selections for training will be made by inverse seniority on a rotating basis.

Line H Summary of Award

The Line H remedy was remanded to the parties at the National Level for a narrowly focused negotiation to define the terms "fully staffed" and "long term" absence, as written below:

*"The types of leave or situations in which this Line H adjustment can be made are limited to the five situations proposed by the Postal Service: **military leave; FMLA-covered absences; leave under USERRA; OWCP leave; or court leave.** I will also permit the Postal Service to adjust the Line H hours to account for the hours in a staffing package of a custodial position that has been properly withheld as a custodial residual vacancy under Article 12 [...]"*

DO NOT engage in Line H negotiations with local management using the above exceptions until the conclusion of discussions on the remand at the HQ level. ■



Assistant Director Javier Piñeres and Director Michael Foster

We Are Essential

To the brothers and sisters of the MVS Division, along with the hundreds of thousands of postal workers who have selflessly placed the needs of their country above their personal health and the health of their families, thank you. We salute the APWU sisters and brothers who bravely performed their duties during the COVID-19 pandemic and lost their lives.

As we go to press during these trying and unknown times, our deepest condolences go out to the family of all our fallen members who have succumbed to the worst epidemic of our lifetime.

While the entire country faces the realities of the coronavirus, and an apparently ungrateful government, MVS has proven every day that we are vital to the USPS mission.

The parties at the national and headquarters levels continue the arduous tasks of working together to create protocols and Memorandums of Understanding to instruct the field on the safest ways to keep our members safe and perform their essential duties as postal workers. However, the reality remains that far too often, in too many post offices and installations, local manage-

ment ignores these instructions designed to keep workers safe.

Supervisors, whose only objective is to “move the mail at any cost,” in neglecting to follow the instructions of safety and health professionals to provide safe guidelines, equipment, and materials to keep the members safe, do a grave injustice to the efforts and intentions of the national parties. These are the times when we need the union more than ever.

As the APWU and sister unions commemorate the 50-year anniversary of the Great Postal Strike, the role and the mission of the union is as critical and necessary as it was in 1970 when postal employees were forced to tell the government “no more” to intolerable pay and working conditions. We have come a long way in 50 years from “collective begging” to “collective bargaining.”

In all fairness, there are some locations and parts of the country where the local parties are getting it right and working together to create safe working conditions, and effectively moving the mail safely. It is management’s obligation and the responsibility of the union to demand safe working conditions and protections for our members. ■

“What Do You Think About the New Lift Gates on Postal Service Trucks?”

With a start date of April 1, 2020, and an estimated release date of August 2020, the Office of Inspectors General (OIG), solicited comments from postal employees on the lift gates on the cargo trucks purchased beginning in 2018.

The survey asks:

- What are your experiences with the lift gates on Postal Service trucks?
- How are the lift gates making it more efficient to load and unload the mail?
- Have you noted any safety issues with the lift gates?

The MVS officers and members participated in the First Article Testing (FAT) of the Cargo trucks, as required

in Article 39.3.B., and made numerous comments and identified safety concerns to postal management and the manufacturer on these trucks including the lift gate. You can read these concerns and the USPS’s response along with the OIG survey on the MVS page at apwu.org.

Although the OIG sometimes contacts the National union when conducting these types of surveys, we have yet to be asked about the union’s concerns with the lift gates.

The survey can be found on the OIG website at usps.oig.gov.

We encourage all members who operate or repair these trucks to participate in the OIG survey.

Stay safe, proud to be union.

How the Support Services Division is Adapting to COVID-19



Director Steve Brooks

We are living in unprecedented times. As essential workers in this country, postal workers are responsible for continuing to process and deliver letters, documents, and packages to the people of this nation.

It is more imperative than ever that we take extra precautions for the safety of ourselves and others. It is critical that we push management to take the proper steps to provide us with the safest environment possible. Employees have the right to come to a workplace that they feel safe in.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT YOUR UNION FAMILY, BOTH LOCALLY AND NATIONALLY, IS THERE FOR YOU AND FIGHTING FOR YOUR RIGHTS TO A SAFE AND HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENT.

I am proud of the work that the APWU has done, at every level, to push management to do the right thing for postal employees. Several Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) have been developed to ensure that the Postal Service provides a safe work environment for every employee.

The Support Services Division negotiated and signed several MOUs in attempts to properly deal with the COVID-19 situation.

For employees in the Information Technology and Accounting Services (IT/AS) group, the Postal Service has provided proper equipment for employees to work from home, if their job duties can be done by that method. Many IT/AS employees, based on their duties and responsibilities, must remain in the facility daily.

The goal here was to get as many people out of the building as possible. This process freed up more space in the building so that those that need to stay at the facility can exercise the recommended social distancing of six feet of separation. I was pleased at the speed in which the Postal Service and members worked to get this feat accomplished once the MOU was signed.

We were also able to come to agreement on allowing the IT Service Desk and the Customer Service Desk workers

at the Material Distribution Center (MDC) in Topeka, KS the opportunity to perform their duties at home. As you can imagine, our Service Desks have been inundated with calls for assistance due to the network connectivity changes involved with working from home.

For our newest group, the members from the Human Resources Shared Service Center (HRSSC), we developed an MOU for work from home for many of the duties performed at that facility. For those deemed necessary to remain in the building, the Postal Service has split the employees into two different shifts in order to better comply with the six feet of separation recommendations.

In our private-sector unit, we worked with the companies to ensure that they are taking all of the necessary precautions and steps to provide the employees with a safe and healthy work environment. Each truck is to be provided a spray bottle of proper sanitizer and wipes so that the trucks can be wiped down before and after a driver enters the vehicle. Areas in the terminal are to be cleaned regularly and hand sanitizer, gloves, and masks are to be available for use.

I am especially proud of the efforts our postal nurses are making in this situation. They are on the front line and critical to the testing, diagnosis, and information communication process.

The Postal Service does not have adequate staffing of nurses to accomplish the tasks that need to be done regarding the COVID-19 requirements. We have agreed to allow the Postal Service to solicit requests for help from postal employees that have the proper nurse licensing but currently work in other positions. The Postal Service has also reached out to retired nurses attempting to contract their services.

I am saddened by the number of members that have tested positive for this virus and devastated by the number of deaths that have occurred. My heart goes out to all of the families who have suffered from this pandemic. Please remember that your union family, both locally and nationally, is there for you and fighting for your rights to a safe and healthy work environment. ■



Sharyn M. Stone, Central Regional Coordinator

This Too Shall Pass

I hope this article finds everyone safe, healthy, and if impacted by COVID-19, recovering. I do not remember a time since I was hired into the Post Office more fraught with concerns. Our comfort zone as Americans is forever altered. We fought numerous campaigns to prevent the elimination of the Postal Service, but now we are literally fighting for our lives.

At the Regional level we are in constant contact with the Areas, getting updated information on an ongoing basis, ensuring that locals are notified and offices are properly cleaned when there is an exposure.

Resources Available on apwu.org

As essential workers, be aware of your rights and the protections. *Apwu.org* has vital information on the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* (FFCRA). It provides language on emergency paid sick leave, what leave is available, how you take it and the documentation required. The law allows you to care for a child whose school or place of care is closed, or if their child care provider is unavailable.

We are fighting battles on two fronts. On the website is a link for you to tell your members of Congress to support our Public Postal Service during this crisis. Make your voice count now and going forward.

At a time when we all want to feel more in control, we can be proactive. Provide notice to Congress to support our Public Postal Service.

In the midst of this battle, there is uplifting news. The public is constantly thanking postal workers for being there, especially now during this crisis. Whenever I see a commercial with posters thanking first responders, doctors, nurses, grocery workers and others, I always look for postal workers on the signs and we are there. I have seen pictures and other expressions of thanks as well. Granted, a lot of the thanks are directed to carriers and window clerks because they are the face of the Postal Service. But, as we all know, they couldn't do what they do if the unseen workers did not do necessary processing, maintenance, and driving first.

Remember to Maintain Social Distancing

We all know a lot of the areas we work in are not large, but we must make every effort to maintain six feet of social distance in break areas, restrooms, locker rooms, etc. These spaces are not exactly roomy, but try to find a way to make it happen. Supervisors should be open to discussing changes that protect everyone on break.

Article 12

Starting in February, there has been some excessing. There were quite a few Maintenance impacts. All of the impacts have been met on, argued over, reduced in some cases, and grieved locally if necessary. The move date is now in September.

**THE PUBLIC IS CONSTANTLY THANKING
POSTAL WORKERS FOR BEING THERE,
ESPECIALLY NOW DURING THIS CRISIS.**

Clerk impacts are now starting to be issued and met on. It has been a while since we have had any excessing, so here are a few reminders. When excessing to the needs of the craft/and or installation, management must notify the Regional Coordinator six months in advance whenever possible, but no less than 90 days before. The memo that limits the excessing to a 50 mile radius is still in effect and the distance is measured by the shortest driving distance, address to address. If the impact/reassignment is within the installation, employees excess to the needs of a section, and the same notification is required to be given on the local level.

The notice is provided to the Local with the same meeting requirements. The Regional Coordinators, Omar Gonzalez (Western Region), Kenneth Beasley (Southern Region), Tiffany Foster (Northeast Region), AJ Jones (Eastern Region) and I are available to assist you with information on excessing and the critical issue of COVID-19. ■

VOTE BY MAIL

Defending the Right to Vote During the Pandemic

As we come to terms with the new reality that the COVID-19 crisis has created, many are wondering how this will impact the November election. Will people be forced to choose between exercising their right to vote and their health? We saw this scenario play out during the April primary election in Wisconsin, where people had to make that difficult choice. At least 40 known cases of COVID-19 can be traced to those who voted or worked the polls for the Wisconsin election.

A functioning democracy is dependent on free and fair elections. Especially in times of crisis, there is only one option to ensure this happens: vote by mail. Vote by mail is the best, non-partisan method of increasing voter turnout. It allows voters more time to research candidates and issues, and makes voting more accessible to those with disabilities.

to have to put their health and safety at risk in order to meet what is a constitutional right?" Condos said.

Legislation has been introduced in Congress that would establish voting by mail in federal elections, but until this becomes law, the APWU is working with other organizations to take a state-by-state approach.

"We're talking now about basic access to the ballot box and defense of our cherished and hard-fought right to vote," said President Dimondstein on *Democracy*

Now!. "This pandemic has brought home that if we're going to have true access to the ballot box...vote by mail is definitely the way to go."

With the uncertainty around the COVID-19 crisis and its potential impact on the November election, it is our recommendation that everyone who can submit a request for an absentee ballot should do so. A majority of states allow for no excuse absentee voting

and, as this crisis progresses, states that require witness signatures for absentee ballots should relax these restrictions. You can go to vote.org for information on how to request an absentee ballot in your state.

Despite his continued opposition to vote by mail, even President Trump has utilized this method of voting. "We were happy to move the President's absentee mail ballots through the mail. He trusted us to do that. Tens of millions of people trust us to do that," said President Mark Dimondstein. "We look forward to doing that on a nonpartisan basis for generations to come." ■



Voters in Wisconsin wait in line to cast their vote in the state's primary election on April 7, 2020.

Vote by mail also makes voting easier for people living in rural areas who would otherwise have to drive long distances to polling locations, seniors and those who have to work during traditional voting hours.

During a press conference with Washington Secretary of State Kim Wyman and President Dimondstein, Vermont Secretary of State Jim Condos said the ability for people to vote by mail is especially needed during the coronavirus pandemic, when people need to keep a distance from each other. "Do we really want people

Members Contact Press to

As part of our efforts to mobilize the public to stand up and demand urgent funding for the USPS, local officers and members are writing opinion-editorials (op-eds) and letters to the editor for their local newspapers

and online publications. These op-eds and letters have been published in outlets across the country. Below are highlights, condensed for space and clarity.

I am a proud postal worker. During this coronavirus pandemic my fellow front-line co-workers and I continue to go to work every day, even in these dangerous times, to serve the people who rely on us....

Thus far, Congress has provided \$3 trillion in combined “stimulus” money, including \$1 trillion in bailouts for private companies. Yet bipartisan congressional efforts to provide real financial relief to your public Postal Service were shamefully stopped by this administration and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

I know the public greatly appreciates and supports the Postal Service. Please contact your congressional representatives and urge them to fight for the relief the public Postal Service needs to survive. Postal workers want to continue our mission of binding the country together and providing universal service at reasonable rates to every home and business.”

Sherry Whitsett, Colorado Springs Area Local, in *The Gazette* (Colorado Springs, CO)

“Due to the pandemic, it is estimated that mail volume and revenue may drop by 50% or more in the coming months. The Postal Service has advised Congress it will run out of cash by the end of September unless Congress and the Trump Administration provide financial assistance to get it through the COVID-19 crisis...

Now, with the loss of mail volume and costs increasing, the Postal Service must have support from the next stimulus bill. The pandemic-induced loss of revenue facing the USPS is no less dramatic than for airlines and corporations. The Postal Service needs the same level of assistance provided to those entities.

The Postal Board of Governors, comprised of three Republicans and two Democrats, has unanimously called upon Congress for \$89 billion in funding to stabilize a service that affects millions of American households and businesses.

Postal workers are in harm’s way on the front line of this pandemic, continuing to serve the American public. Postmaster General Megan Brennan said during an appeal for funding that postal workers “provide an essential public service and bind the nation together.” As of this writing, more than 1,200 postal workers have tested positive for coronavirus, thousands are quarantined and 44 have died...

Action is urgently needed! Please contact your congressional representatives and urge them to support funding for the Postal Service in the next stimulus bill. Further material addressing this issue, including congressional contact information is available on the website usmailnotforsale.org.”

Anthony Carobine, American Postal Workers Union National Postal Press Association President, in the *Iron Mountain Daily News* (MI)

“Postal services and post offices are particularly critical to rural areas, small towns, the elderly, military veterans and millions of small and medium-sized businesses.

The USPS is also essential to the political and cultural life of America, delivering hundreds of millions of magazines and weekly newspapers each year, plus billions of business-related and personal communications. It routinely handles tens of millions of ballots delivered to voters who request absentee ballots or who live in states that conduct elections by mail.

The USPS also plays an important role in the health care system, handling 1.2 billion prescription drug shipments a year — nearly 4 million every day, six days a week...

The universal reach of the postal network is invaluable to all Americans, but especially to those in rural, inner city and exurban areas that would not be served if not for the USPS.

The USPS, held in high regard by the public, is a national treasure providing a vital service for the past 245 years. All of us, Democrats, Republicans and Independents, must stand together and demand that Washington protect it.”

Cathy Hanson, Minneapolis Area Local Editor, in the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

Encourage Community Action

“Perhaps the members of Congress realize what the Pew Research Center has reported, the Postal Service is the most popular government agency. The USPS is the largest, most efficient postal service on the planet, handling 47% of the world's mail, delivering more than 212 billion pieces of mail to 157 million addresses each year. The Postal Service maintains the largest retail network on Earth, larger than McDonald's, Walmart and Starbucks combined. The USPS does all this without one cent of taxpayer money; they rely on the sales of stamps and other postal products to run the operation.

Congress must surely know that due to the Postal Service's mandate to provide universal delivery across the United

States companies like Fed Ex, UPS and Amazon rely on the Postal Service to handle the “last mile” delivery which is the most expensive and time consuming part of the shipping process, and unlike their competitors the Postal Service can't jack up delivery charges for remote areas....

I wish they would think about the tens of thousands of dedicated postal employees working 24 hours per day 365 days per year to serve all of America. These men and women have proven to be instrumental in returning communities to normal after hurricanes, tornados or wildfires, often times having the mail up and running before basic services like electricity or running

water are restored. With its constantly updated change of address data base they have worked with FEMA to find people forced to relocate after disaster strikes. Almost 20 years ago they went to work every day, while Anthrax was being sent through the mail and their coworkers were sickened or killed. Today as COVID-19 spreads across the country they show up every day to keep America's mail moving, and that is all they want to do.

Our elected officials should think about what a treasure the United States Postal Service is, and act to preserve it.”

John Flattery, Central Massachusetts Area Local President, in the Worcester, MA Telegram & Gazette

“The task force that Trump created to study the postal system, headed by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, came up with a report in December 2018 calling for the eventual sale of the Postal Service to private corporations. Six months earlier, the federal Office of Management and Budget came out with a plan to make it more attractive to potential buyers by eliminating collective bargaining for postal workers' wages.

Postal workers won that right because of the Great Postal Strike of 1970. It was memorialized with the creation of the APWU in 1971 and in the national agreement that the union has as the representative of workers, just as the National Association of Letter Carriers, the National Postal Mail Handlers and the National Rural Letter Carriers Association have in their contracts. This is a great irritant to Trump because other federal workers don't have these rights.

The push for privatization brings together two forces on the right: the anti-government ideologues who are at war with

the Postal Service because it is consistently the nation's most popular government agency, and the private corporations who want to get their piece of the \$80 billion in business the USPS does each year. Of course, those corporations have no intention of providing the same level of service. They would almost certainly raise prices and cut or eliminate delivery in rural areas....

In addition to providing essential services to people all over the nation, the postal service also employs more veterans and disabled veterans than anyone else. It provides living-wage, union jobs for its workers....

The post office, founded in 1775 by Benjamin Franklin, is older than this country. It is owned by the people and it should stay that way. *The U.S. Mail Is Not for Sale!*”

Chuck Zlatkin, New York Metro Area Postal Union Legislative & Political Director, in *The Independent*

WRITE AN OP-ED OR LETTER TO THE EDITOR TO YOUR LOCAL PAPER!

All members are encouraged to write op-eds and letters to the editor to raise awareness of the financial crisis facing the Postal Service. For help on writing and more information on getting involved, email the Postal Press Association at ppa@apwupostalpress.org, or the APWU National Communications Department at communications@apwu.org.

DURING PANDEMIC, POSTAL WORKERS SHOW **Community Solidarity Across the Globe**

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues around the world, postal services have become more important than ever as millions of people rely on the mail for life-saving prescription medication, government retirement and social program benefits, and other necessities. Postal workers continue to deliver daily during these dangerous and difficult conditions. As people remain in their homes, the role postal workers have as important lifelines in communities everywhere is highlighted.

As U.S. Postal Service workers, our mission of universal service to everyone, no matter who or where, binds this country together. This mission is shared by postal workers across the globe, who set out every day to move the mail and go the extra mile to show solidarity with their communities during this frightening and uncertain time.

Indonesian Postal Workers Deliver Medical Supplies and Cash Assistance

As a country with a population spread across several island formations, COVID-19 presented Indonesia with a logistical and structural challenge. Yet, due to the work of postal workers in Pos Indonesia, the country's state-owned postal company, the government has been able to transport medicine and supplies around the country, and deliver cash and food assistance to families.

In West Java, the most populous province in the country, postal workers made nearly two million social assistance deliveries on April 15, the first day of the province's relief program. Postal workers made deliveries directly to households to avoid congregating of crowds in the densely populated cities in the province.

Delivering more than just the mail in the UK



CWU (UK) Member Paul Parfitt

In the United Kingdom, postal workers unionized under the Communication Workers Union (CWU) have been engaged in heated disputes with private mail operator Royal Mail for most of the past year. Union members overwhelmingly voted in favor of striking in March, around the time the country began feeling the effects of the pandemic.

As the crisis became more dire, the union temporarily set aside its plans to strike, continuing the important work of moving the country's mail, with a focus on solidarity with the people of their country.

"We are witnessing before our very eyes the importance of collectivism, of treating others as we would wish to be treated, and looking out for our neighbors," said CWU General Secretary Dave Ward. "The current outbreak will test us and it will hurt us. But it is also concentrating



CWU (UK) Member Simon Stevenson

our minds on the things that matter."

This mindset of solidarity has stretched to the farthest corners and most rural parts of the country. In the small village of Worsthorne in Northwest England, postman Paul Parfitt delivered chocolate to many of the elderly residents in the community, most of whom are facing an indefinite period of isolation.

"I thought about how lonely it must be for so many people living alone at this time and so I bought some chocolates and left them on the doorsteps of the people on my round that I know live alone – and a special box to a local care home," Parfitt said.

In Nottingham, in Central England, 30 postal workers volunteered to pick up an extra Saturday shift on April 25, delivering mail while wearing superhero costumes to lift residents' spirits. Wages earned from the shift were donated to the Nottingham Hospitals Charity in the name of fellow postal worker Ian Pointer, who is recovering from COVID-19.

India Post Mobilizes to Transport Medicine and Supplies

On March 24, India went into lock-down to stop the spread of coronavirus. As a result, every non-essential business and service was forced to halt operations. This included much of the country's transportation infrastructure, including air travel and rail.

As an essential service, India Post workers are still moving the mail throughout the pandemic. Now, they have an extra responsibility during the crisis: transporting medicine, test kits, ventilators, and other medical supplies from urban centers into

less populated areas. Medical manufacturers and suppliers, who usually rely on courier services, have turned to their public postal service to quickly and safely transport these life-saving supplies where they need to go.

With the most post offices in the world – at over 155,000 – India Post

workers have been able to accommodate every request it has received, according to the BBC.

India Post also maintains a postal banking system, and has been able to maintain pension and Social Security payments, especially important for older and poorer citizens who live in rural areas.

Irish Postal Workers Engage in Community Support Program

In Ireland, the postal workers' union, Communication Workers Union (separate from CWU in the UK), and the country's mail operator An Post came together on an initiative to make sure the most elderly and isolated people receive the care they need.

Postal workers, at least once a week, are checking in on these customers and relaying any request for medicines or supplies back to the country's health service. Postal workers are then delivering these supplies so that their vulnerable customers do not have to risk going out to a pharmacy themselves.

"Postal workers have always been central to their communities and are anxious to help this national effort to get us through this crisis," said CWU General Secretary Steve Fitzpatrick. "Postal delivery staff know their customers better than anyone, particularly in rural areas, they're trusted and they very often have a well-established rapport with many people living alone in isolated areas."

These initiatives were not mandated from An Post – rather, they came from rank-and-file postal workers eager to use their network and relationships within their communities to help the country through the crisis.



Canadian Postal Workers Organize Caravans to Support Health Care Workers

Postal workers all over Canada are showing support for the country's health care workers by arranging caravans of postal vehicles through hospitals and medical facilities. In many caravans are also postal worker family members, out to support these crucial medical professionals.

These caravans have been organized in dozens of cities, including Toronto, Vancouver, Dartmouth, Montreal, Winnipeg, Maple Ridge, Calgary, Halifax, Windsor, and Ottawa.

"Our membership wanted to reach out to health care workers in the city and show tremendous appreciation and thanks to all those workers for what they have done and continue to do during the coronavirus pandemic," said Ian Anderson, President of the CUPW Ottawa Local, before their local caravanned on April 30. "It was decided a Health Care Workers Express convoy of our members driving safely past the hospital with signs and waving was a small way we could perhaps show that sentiment."

Safety for Postal Workers Remains Biggest Concern

While postal workers around the world are continuing their essential work of moving and delivering mail, many countries' postal services are lagging behind in ensuring the safety and protection of workers on the job. We stand in solidarity with our international postal worker brothers and sisters as they demand the necessary materials to deliver their mail safely.

"The health and safety of our postal workers must come first, no matter what services are provided during this pandemic. With the right safety measures in place our workers are ready to fulfill their public mission and be an important part of emergency services," said Cornelia Berger, Head of Post & Logistics at the UNI Global Union.

LABOR NEWS

Union Workers Demand to Make Medical Equipment During Pandemic

On March 30, laid off workers at General Electric (GE) factories across the country protested against the company, demanding to come back to work and build life-saving ventilators in the fight against COVID-19. Hospitals have faced critical shortages of ventilators during the crisis, and many public health officials implored companies with capacity to produce them to do so.

Vice News reports that GE's Healthcare Division is one of the country's largest producers of ventilators, but the company decided to lay off nearly 2,600 aviation factory workers instead of converting those factories to make ventilators. In response, these GE workers, members of the Industrial Division of Communication Workers of America (IUE-CWA), held protests at factories in New York, Texas, Massachusetts and Virginia, demanding the company reverse the layoffs and bring workers back to produce ventilators.

"If GE trusts us to build, maintain, and test engines which go on a variety of aircraft where millions of lives are at stake, why wouldn't they trust us to build ventilators?" said IUE-CWA Local 86004 President Jake Aguanaga at a press conference.

In a statement, the company said it was "working around the clock" to increase ventilator production. GE Healthcare joined Ford in a commitment to produce 50,000 ventilators by July, but the company has yet to announce whether this will lead to a reversal of announced layoffs.



IAM Local Lodge 2003 Members Produce Thousands of Masks for Military Base

At Fort Rucker, a U.S. Army base in Southern Alabama, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) Local Lodge 2003 members are contracted with M1 Support Services to maintain Army training helicopters. In response to COVID-19, the workers – deemed essential personnel during the crisis – volunteered to use their work shifts to produce protective face masks for their fellow workers and residents of the base. Instead of their normal responsibilities, workers are spending their shifts at sewing machines.

Local 2003 members are producing over 17,000 face masks in the effort, for which they will be honored with recognition from the Army.

"If anyone can keep us safe, it's the working class. They will be the ones that allow us to not only survive COVID-19 but thrive as a nation," said Local 2003 President Anthony Holton.

Grocery Workers Win Safety Protections During COVID-19 Crisis

As essential businesses, grocery stores stayed open to serve the public during the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, many grocery workers had to report to work without their stores providing proper personal protective equipment (PPE) and sanitizer, or enforcing social distancing.

In response to the crisis, the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) began a series of local, statewide,

and national efforts to protect their members, and all grocery workers, during the crisis.

UFCW Local 5 in Northern California negotiated a new agreement with Safeway for its retail and delivery workers. The agreement provides for proper sanitizing and cleaning materials in stores, paid breaks for workers to wash hands, and social distancing measures. Also included were new protocols for delivery workers to socially distance when making grocery drop-offs to homes.

Workers Organize to Fight for Hazard Pay, Paid Sick Leave, and Safety at Amazon and other E-Commerce Retailers



As the coronavirus pandemic hit the United States and non-essential businesses closed, customers have increasingly turned towards e-commerce and online retail, leading to record revenues for companies like Amazon and Instacart. Yet, as these companies profit off the circumstances of a pandemic, their workers are forced to work in increasingly dangerous conditions, with no paid sick leave, proper protective equipment, or hazard pay (*see page 10 for APWU's support of hazard pay for postal employees*) – all while dozens of workers have become sick with COVID-19.

In response to these conditions, workers have organized multiple actions across the country and in Europe. Workers at Instacart and Whole Foods held one-day strikes, and workers at Amazon warehouses in Illinois, Michigan, New York, and Minnesota engaged in work stoppages and “sick-outs.” Nearly 100 workers joined in the action at a Staten Island, NY facility.

When Chris Smalls, the lead organizer of that action, was fired, Amazon was notified by New York Attorney General Letitia James that her office would be investigating the company.

Forming an Alliance of Workers to Fight Back

Since his firing, Smalls has been organizing with fellow workers at

Amazon, Whole Foods grocery stores (owned by Amazon), Instacart, Target's delivery service Shipt, FedEx, and others, forming a cross-company workers' alliance to stand together against the conditions at their workplaces.

“It's more powerful when we come together,” Smalls told *Vice News*. “We formed an alliance between a bunch of different companies because we all have one common goal, which is to save the lives of workers and communities.”

The alliance's first major action was a one-day strike on May 1, International Workers Day, to demand higher pay, better access to protective equipment, and more paid sick leave. While these demands have yet to be met by the companies, the alliance was successful in another broad goal: gaining the attention of the public and policy-makers.

The strike was widely covered in the media, with stories published in national outlets including the *Los Angeles Times* and *Washington Post*, and CNN. Workers were given messages of support by multiple representatives and Senators, including Kamala Harris (D-CA), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA).

AFA President Sara Nelson testifying before Congress



Flight Attendants and Airline Workers Win Victory in CARES Act Stimulus Package

Over the last five years, the big four air carriers (Southwest, American, Delta, and United) spent almost \$45 billion combined on stock buybacks, enriching their shareholders and keeping stock prices high. When coronavirus hit the United States, revenues plummeted, and airlines asked Congress for over \$50 billion in bailouts.

While airlines did end up receiving that money in the \$2.2 trillion *CARES Act* package signed into law on March 27, the final bill included strong language making sure that the money would only be used to keep airline workers on payroll, with no furloughs, pay cuts, or benefit reductions through September 30.

The victory came after a strong public push from airline workers, including the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) and other aviation unions. AFA members mobilized quickly, spreading the hash tag #WorkersFirst on social media, focusing public pressure for making sure relief money went towards helping workers and their families, not executives.

“Our work creates the value of our businesses. We are the consumers and the taxpayers. Most importantly, we are the mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, siblings and dear friends who love and cherish each other,” said AFA President Sara Nelson after the bill's passage. “For our health and well-being, and for the people we love, we will continue to press leaders of our government to put forward plans that focus on people first.”



Judy Beard, Director

Saving the Post Office

As COVID-19 began in the United States, urgent strategic planning and outreach was taking place from APWU National Headquarters to protect the health and safety of the membership and their jobs. As the crisis progressed and states began to shut down, postal workers were classified as essential and you all continued to work.

With businesses shut down and people laid off from work, mail volume has dropped approximately 35 percent. The Postal Service expects it to continue to drop and the crisis to cost them over \$67 billion over the next 10.5 years. The Postmaster General announced to Congress that without government aid, the Postal Service will run out of funds by the end of the summer.

The Legislative & Political Department continues to meet with your members of Congress via conference call and Zoom to discuss their evolving role in protecting the Postal Service and demand they support the public Postal service and postal workers in their next stimulus bill.

Shifting the Focus of the *US Mail: Not for Sale* Campaign

At the outset of the crisis, we immediately began advocating for the inclusion of funds for the Postal Service in stimulus packages. Simultaneously, the *US Mail: Not for Sale* campaign, led by the Legislative & Political Department, shifted focus to educating members of Congress and the White House on why immediate funding is needed to give the Postal Service and its workers the ability to carry out their mission of universal service, binding the nation together. The campaign pushed out emails and targeted social media to drive our members and the public to contact their member of Congress.

The work of the *US Mail: Not for Sale* campaign has been critical in changing the narrative in the media. Over the course of a month, we saw the conversation shift from no mention of postal workers and the critical role we play in this crisis shift to postal workers being all over the news.

Our fight has caught the attention of members of Congress. Some have put out a constant stream of support for our workers and the valuable role the Postal Service is playing during this crisis. Growing this support is critical in elevating our issue and getting funding in the next stimulus package.

Postal Preservation Caucus

On April 30, the House of Representatives announced the formation of the first Postal Preservation Caucus, headed by Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney (D-NY-12), the Chairwoman of the Committee on Oversight and Reform, Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA-11), the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Government Operations, and Rep. Peter King (R-NY-02), the Ranking Member of the House Committee on Homeland Security's Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee.

Together, they are making the same identical request as the bipartisan Postal Board of Governors for Postal Service support to be included in the next stimulus:

- A \$25 billion appropriation to cover the Postal Service's expected losses due to COVID-19 (revenue losses and additional costs) in FY20 and FY21.
- \$25 billion in unrestricted borrowing authority, created by forgiving the outstanding USPS debt (\$15 billion) and converting the \$10 billion Treasury loan to regular USPS borrowing authority.
- A \$25 billion grant for the USPS to maintain its critical infrastructure and meet its responsibilities as an essential agency (improve its resiliency in emergencies and invest in job-creating capital projects).

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO CONTINUE BUILDING SUPPORT FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE POSTAL SERVICE. CONTACT YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS AND ASK THEM TO INCLUDE MONEY IN THE NEXT STIMULUS SO THAT THE POSTAL SERVICE WILL BE ABLE TO CONTINUE SERVING FUTURE GENERATIONS. GO TO [APWU.ORG](https://apwu.org) TODAY TO FIND OUT WHAT YOU CAN DO.

On page 10, we outlined the four postal unions' requests to Congress for the next stimulus.

We need your help to continue building support for financial assistance for the Postal Service. Contact your members of Congress and ask them to include money in the next stimulus so that the Postal Service will be able to continue serving future generations. Go to apwu.org today to find out what you can do. ■



Anna Smith, Director

United at a Safe Distance

Just about everyone is literally ‘worried sick’ with the health crisis hitting our country. Postal workers are no different, especially being “essential” workers and needing to report for duty to serve the American people day in and day out. That is stressful in and of itself, but then our interaction on the workroom floor is now becoming a “new normal.”

In many offices, breaks and lunches are staggered. Some offices enforce social distancing by separating operations. Unfortunately, due to the situation we are now all in, some of our co-workers need to self-quarantine, leaving many of us wondering if they are ok.

Are we ok?

We worry more during this crisis; more about our health, death and about the safety of our family.

We are members of our union – our extended family. God forbid, one of our own co-workers is taken away from us by the dreaded submicroscopic monster, and we cannot even attend the funeral services (my condolences to my sisters and brothers who have already tragically been in this situation). We cannot hug each other at work. Our union family hurts! Even so, our family is still united even while maintaining physical distance.

Pandemic and Perilous Treachery

Suddenly, social media lights up beyond the issues of safety and health, anger and fear. The Postal Service releases information of the imminent financial collapse because of this pandemic mess. We now begin to fear what will we do if in a matter of months our livelihood, our means of living, our own financial security is also devastated by this disease. Could it be? Is this real?

Is it true that the White House would save the airline industry but not the People’s Post Office? Yes.

And that my sisters and brothers is why being **united** is critical. United to beat the virus and united to Save The Post Office. The union is you and I. The union is us! We have to stand united, even at a distance, to fight for our health and our life.

Our union’s leadership has negotiated safeguards and extra protections to cover us during the pandemic. But the national leadership alone cannot solve the imminent threat of the Postal Service going under. That fight is something you and I – together – are going to have to wage with our friends, family and community.

By the time you read this, we will be closer to postal insolvency and the true test of how united we are will be underway. On other pages of this magazine, my fellow officers are sounding the alarm in various ways. Read every page; take it to heart. Put your actions into gear.

**BEING UNITED IS CRITICAL. UNITED
TO BEAT THE VIRUS AND UNITED TO
SAVE THE POST OFFICE. THE UNION
IS YOU AND I. THE UNION IS US!**

We can fight the disease and treachery and **we can win** but **only if we shout together**.

What we must do is listed on other pages, but it will not hurt for me to highlight what action we must take:

- Contact your Congressional Representatives, both your member of the House of Representatives and Senators, about supporting the USPS during this crisis – with no strings attached. Go to apwu.org to send an email and then pressure your friends and family to do the same.
- Encourage your co-workers to send their own email or call your elected leaders on Capitol Hill. Remind them that none of us can afford to have the USPS go under, and if it is sold to private corporations, we can kiss our good wages and benefits goodbye.

I cannot stress how important this really is. If we stand united and stay united, there is not a power on Earth that can beat us, even this damn virus.

Be Strong, Be United, Be Safe! ■

How Coronavirus is Affecting Service Members and Veterans

As a nation, we are currently facing one of the greatest threats in the history of our existence. As the *American Postal Worker* goes to press, the United States has reported more than 1.22 million confirmed cases of the novel SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus (COVID-19), with approximately 71,000 deaths. The numbers from this pandemic remain staggering to say the least. Unfortunately, there will be many more in the coming days and months.

Despite the danger of the coronavirus, our nation's veterans of the Armed Forces have once again answered the call of duty and stepped up to aid in the fight against this invisible enemy. In response to the coronavirus outbreak, active duty was authorized to augment forces.

There are now more than 29,400 Air and Army National Guard professionals that are supporting the COVID-19 crisis at the direction of their governors. That number is certain to grow in the future. The troops mostly consist of Headquarters units and personnel with high-demand medical capabilities whose call-up would not adversely affect their civilian communities.

Our entire military community – both active-duty and retired – has been significantly impacted by this fast-spreading virus. Over 2,000 active duty troops have been diagnosed with COVID-19 according to the latest Department of Defense data, bringing the military's infection rate to approximately 903-per-million. The U.S. Navy reported that 741 service members have contracted the virus, 550 of which were aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier. At the time that the report was released, the Army has 411 positive cases, the Air Force has 367 cases and the Marine Corps has 173 cases, in addition to 409 airmen and soldiers with the National Guard.

There will most certainly be an impact on our veterans as well, as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

has issued new operating guidelines that include the suspension of all VA Clinic in-person face-to-face visits. This comes shortly after the federal agency reported that it would begin testing for the coronavirus at its hospitals around the country, and that it is preparing 1,500 hospital beds for non-veterans infected with the virus.

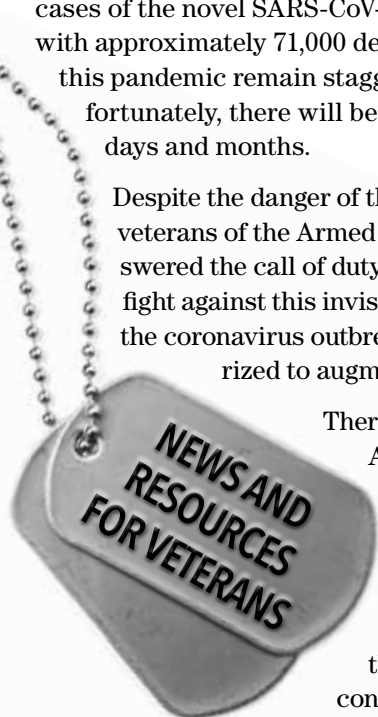
DESPITE THE DANGER OF THE
CORONAVIRUS, OUR NATION'S VETERANS
OF THE ARMED FORCES HAVE ONCE AGAIN
ANSWERED THE CALL OF DUTY AND
STEPPED UP TO AID IN THE FIGHT AGAINST
THIS INVISIBLE ENEMY.

In addition to operating 172 medical centers and being responsible for treating more than nine thousand veterans, distributing their benefits and running veterans' cemeteries, the VA has a fourth mission: to provide emergency medical care to all Americans in times of crisis.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs reported that since the first death of a VA patient from coronavirus in mid-March, the number of positive cases and fatalities in the department's health system has risen dramatically. Across all Veterans Administration sites, more than 3,700 patients under VA care have tested positive for the coronavirus, which is about 11 percent of all of the cases tested by the department, and more than 1,100 Veterans Affairs health care staffers have been forced into quarantine.

On a positive note, officials from the charity Wounded Warrior Project announced that they would make available \$10 million in reserve funds to injured veterans whose finances have been hurt by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The money is to be made available to individuals registered with the group in the form of \$1,000 grants for groceries, rent payments, and other essential expenses.

The APWU appreciates the efforts and contributions of our veterans for their essential front-line efforts in helping to battle the terrible coronavirus pandemic. ■



Avoiding Foreclosure on Your Home



Joyce B. Robinson, Director

Due to the outbreak of the coronavirus, millions of people are facing foreclosure and financial difficulties. There are actions that homeowners can take and programs that are available to assist. The Better Business Bureau (BBB) and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) offer the following checklist to improve your chances of keeping ownership of your home:

- **Don't ignore the problem** – The further behind you become, the harder it will be to reinstate your loan and the more likely that you will lose your house.
- **Contact your lender** – Ask for the Loss Mitigation or Collection Department, where borrowers and the lender work together to avoid a foreclosure.
- **Open and respond to mail from your lender** – Discuss your situation honestly. Give the lender specialist an accurate account of all bills and statements. Don't under or over exaggerate the situation.
- **Review the terms of your mortgage** – Find out how much equity you have in your home. Review penalties or restrictions for refinancing. Learn about the foreclosure laws and time frames in your state by contacting the State Government Housing Office.
- **Understand foreclosure prevention options** – Valuable information about foreclosure prevention can be found at fha.gov/foreclosure/index.cfm.
- **Prioritize your spending** – After health care, keeping your house should be your first priority. Review your finances and see where you can cut spending: cable TV, gym memberships, entertainment, etc. Contact your credit card companies to delay or reduce payments.
- **Consider your options** – The lender may approve a temporary exception from the full monthly payment to help the homeowner resolve financial issues and resume normal payments later.
- **Apply for an Emergency Hardship Loan** – The Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund (FEEA) offers emergency hardship no-interest loans

for a maximum of \$1,500 for postal employees with more than 1 year of employment. For information visit feea.org/emergency.

- **Be Aware of Foreclosure “Rescue” Scams** – Be aware of con artists who scam homeowners into moving out and deeding their property over to a third party. The original owner is told that they can rent the property with the option to buy it back later. However, he/she cannot afford the rent and is evicted, or try to buy back the property, but the price is too high.
- **Avoid foreclosure prevention companies** – Many for-profit companies will contact you promising to negotiate with your lender. They charge a large fee for services your lender or a HUD-approved housing counselor will provide for free.

TO FIND A HUD-APPROVED HOUSING
COUNSELOR NEAR YOU, CALL 800-569-4287
OR TTY 800-877-8339.

If you are unable to reach a satisfactory conclusion, HUD offers free or very low-cost housing counseling nationwide to help you understand the law and represents you in negotiations with your lender. To find a HUD-approved housing counselor near you, call 800-569-4287 or TTY 800-877-8339.

In closing, I would like to thank Postal Employees, who put their lives in jeopardy by going to work each day to serve the American People. May God Bless You and Your Families, Be Blessed and Be Safe! ■

Resources: The text in this article was taken from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Tips for Avoiding Foreclosure webpage and the Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund, Emergency Hardship Loans.



Nancy Olumekor, Director

Resetting for a New Normal

Each of us can look back over our life to see how the world has fundamentally changed several times following specific traumatic events. Early in the 21st century, it was not acceptable for government to encroach on our personal privacy or impose boundaries. However, in the aftermath of September 11, we adapted to government surveillance in the name of “safety and security” at public and private events. We accepted technology that permits our voices and circumstances to be heard and seen throughout the country, quickly and permanently recording almost our every move. The catch word for the “new normal” then became *see something, say something*.

Today, because of the COVID-19 crisis, it appears that we are again at that point of a new normal – “physical distancing.” In order to function as normally as possible, technology is being promoted even more in almost every aspect of our lives. We are forced to adapt to going “cashless” for routine transactions; using the internet for virtual visits with our doctors; virtual business meetings and remote workplaces. There is still a serious digital divide, with many seniors – who are the most at risk of dying from the virus – on the wrong side. As seniors, we must continue to stay connected with technology in order to stay safe.

Stay Safe, Stay Connected!

There are many ways to communicate; we can keep the old ways and try new ways. During the period of self-quarantine, for many of us our telephones are our connections to others. We also write letters, note cards and send greeting cards. When we cannot visit the post office, we order stamps by mail. Those seniors with “smart” cell phones use them as a full-range communication tool – by voice, visually with FaceTime or other video chatting applications, and writing with text. In addition, seniors who are tech-savvy use numerous social media tools – applications that can be used on computers or cell phones with internet service.

Our cell phones, internet service and writing paper are resources that we can use to stay in touch with every-

one, including our elected officials – our local mayors and governors; our members of Congress, as well as to our APWU family. Retiree chapters and local unions are using Zoom, Skype, FaceTime and other teleconference tools for meetings. Our churches and houses of worship are using the same technologies. If you are not sure how to use all of this technology, remember that help is just a telephone call away. Reach out to your families, especially your children and grandchildren, for assistance. When family is not available, use our network of friends and our community, and contact your local office on aging.

The Heroes Among Us

We salute all medical personal and workers who are rightfully being applauded as the heroes in this crisis. However, there are also unsung heroes among us – the store clerks, the sanitation workers, truck drivers and us – all USPS employees. Postal workers are essential employees in this “new normal.”

Retirees must shout as loudly as we can to Congress: “Do not let the USPS fail! Provide the funding needed to replace revenue lost from COVID-19 and attach no strings to money borrowed. Do not allow this pandemic to destroy the USPS – a true national treasure and a vital part of America’s response and eventual recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.” ■

REMEMBER:
Do your part,
Get Out the Vote
2020!

VOTE BY MAIL IS ESSENTIAL IN 2020. Starting in your primary elections, if you have the ability to vote by mail, do so to protect the integrity of your voice. Senior voices will only be listened to when we vote.



Sarah Jane Rodriguez, Director

Our COVID-19 Response

On behalf of the APWU Health Plan, I want to thank you for your service to our country through this pandemic. The APWU Health Plan never lost sight of postal employees and how you are at risk during the global spread of COVID-19.

The health of our members is our number one priority. I wanted to share with you how the Health Plan responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Health Plan Coverage Enhanced

The Health Plan did not want costs to be a barrier to accessing testing and treatment. Many COVID-19 services are covered at no cost to members. Deductible coinsurance and copayments for certain services are waived. See highlighted enhancements below:

- ★ Diagnostic testing for COVID-19 is covered at no cost to members when prescribed by a clinical professional.
- ★ Prior authorization requirements are relaxed.
- ★ Virtual visit coverage is also enhanced to provide members access to 24/7 online care at no cost to the member (for most services).
- ★ We are following the development of the COVID-19 vaccination; when it becomes available, our members will be covered at no cost.
- ★ We are continuing to evaluate benefit enhancements as a result of COVID-19.

Communication

The Health Plan website is always our first line of communication. Navigating the amount of information in circulation can be stressful and overwhelming.

Our website includes clear and concise information regarding our benefit enhancements, and updated information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Lastly, specific health tips from our partners at Cigna, Express Scripts and United Healthcare were also made available.

Information from the website has been mailed directly to members, as necessary. As APWU members, you should visit apwuhp.com and register to get these criti-

cal updates via email or view the vital information that is located on the home page.

Social Distancing and Infrastructure

With “social distancing” as an imperative defense to the health care crisis, two important things happened to the Health Plan infrastructure. One, in an abundance of caution to keep employees safe and to follow CDC and Office Personnel Management (OPM) guidelines, many Health Plan employees transitioned to telework. The technology team at the Health Plan worked diligently to prepare employees to work from home. They ordered additional equipment, conducted training and were on-call for questions from the staff.

Two, the demand for telehealth visits increased. As Health Plan members and postal employees, you heard messaging on the use of telehealth over in-person office visits. These messages are on the Health Plan website and communicated by OPM, your human resource representatives, and during various news briefings to the public. This translated to an exponential rise in telehealth use nationally. At the highest peak, we saw areas where requests for visits were up more than 2,000 percent. Because of the transition to telework and increased demand in telehealth, longer than normal wait times were experienced by members that called customer service and/or proceeded with telehealth visits.

Health Plan Reaction

Our primary focus is consistency of service. Addressing the call wait times was accomplished by a massive expansion of hardware and connectivity. Our technology team worked tirelessly so that calls could be answered as close to “normal” conditions as possible. Our telehealth partners were also speeding to market with efforts to prepare the nation for more social distancing, and new clinician and patient interaction. They led fast and widespread efforts to enlist and onboard clinicians onto telehealth systems. Provider enrollment quickly increased to respond to the massive load. The APWU Health Plan relieved pressure points and took a proactive response in anticipation of the pandemic’s increasing health risk.

You are always in good hands! We are honored to serve you during these critical times.

Together. Better Health.



Coronavirus

Support through Online Therapy

Audio, video and text message therapy through your **EAP**.

With online counseling services, USPS employees and their families can access professional counseling anytime, anywhere, through a computer, tablet or smartphone. By removing location and scheduling barriers, patients have greater flexibility and more options when it comes to providers. Whether you would like support in regard to challenges presented by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) or every day life, we are here for you.

Be right there (BRT). That's the kind of response you want when you or a family member is stressed or needs some help. It's even better when this support can be delivered right to your mobile phone.

Online Therapy includes:

- Access from a computer, smartphone or tablet
- No commutes or appointments
- Ability to communicate with a chosen therapist
- Secure and confidential support

To get started:

- Visit EAP4YOU.com
- Click "Get Started" under Online Counseling Services
- When prompted, enter organization name "USPS"
- Follow instructions to connect with a therapist

As always, your EAP is here for you and your family. Whether you are staying home or continuing your routine, there are a variety of ways to connect with your EAP including: by telephone 800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU), TTY: 877-492-7341, online at EAP4YOU.com, through video, by live chat or text message. Reach out to us to learn more about the many options you have to receive support from your Employee Assistance Program.



CALL US TODAY: 800-327-4968
800-EAP-4YOU | TTY: 877-492-7341
WWW.EAP4YOU.COM