

THE AMERICAN

Postal Worker

APWU

November/December 2021

WORKERS RISING UP



See Pages 5 and 16 for Contract Negotiation Updates



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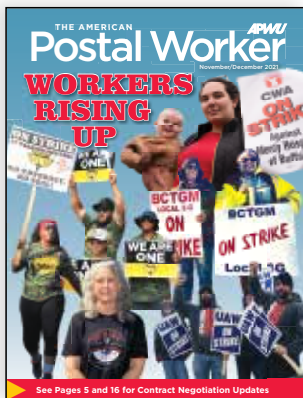


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As postal workers negotiate their own contract, workers are "rising up" across the country in many different industries including John Deere workers (UAW members pictured) and workers at Kellogg's (BCTGM workers pictured). See page 4 and 28 for more information.

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Mark Dimondstein	President - Editor
Debby Szeredy	Executive Vice President
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Idowu Balogun	Maintenance Division Director
Michael O. Foster	Motor Vehicle Service Division Director
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Jerome Pittman	Garrett C. Langley

SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENT

Judy McCann

OTHER NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENTS

Daniel Soto	Rufina Pagaduan
James M. Patarini	

PRODUCED BY THE APWU COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Emily Harris	Communications Director
GO! Creative, LLC	Design and Layout



PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN

Workers Are Standing Up

Greetings postal heroes!

Postal workers, nurses and medical personnel, meatpackers, farmworkers, transit workers, truck and delivery drivers, cashiers, EMS and firefighters, sanitation, warehouse, utility and manufacturing workers, and so many others, have been dedicated essential workers throughout this ongoing and tragic pandemic. Frontline workers face extreme stress, danger, sickness and too often death.

As a result of the pandemic-driven economic crisis, millions of other U.S. workers found themselves without jobs and health insurance, saw the largest increase in poverty in fifty years and faced the challenges with school-aged children at home. Yet, the billionaire class increased their ill-gotten wealth during the pandemic by \$1.8 trillion – and laughed all the way to the bank!

Thus, the pandemic has underscored that: 1) society cannot function without the working class; 2) workers should be proud of what we produce and the services we provide, and 3) unmistakably, we are in a struggle – “Bosses vs. Workers,” Wall Street vs. Main Street, Capital vs. Labor.

Another fundamental lesson has not been lost that workers deserve better.

While the billionaires are playing as astronauts, workers around the country are standing up and fighting back to make a better life here on earth.

As I write this article, 10,000 John Deere United Auto Worker (UAW) members at 14 manufacturing plants across the country withheld their labor and went on strike. Workers are fighting to reclaim wages and retirement benefits lost during years of concessionary contracts, an end to a two-tier structure and for a fair share of the company's record profits.

This battle with John Deere is taking place amid a wave of recent strikes of unionized workers including at Frito-Lay, Nabisco, Kellogg, Kaiser Permanente, Volvo Trucks, Warrior Met Coal and Tenet hospitals.

As with the Great Postal Strike of 1970, a number of these strikes resulted in victory for the workers. In other struggles, such as of 60,000 Hollywood film production workers, the real threat of a strike compelled companies to

negotiate fair contracts. In the protracted AL mineworkers and MA nurses strikes to defend their unions, workers are hanging tough – “Union Strong, All Day Long!”

This new rise in worker militancy is resisting management concessionary demands at the bargaining table. Moreover, these are fights to restore worker givebacks from previous decades, eliminate unfair and divisive two-tier wage and benefit structures, address pandemic era health and safety concerns, reduce forced overtime and shift pandemic-driven massive corporate profits to the workers who create the wealth.

It's not just unionized workers who are fed-up. Amazon workers are stirring. Individual workers in the millions are “voting with their feet” and refusing to return to low-wage jobs with few benefits. Over four million quit jobs just in August. This resistance has forced many companies to raise wages and improve benefits.

“Pro-business” pundits and news outlets claim that “lazy” workers are staying home because of “generous” government benefits and that rising wages will cause inflation. In response, former Labor Secretary Robert Reich hit the nail on the head:

Corporate America wants to frame this as a ‘labor shortage.’ Wrong. What’s going on is more accurately described as a living wage shortage, a hazard pay shortage, a childcare shortage, and paid sick leave shortage, and a healthcare shortage... American workers are now flexing their muscles for the first time in decades. You might say workers have declared a national general strike until they get better pay and improved working conditions. No one calls it a general strike. But in its own disorganized way it’s related to the organized strikes breaking out across the land.

Let's do our part to help propel this wave of militancy forward: Practice solidarity with striking workers; Assist workers who want to organize into unions; Proudly promote the benefits of collective worker union power – better job security, workplace safety, standards of living and quality of life! Empowered workers, rising wages, safer workplaces and building unions will uplift all workers, including unionized postal workers. ■

Negotiations with the USPS Continue



Bakersfield Area Local (CA)

mittee” level, including the Clerk, Maintenance, Motor Vehicle Service and Support Services “craft tables.”

As we go to press, there has been no major breakthroughs. However, APWU President and Lead Negotiator Mark Dimondstein reports that there continues to be slow but significant progress.

The APWU National Negotiating Committee is leaving no stone unturned to secure the decent new contract that postal workers have earned and deserve. We strive to reach a voluntary negotiated tentative agreement. However, if we cannot reach a positive negotiated settlement, the union will aggressively pursue interest arbitration. In fact, while the APWU continues negotiations with management, the union has already begun discussions with postal management to choose a “neutral” arbitrator if interest arbitration becomes our path forward.

Our collective bargaining rights, which were won in the historic Great Postal Strike of 1970, have been a great way to improve the lives of postal workers. Without a union, unorganized workers find themselves at the mercy of their boss in relation to wages and working conditions. Since postal workers are unionized, management must negotiate in good faith, but that does not mean negotiations are easy. The union is not negotiating with itself, nor are negotiations a “one way” street. The union has the overall goal of uplifting postal workers and our families. These goals include annual pay raises, full COLA, improving the hours



Louisville Area Local (APWU Local #4)



Keystone Area Local (PA)

and rights of PTFs, and increased career opportunities for PSEs. Obviously postal management has very different goals.

By the time members receive this magazine, the way forward for a new union contract will be clearer. Either we will be very close to or possibly have reached a voluntary tentative agreement, or we will have invoked mediation as the first step to interest arbitration to determine the outcome of a new contract.

The foundation of our union, which gives us strength at the bargaining table, is you, the member. APWU members are united in our common goal of protecting the gains of the past and enhancing the future economic well-being, health and safety and rights of postal workers.

Through mailings, News Service Bulletins, phone messages, emails and the website, the APWU leadership will continue to communicate important developments in the crucial battle for a new union contract. In the meantime, APWU members remain *Union Strong All Day Long!* ■

The Collective Bargaining Agreement (union contract) between the APWU and the USPS covers the wages, benefits and conditions of employment for almost 200,000 postal workers.

When our current contract was due to expire on September 20, 2021, both the APWU and postal management agreed to “stop the clock” at 11:59pm and continue to negotiate. The APWU negotiating team unanimously believed this path was in the best interests of our members.

Since September, numerous negotiating sessions have continued between the union and management. Some of the meetings were at the “main table.” Others were held at the “com-

Montgomery County Area Local (MD)



Geared Up For a Good Contract

While the APWU National Negotiations Committee is at the main table with USPS management, across the country Gear Day is going strong! Keep wearing your union gear to show management we are united in the fight for a good contract. Post pictures online and tag #APWUnited, and email them to ncc@apwu.org. ■



South Alabama Area Local

Statesboro Local (GA)



Rapid City Local (SD)



Puerto Rico Area Local



Central Florida Area Local



North Jersey Area Local



Bakersfield Area Local (CA)



Nation's Capital Southern Maryland Area Local

Season's Greetings!

The APWU National Executive Board & Officers Wish You and Your Family Good Health and Happiness this Holiday Season!

Virtual Union Conferences a Success

From September 26 to October 1, APWU members met online via Zoom for a week of trainings, workshops, and conferences for all four crafts, as well as the Legislative & Political Conference on Sunday, September 26, and the Retiree Conference and Planning Workshops on September 27. The conferences were a huge success, with over one thousand members participating.

“Thank you to the National Officers for meeting the challenge of bringing members together. The successful conference is yet another example of how our union has continued the critical work for our members throughout this dangerous pandemic,” said President Dimondstein.

“Our General Session and workshops were excellent, with great participation from the membership,” said Clerk Craft Director Lamont Brooks. “I look forward to bringing the momentum from the conference into the rest of the year and 2022.”

“I am very pleased with how our conference went,” said Maintenance Craft Director Idowu Balogun. “Members were engaged and our sessions were very informative and well received, even in the virtual environment.”

“The MVS Division had a successful 42nd Director’s Conference,” said Motor Vehicle Service Craft Director Michael Foster. “Members from across the country came together for updates on contract negotiations, and recent Step 4 settlements. Among the Step 4s discussed was the recent clarification on the DOT CDL physi-

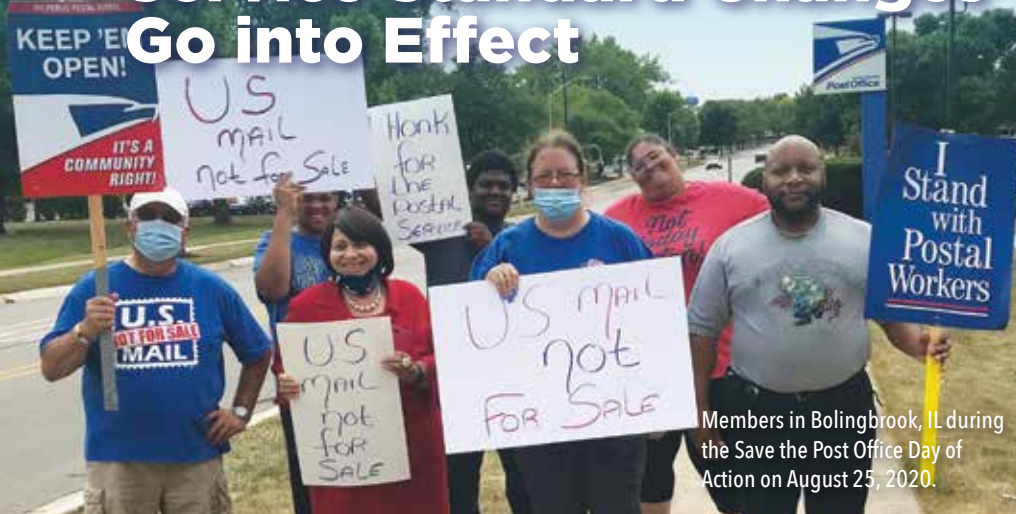
cals. While we look forward to when we can all meet in-person again, the virtual setting did not hinder the pertinent questions and spirited debate that our craft is known for.”

“Our virtual conference was a success, with strong participation from members,” said Support Services Division Director Steve Brooks. “We talked about the status of multiple craft issues, and had valuable open discussions with participants. Afterward, the participants commented that the grievance training and TSP/retirement benefits class were much needed.”

“Thank you to all the members who attended the Legislative Conference, and thank you to all the speakers and workshop leaders for sharing your skills and inspiring members as we prepare for our upcoming challenges,” said Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard. “The APWU is ready to keep up the pressure in the halls of Congress and fight for justice for postal workers, our communities, and the American people.” *Read more about the Legislative Conference on page 33.*

“The COVID-19 virus did not stop our APWU Retirees from learning and being active participants of our 2021 Retirees Conference,” said Retirees Department Director Nancy Olumekor. “Workshops were well attended and animated conversations were had during our General Session. I hope we can all be together soon, when it is safe to do so.” ■

USPS 10-Year Plan Service Standard Changes Go into Effect



Members in Bolingbrook, IL during the Save the Post Office Day of Action on August 25, 2020.

The United States Postal Service implemented significant service standard changes starting Friday, October 1 that will slow down mail delivery for tens of millions of people and affect billions of pieces of mail. That date marked the first day of the new service standards for First Class Mail and Periodicals, which USPS management implemented as part of their 10-year plan. The changes lengthen the delivery target from the previous two and three-day standard to as many as five days for many pieces of mail, depending on distance of travel.

This is a step backward for the Postal Service and for millions across the country who rely on speedy mail service. The union remains convinced that the service standard changes will only drive away mail volume and much-needed

postal revenue. The APWU opposes these changes, and will continue our work to ensure the public receive the fast and reliable service that they've come to expect and that they deserve.

Earlier this year, the APWU led an effort with organizations of a *Grand Alliance to Save our Public Postal Service* in opposing the service standard changes when they were under review by the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC). Collectively the union and allies organized over 130,000 comments from the public that were submitted to the PRC and the Postal Service. While the PRC was critical of USPS' proposals, postal management ultimately decided to pursue the service standard changes nonetheless.

APWU has long campaigned not only in defense of the existing

standards, but for a restoration of speedier service standards, which were in place before July 1, 2012. At that time, overnight First Class Mail within cities and towns was still in place, along with the two and three-day standard coast-to-coast.

"The people deserve the prompt, reliable and efficient mail service promised under the law," said President Mark Dimondstein. "Postal workers are proud to serve our communities every single day. We believe management's response to months of poor performance should be to improve service and regain the public's trust, instead of this focus on moving the goalposts and slowing service standards. We'll stay united with the public until the service standards and postal performance reflect the need for quality and fast service."

Many APWU locals have held actions to 'stop the slowdowns' and raise awareness around the reduced service standards. The Portland Oregon Area Local held a press conference on October 1 to speak out against the changes. On October 4, the Minneapolis Area Local held a protest event while DeJoy and the Postal Board of Governors were in the city, with dozens of APWU members rallying at the main post office in Minneapolis. The APWU of Wisconsin also held an event on October 29 in Madison when Postmaster DeJoy was in the city. ■

Be Safe This Holiday Season

This holiday season, all APWU members are encouraged to remain vigilant on the workroom floor and be on the lookout for hazards, unsafe conditions and work practices, or hostile working environments. Management must not cut corners, and postal workers' safety must be the highest priority.

APWU members should fill out and submit PS Form 1767 to report any dangerous or unsafe conditions. The form must be readily available and easily accessible to all workers on the workroom floor. Contact your local if you cannot easily locate them.



First Steps Taken in Postal Banking Pilots

In September, the Postal Service and the APWU announced that they had begun partnering on a limited proof-of-concept test of expanded postal financial services in a small number of post offices. The announcement was a welcome development after years of campaigning by the APWU, the *Campaign for Postal Banking* and many others to expand the types of financial services available to the public at post offices across the country.

Specifically, the September announcement was that the USPS would now accept payroll and business checks, up to \$500 in value, as a means of payment for the existing prepaid Visa gift card that is on offer in post offices around the country. The test sites in the initial phase of the project are limited to just four stations in Northern Virginia, Washington, DC, Baltimore and the Bronx.

While the initial rollout falls well short of the Campaign's demands for a broad pilot of a number of expanded postal financial services, news of any movement on the part of the Postal Service is a welcome development. APWU and the *Campaign for Postal Banking* fully expect to keep pressing postal management to broaden and expand the tests as soon as possible.

"Postal workers are excited by this first step in expanding the financial services we offer," said President Mark Dimondstein. "This is a small step in a positive direction. We're confident that expanded services will be a win for the people of the country, a win for the Postal Service itself, and a win for postal workers who are extremely dedicated to their mission."

The *Campaign for Postal Banking* has long held that the Postal Service is ideally situated to help address the needs of more than 80 million people who live in unbanked and underbanked households across the country. The check-cashing service being tested at the four sites is one of several services the USPS could offer at much more affordable rates than predatory check-cashing counters found across the country. Today, millions of people are forced to use these shady businesses that often charge as much as 10 percent of the face value of a check just to cash it. While the USPS is offering this service at \$5.95 at the test locations, Campaign advocates are urging them to adopt a lower price that will better position the USPS relative to the predatory AFS industry.

The other services the Campaign has long sought the USPS to pilot include a bill-payment service, expanded international wire services, a post office-to-post office domestic wire service, and ATMs to allow customers to affordably access their own money. Put together, these modest expanded services could produce up to \$1 billion in additional revenue for the Postal Service, according to a 2015 study by the Postal Service Office of the Inspector General.

Proponents of postal banking should be encouraged by these first steps, but not yet satisfied. There's little doubt that the Campaign's work, together with the determination of the APWU to move the pilots forward, has moved the Postal Service to act this fall. Nonetheless, the need remains to expand the test sites to many more post office locations, together with the other yet-unrealized services.

Opponents of postal banking have already begun organizing. The American Bankers Association, the Consumer Bankers Association and the National Association of Federally-Insured Credit Unions all issued statements panning the developments. Conservative lawmakers, including Rep. Patrick McHenry (R-NC-10), the ranking member on the House Financial Services Committee, wrote to the Postmaster General expressing their dismay about the developments.

It's clear now that advocates and supporters of the *Campaign for Postal Banking* will have to redouble our efforts to push the Postal Service forward to expand these tests and offer the country a real taste of expanded postal financial services. More details on our fight ahead in the next edition of this column! ■

The Campaign for Postal Banking is a coalition of consumer, worker, financial reform, economic justice, community, civic, and faith-based organizations calling for low-cost, consumer-driven financial services via the Postal Service. Products and services could include check cashing, bill payment, savings accounts and small-dollar loans. Postal Banking will benefit consumers without access to traditional banks as well as those who want a public option. The expansion of services would also strengthen our public Postal Service. To learn more, visit www.CampaignforPostalBanking.org.

20th-Year Remembrance Event for Postal Workers Killed in Anthrax Attacks

On October 21, the United States Postal Service and the Nation's Capital Southern MD Area Local (NCSMAL) held a remembrance event for the two postal workers killed by the October 2001 anthrax attacks. Joseph P. Curseen and Thomas L. Morris were both postal clerks and APWU members who worked at the Brentwood, Washington, DC mail facility.

In addition, Leroy Richmond was also honored and remembered. Leroy was diagnosed with inhalational anthrax following the attacks and helped the National Institute of Health's studies of anthrax. His blood was used to help the development of an anthrax vaccine. He died in 2019.

NCSMAL President Dena Briscoe, herself a worker at Brentwood during the attack and who led the fight-back group "Brentwood Exposed," spoke about the effects of the attacks on postal workers. "There were many, many others whose trauma was never publicly spoken



Nation's Capital Southern Maryland Area Local President Dena Briscoe

of, the pain never addressed, and lives forever changed. Many were hospitalized, some never returned to work, retired, resigned, and just moved on," Briscoe said.

"Thanks to the men and women who survived this ordeal for your continued service to the USPS," Briscoe continued. "I hope and pray that each of you finds more peace, love, and understanding within your life experiences."

President Mark Dimondstein spoke at the commemoration, extending

our union's heartfelt sympathies to the Curseen, Morris and Richmond families. He raised that one of the most important ways to honor their legacy is to wage the continuing struggle for workplace safety.

"I commend sister Dena Briscoe for her outstanding leadership and all the workers involved in the 'Brentwood Exposed' organization that fought so hard to defend the workers exposed to anthrax and hold management's feet to the fire," said President Dimondstein. "Twenty years after these tragic events, the struggle continues to protect postal workers on the job as they come to work every day to serve the people and fulfill our mission as public servants. We must continue to look after each other and hold management accountable in keeping our workplaces safe and secure."

Around 150 people attended the event. A memorial bench with the names of the three fallen workers was unveiled. The bench will be placed in front of the Brentwood facility. ■

Industrial Relations Department Releases Informational Booklet to Help Postal Workers Stop Harassment at Work

The APWU Industrial Relations Department recently mailed an educational booklet to local offices and members-at-large, to educate and assist members working to improve their workplace environments and address harassment on the job.

The booklet titled "Improving Your Workplace Environment," is offered to help arm you with your contractual and other rights in regards to harassment and hostile workplaces. It contains vital information including examples of abusive conduct, your rights in the workplace, actions you can take, and a variety of resources available to help you when experiencing abuse or harassment.

"Every worker has the right to a work environment free of harassment, hostility, and discrimination," write President Mark Dimondstein and Director Vance Zimmerman in the booklets' introduction. "For

too long, postal management has gotten away with allowing hostile work environments, often covering up for managers and failing to protect postal workers on the job."

The work is a product of a collaborative effort with the APWU Industrial Relations Department and the Workplace Environment Committee, a national committee made up of appointed local, state, and national officers. The committee was established in July 2019 to help address concerns over hostile work environments. The APWU thanks the committee members for their important work.

You can download the booklet by going to apwu.org/harassment or contact your local for a printed version.



Puerto Rico Area Local Members Rally to Demand Safe Workplace

On August 27, Puerto Rico Area Local members staged a rally at the General Post Office in San Juan, Puerto Rico, demanding that management address the post office's unacceptable structural issues that have created an unsafe workplace. The local initially demanded that postal management receive a certification from a structural engineer that deems the post office safe for both employees and customers. The local's larger demand (proclaimed by the rally participants) is for a new, safe building.

The rally followed management's evacuation of the second floor of the General Post Office on August 20, without telling postal workers the reason. Though management insisted that the first floor was safe, when members investigated the building, they noticed several structural issues similar to those that caused the collapse of the Champlain Towers condo building in Surfside, FL in June.

Though management insisted the first floor was safe, they installed plastic sheets and tape to stop the debris from falling on employees. In

response to management's inaction, many APWU members in the building filled out PS 1767 and 3971 forms to request administrative leave due to the unsafe workplace. In response, the Postal Service informed the first floor the building was to be fully evacuated, but excluded Main Office Window Section (MOWS) and Business Mail Entry Unit (BMEU) employees.

At the rally on August 27, Puerto Rico Area Local members raised awareness with the press and the public about management's inaction to protect every single employee and customer at the General Post Office.

"We are tired of the discrimination against us Puerto Rican postal workers. We are tired of putting our lives needlessly in danger. And we demand a better and safer working environment for not only the employees, but for all the people of Puerto Rico," said Omar Ortiz, Puerto Rico Area Local Metro Area Coordinator. "We want a better General Post Office, and when do we want it? Now!"



"I salute Puerto Rico Area Local President Juan Carlos González Del Valle and the other local leaders and members for stepping up on this important health and safety struggle," said President Dimondstein. "The actions and solidarity of the Puerto Rico postal workers continue to demonstrate to all of us how workers can hit the streets and make change happen." ■



Puerto Rico Area Local officers, members and supporters at safety rally.



Postal Workers Are Always Essential

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

Your labor of love and survival has really made a difference to so many people over the last two years. Your job exposed you to COVID-19 – original and variants*. You persisted as you watched your co-workers, family, friends and your communities getting sick or dying. You were called “Essential Workers,” though many in our country never realized that you have always been essential!

Essential workers who also were union members had a clear safety advantage the last year and a half. For postal workers, stewards and officers were there to help enforce the many Memorandums of Understanding that were signed at APWU Headquarters, and they enforced the CDC, and Biden Administration Executive Order protections making sure the USPS was following the rules to protect you on the job.

You worked hard to make sure that all individuals in this country were able to exercise their right to vote. This was lifechanging because the results brought congressmembers and a U.S. President who took COVID-19 seriously as a disease, not dismissing it as ‘fake news.’

Hundreds of thousands of postal workers were exposed to COVID-19, and over 200 postal workers died. The PMG admitted in his Ten-Year Plan (March 2021) that the cumulative number of employees quarantined was over 100,000 (out of 644,000 postal employees). Non-career employees’ turnover rate

continues to increase. There is the need for more nursing staff and better cleaning protections.

In some cases, COVID-19 caused smaller post offices to temporarily close due to employees quarantined.

The PMG and the Board of Governors had the audacity to start up consolidations of mail processing facilities, in addition to excessing employees, equipment and moving first class mail away from its communities, and degrading the service standards. To take this action during a pandemic while heading toward our peak season and the upcoming 2022 elections is sabotage. The plan should be to improve service standards like we had in 2012. We still need more congressional members to cosponsor *H. Res 119* to bring the right standards back; please make sure your representative has signed on.

The Holiday Season is upon us, and I pray you continue to stay strong. Members unite – our fight is not over. We must get our standards back, and battle for our future.

There are thousands of stories where your locals and states stood strong stepping up and volunteering to make our workplace better. We all hope and pray for a better contract; one that members will be proud to help us enforce on the workroom floor. There is work to do.

Blessed Holidays and stay safe APWU Family. ■

**If you tested positive for COVID-19, look into your right to file an OWCP claim.*

Executive Vice President Szeredy with the Nation's Capital Southern MD Area Local during the August 2020 Save the Post Office Day of Action. “We didn’t let them take our democracy away and now we are not going to let them take our timely and vital postal services!”
– Vice President Szeredy



APWU National and Locals Fight Back Against Consolidations



Grenada Local (MS) members standing against consolidations

In May 2021, the Postal Service released a list of 18 USPS facilities slated for consolidation, as part of their *10-Year Delivering for America* plan that went into effect October 1. The consolidations, along with the reduced service standards and mail slowdowns, would affect all postal workers and millions of customers who rely on the USPS for prompt, efficient service in the delivery of mail and packages.

In response to the planned consolidations, APWU National and locals immediately sprang to action to protest and stop the closures. The APWU Legislative & Political Department, along with the NPMHU, supported a strong bipartisan response from Congress. On October 1, as the 10-Year Plan went into effect, 40 members of Congress from both parties joined a letter to Postmaster General DeJoy led by Reps. Suzan DelBene (D-

WA-01) and Mike Simpson (R-ID-02), urging him to stop the consolidations.

"We are worried that moving forward with facility consolidations during the ongoing public health emergency, which continues to impact staffing availability, would result in further service delays and erosion of public trust in one of our nation's most important institutions," the letter said. "If the proposed consolidations proceed on the originally stated timeline, we fear that similar to last year, they will interfere with the timely delivery of election mail in states that have vote-by-mail systems and further degrade mail service heading into the busy holiday season."

APWU locals held rallies and press events to raise public awareness about the consolidations and gather momentum to stop them from moving forward. On October 1, Greater Seattle Area

Local members held an event at the Redmond Post Office to protest the consolidation of the East Delivery Distribution Center. The Erie Area Local (PA), Toledo Area Local (OH), and the Grenada Local (MS) also held Days of Action to stop the mail processing consolidation of their letter mail.

When the APWU was notified in late April about the planned consolidations of 18 postal facilities, President Dimondstein appointed Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy to lead a National Fightback Committee with the five Regional Coordinators – Sharyn Stone, AJ Jones, Tiffany Foster, Kenneth Beasley, and Omar Gonzalez. Materials, shirts, posters, a Zoom Meeting on Mobilizing, and a communication toolkit was provided for the fight. To get involved, email Vice President Szeredy at dszeredy@apwu.org. ■

Congratulations to HRSSC Workers on their New Union Contract!

The American Postal Workers Union's newest bargaining unit, made up of the employees at the Human Resources Shared Service Center in Greensboro, NC, have officially ratified their first contract. The new contract contains strong step progression increases, contractual increases, and two cost of living adjustments.

"Congratulations to the North Carolina Triad Shared Services Local on their new union contract and to Support Services Director

Steve Brooks, NBA Judy McCann and the local negotiating committee," said President Dimondstein. "This new collective bargaining agreement is a prime example of the power of solidarity. By coming together as one, the workers at the HRSSC now have a strong union contract that reflects their hard and important work."

"Thank you to the HRSSC workers for coming to the APWU to form a union and for standing strong throughout the election

and first contract negotiation process," said Industrial Relations Director Zimmerman. "I'm proud of our work in this process to deliver a good contract, that starts to address the pay gaps, job security, seniority and other workplace issues that led to the workers seeking out the APWU. This is a great example of why it is so important to come together as a union."

Read more about the new HRSSC contract in Support Services Director Steve Brooks's column on page 25. ■



Important Dates and Deadlines in the Months Ahead

SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

Throughout 2021 the Secretary-Treasurer's Department has been committed to providing tools and resources for officers in leadership positions to fulfill their responsibilities and stay in compliance with applicable regulations and laws. The last Secretary-Treasurer's virtual training for 2021 will be LM Reporting on December 8, to help local treasurers prepare the March 2022 LM report filing for locals with a fiscal year that ends December 31. Registration for the virtual LM report training can be found in the event section of *apwu.org*.

This year proved to be just as challenging as 2020, but we did not let the circumstances hinder our efforts in bringing our officers and members together to attend the various department virtual trainings, craft conferences, town hall meetings and most importantly our contract negotiation process. The APWU has managed to navigate these uncertain times, keeping our members in the forefront and informed. We cannot afford to let our guard down as we bring the year to an end.

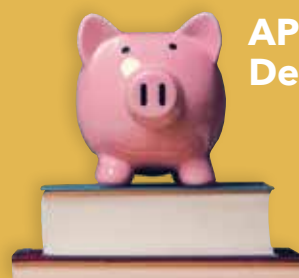
What Local Unions Should be Doing this November and December

Local presidents and treasurers are reminded to take care of important housekeeping tasks in preparation for the New Year. Here is a quick reminder of what locals should be doing this November and December:

- Review 2021 budget and prepare a 2022 budget of your fiscal year ending December 31, 2021.
- Shred financial records prior to 2016 (remember you must keep financial records for 5 years plus the current year).
- Audit of financial records must be done at least once a year.
- Update local asset inventory. Properly dispose of old and broken equipment and furniture with a appropriately approved motion.
- Archive the minutes of membership and executive board meetings for 2021.
- Prepare a calendar of activities and deadlines for 2022.
- Prepare to file your DOL LM report and IRS 990 reports electronically and by the required due date!

Locals that need assistance with these tasks should contact the APWU Secretary-Treasurer's office at 202-842-4215 or contact Executive Assistant to the Secretary-Treasurer, Annette August-Taylor, aaugust@apwu.org.

Happy Holidays from Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth 'Liz' Powell and the staff of the Secretary-Treasurer's Department. ■



APWU Scholarship Deadline is March 31

The scholarship deadline for the E.C. Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship, Vocational Scholarship, and Best Essay Award for 2022 is March 31, 2022. Every year the union

selects deserving students to receive scholarships for college or a vocational institution of their choosing.

The APWU Scholarship Program is one of the benefits of being a member of the APWU. The E.C. Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship awards 10 recipients \$2,000 annually for four years to use toward an undergraduate program. Five Vocational Scholarship winners receive up to \$3,000 to be used for three years of study in a specific trade, technical, industrial, or vocational school. One "Best Essay" winner is selected from the applicant pool to receive a one-time \$2,000 award to his or her four-year college tuition.

APWU Biennial Convention

As this issue goes to press, the APWU National is preparing for our planned 2022 National Convention at National Harbor outside of Washington, D.C., from August 15-18, 2022. Local and state officers should pay close attention to information in the *American Postal Worker*, email correspondence and information posted on *apwu.org*. Deadlines pertaining to the acceptance of resolutions printed in the convention book (June 6, 2022) as well as other important information to assist local and state organizations with budgeting and planning will be provided in the New Year.

APWU HONORED DURING 2021 COMMUNITY CHANGE CHAMPIONS AWARDS

On September 30, APWU ally organization Community Change held its annual Community Change Champions Awards, with the theme of “Rooted and Rising.” The 2021 awards, held virtually due to the pandemic, recognized “those who carried us through all that was 2020: a global pandemic, economic devastation, the uprising for Black lives, [and] our democracy at a precipice.”

APWU members, along with other frontline union workers of AFSCME, SEIU, NEA, UFCW, and UNITE HERE, were honored with the Champion in Labor Partnership award. Arrion Brown, Legislative Director of the Nation’s Capital Southern MD



Area Local, accepted the award on the APWU’s behalf, along with rank-and-file members of the other unions.

“Throughout the pandemic, we have proven that the millions and millions of workers across the country are the true strength and backbone of the country,” Brown said during the ceremony. “And also that the workers around the world are the true strength of humanity.”

Lorena Quiroz-Lewis, Executive Director & Founder at Immigrant Alliance for Justice and Equity in Mississippi, was also honored during the ceremony as Emerging Change Champion. The National Domestic Workers Alliance was honored as Champion in Community Organizing, and journalist, professor and 1619 Project creator Nikole Hannah-Jones was honored as Disruptor Change Champion. ■

APWU Family Members Awarded 2021 Union Plus Scholarships

Since 1991, the annual Union Plus Scholarship Program has helped fund education for students of more than 3,200 union families. The Union Plus Scholarship awards are presented annually to union members or members of their families who want to begin or continue their post-secondary education.

In 2021, Union Plus awarded \$250,000 in scholarships to 199 students. Two winners who are dependents of APWU members were awarded \$1,000: Abeera Saeed, daughter of Muhammad Akhtar, member of the New York Metro Area Postal Union, and Corey White, son of Timothy White, member of the Boston Metro Area Local.

Both winners spoke about the important impact that the APWU had

on their lives. “APWU worked hard to make sure my father’s mental health, physical health, and job were protected,” Saeed said. “They also gave him the freedom to have some say in the locations and times he worked, which meant he could stay closer to home and properly raise me during my early years of development. This time together was a gift from APWU that I can never repay.”

“My father receives many important benefits, including collective bargaining, workplace safety, and fair health care programs,” White said. “These benefits mean that APWU workers have rights, and they have a collective voice. As I pursue a career in the trades, I am excited about the opportunity to be part of a union.” ■



Abeera Saeed



Corey White



INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR VANCE ZIMMERMAN

Negotiations Still Ongoing As Clock is Stopped

On September 20, 2021, the Collective Bargaining Agreement was set to expire at midnight. As the deadline approached, the Core Negotiating Committee (President, Executive Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, Industrial Relations Director, and the four Craft Directors) met to discuss how to proceed. The Committee felt that there was sufficient progress in negotiations to “stop-the-clock” and continue negotiating. The Committee’s vote was unanimous.

‘Stopping the clock’ meant that all provisions and MOUs under the 2018-2021 contract continued in full force and effect. Your negotiators have continued to meet with their counterparts at the Postal Service. The APWU’s Chief Negotiator (President Dimondstein), Craft Directors, and I (Chief Spokesperson) are continuing to negotiate with our counterparts and progress continues to be made.

Since September 20, 2021, the Committee has continued meeting regularly to discuss and analyze how negotiations are proceeding. The Committee also discusses what the next steps will be. Main Table meetings with the Postal Service have continued since September 20. Both the APWU Core Committee and the Postal Service team attends. The last Main Table meeting occurred on November 8, 2021.

I understand how important the contract is to you and your family. I want you all to have answers on the what your contract will be. By the time you are reading this, there is a chance that either a voluntary agreement will have been tentatively reached or the Committee will have taken the next step and moved into the mediation process, which is taken as a last attempt prior to interest arbitration.

Postal Workers are Protected by OSHA Safety Standards

The US Postal Service is unique when it comes to the applicability of the *Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSH Act)* on federal agencies. This is the law that established the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Under the *Postal Reorganization Act of 1970*, the Postal Service was placed under Section 19 of the *OSH Act*.

This did nothing more than require the Postal Service to establish a safety program to help prevent injuries and accidents, keep records of any injuries/accidents, and report these statistics. OSHA did not have any enforcement authority over safety at the Postal Service.

In 1998, the *Postal Employees Safety Enhancement Act (PESEA)* was passed. This made the Postal Service subject to Public Law Number 91-596 subjecting the Postal Service to OSHA safety standards. OSHA can now do inspections, issue citations, penalties and criminal referrals.

Under the PESEA, postal employees gained rights that other federal employees do not have. Falling under OSHA has benefitted postal employees, given them more rights, and led to better enforcement of safety regulations. When OSHA issues new and updated safety standards, the Postal Service is subject to them. The parties cannot pick and choose what OSHA safety standards are followed/enforced and which ones are not.

COVID-19 Remains Dangerous

I want to remind everyone that COVID-19 is still a threat and safety concern. The APWU encourages everyone to practice those precautions that help prevent and slow the spread of the virus. Wear a face covering, wash your hands regularly and practice social distancing when possible. The APWU also encourages all employees who are medically able to receive one of the authorized vaccines against COVID-19. I have been vaccinated and received my booster shot.

Any postal employee who is diagnosed with COVID-19 is able to apply for workers’ compensation benefits (OWCP). Changes to the law made it much easier to apply for and be approved. It is important to apply for benefits for a variety of reasons. You can be compensated for missed work, and your medical treatment is paid for. Since no one knows the long-term effects of the disease, having an approved claim ensures your future medical treatment related to COVID-19 is paid for as well. Please contact your local with questions on how to apply for benefits.

Solidarity! ■

Did you hear it's Easier to File an OWCP Claim for COVID-19 now?

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 that President Biden signed on March 11, 2021, makes it **much easier** for federal workers diagnosed with COVID-19 to establish coverage under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act. To establish a COVID-19 claim, you simply need to establish that you are a "covered employee," meaning that:

1. **You were diagnosed with COVID-19.** Specifically, you were diagnosed with COVID-19 while employed in the Federal service at any time during the period of January 27, 2020 to January 27, 2023; and,
2. **Your duties include any risk of exposure.** Specifically, within **21** days of your diagnosis of COVID-19, you carried out duties that—
 - a. required contact with patients, members of the public, or co-workers; or
 - b. included a risk of exposure to the novel coronavirus.



What Does the Change in the Law Mean?

1. **You are only required to establish that your duties included a risk of exposure to COVID-19.** You do not have to prove you were engaged in high-risk employment; that you were actually exposed to the virus; or that you were exposed to someone who had the virus while performing your duties.
2. **If you establish that you are a "covered employee," any diagnosed COVID-19 will be deemed to have been proximately caused by your Federal employment.** You no longer have to establish a causal link between your employment and your COVID-19 diagnosis.



What to Do:

You can quickly and easily file a **CA-1** Claim for COVID-19 through the Employees' Compensation Operations and Management Portal (ECOMP). You can access ECOMP at ecomp.dol.gov. If you have never used ECOMP, you can [view this instructional video](#) to learn how to register for an ECOMP account, [and this video](#) to learn how to file a COVID-19 claim. If you don't have access to a computer, contact your supervisor.



Why File Now? What if I Think I Am OK?

If you were previously diagnosed with COVID-19 or even if you believe you just have a mild case of COVID-19, you should consider filing a COVID-19 FECA claim **now** even if you have fully recovered and/or had an asymptomatic infection.

- In the event you develop a consequential injury, impairment or illness later as a result of your COVID-19 diagnosis, timely filing your claim **now** will facilitate the processing of any future claim for any such consequential condition or impairment.
- If you wait until you experience a consequential injury or illness to file your COVID-19 claim, your claim may be subject to time limitation and you will have to establish **both** the initial COVID-19 claim and the consequential condition claim before benefits can begin.



Support Postal Employees Impacted by Hurricane Ida and Other Natural Disasters



Damaged houses along the Gulf Coast Region of Louisiana following Hurricane Ida



Barn burning during the Caldor Fire in California's Sierra Nevada mountains on August 29

On August 26, the 16-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Ida made landfall in Louisiana as a Category 4 storm. Behind Katrina, Ida was the second most intense and damaging hurricane to hit the state. As the storm moved northeast, it caused additional destruction, flooding and multiple fatalities on the East Coast and in New York City. In Louisiana, nearly the entire state's power grid was knocked out, with several major tornado events in Louisiana and other southern states caused by the storm.

With over 115 total fatalities and over \$65 billion in damage, Hurricane Ida was just one of several major natural disasters this year. Devastating wildfires continued to rage across the West and many states experienced torrential rainstorms causing major flooding. In total, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recorded 18 major natural disasters in 2021, separately totaling over \$1 billion in damage as of October, already a record high. The average number of these disasters per year is seven.

Experts state that events like Hurricane Ida and other natural disasters will only continue to rise in frequency due to the effects of climate change.

Postal Employees' Relief Fund

If APWU members wish to help their fellow postal workers offset the devastation of Hurricane Ida and other natural disasters, they can donate to the Postal Employees' Relief Fund (PERF). PERF provides relief grants to assist qualifying active and retired postal employees to help reestablish residence and replace other necessities to get life back on track.

PERF was created as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization to provide financial assistance for postal employees in their hour of need – it belongs to all postal workers and is administrated by the postal unions and management equally. PERF depends almost entirely on the generosity of postal employees to help co-workers rebuild their lives after natural disasters and home fires.

There are several ways to securely donate to PERF:

1. By designating #10268 during the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), employees can often give more generously by making small, bi-weekly contributions throughout the year through payroll deduction. The CFC kicked off on September 1

and continues through January 15, 2022.

2. Anyone can make contributions anytime of the year by credit card or Paypal through PERF's website, postalrelief.com. The site allows donors to make a one-time donation or to set automatic, recurring donations.
3. Checks or money orders are also accepted throughout the year. Donations should be mailed directly to the:

Postal Employees' Relief Fund
P.O. Box 41220
Fredericksburg, VA 22404-1220

Members in need are encouraged to take advantage of the available resources. Contact the APWU Secretary-Treasurer's Department by calling 202-842-4205 or email Annette August-Taylor, aaugust@apwu.org, for more information. You can also contact PERF directly at 202-408-1869 or perf10268@aol.com.

Union workers impacted by the hurricane or other disasters may also qualify for a Union Plus Disaster Relief Grant, and other financial assistance. ■

The APWU logo is displayed in a stylized, bold, blue font.

HEALTH PLAN

Together. Better Health.



JOIN US IN THE COVID-19 FIGHT

What You Need to Know

- Vaccines are safe and effective.
- You may have side effects after vaccination, but these are normal.
- It typically takes two weeks after vaccination for the body to build protection. You are not fully vaccinated until 2 weeks after the 2nd of a two-dose vaccine or two weeks after a one-dose vaccine.
- Adults and adolescents are now eligible for a COVID-19 vaccination; children ages 5-11 can get the Pfizer pediatric vaccine.

Benefits of Getting COVID-19 Vaccine

- All COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the U.S. have been shown safe and effective at preventing COVID-19.
- People who are fully vaccinated can start to do some things that they had stopped doing because of the pandemic.

Find a COVID-19 Vaccine:

Find where vaccines are available in your state by going to the link below or search [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov), text your zip code to 438829, or call 1-800-232-0233.

Link: <https://www.vaccines.gov>

It's free to everyone!

**Vaccination can help to
protect Postal Employees
during the challenges of
the COVID-19 pandemic.**





OPEN SEASON HOTLINE

800.PIC.APWU (8:30a.m. - 7p.m. ET)

virtualopenseason@apwuhp.com
(response within 48 hours)

www.apwuhp.com
(click on Open Season)



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1 million+ providers



Personal service
from people
who care

High Option

100% covered services

- ✓ Preventive care and treatment
- ✓ Lab tests (covered blood work performed at LabCorp and Quest Diagnostics)
- ✓ Maternity care
- ✓ Accidental injury outpatient services within 72 hours
- ✓ Diabetes generic oral medications
- ✓ Visits to a registered dietician/nutritionist
- ✓ Tobacco cessation and weight management programs
- ✓ Breast cancer screenings for women

Save money with virtual visits.

The copay for a virtual visit is just \$15.

In-network copays

\$25 for office visits, including specialists
\$30 for urgent care
\$10 for retail non-specialty Tier 1 drugs

Save on prescriptions by using the Express
Scripts® Smart90® program

2022 HIGH OPTION PREMIUMS

APWU Career Biweekly and Retiree Monthly



Self Only
enrollment code 471

Biweekly	Monthly
\$106.39	\$230.51



Self Plus One
enrollment code 473

Biweekly	Monthly
\$212.96	\$461.41



Self & Family
enrollment code 472

Biweekly	Monthly
\$268.83	\$582.46

ENROLL DURING OPEN SEASON

November 8 – December 13

A Medicare Advantage plan designed for FEHBP. Take advantage of it.

APWU Health Plan offers a Medicare Advantage plan for High Option members covered by Medicare Part A and Part B. The UnitedHealthcare® Medicare Advantage (PPO) for APWU Health Plan reduces or eliminates cost-sharing for services. Plus, it includes a \$50 Medicare Part B monthly reimbursement.

There's so much to take advantage of:

No deductible, coinsurance or copays

No need to coordinate primary and secondary payers

Prescription drug coverage throughout the Gap stage and Catastrophic coverage stage



Choose a plan that offers benefits at no extra cost.



FROM AN APWUHP MEDICARE ADVANTAGE MEMBER

It's a homerun!

SilverSneakers®

Stay active with a free fitness program.

NurseLine

Access a registered nurse 24/7.

UnitedHealthcare HouseCalls

Get an annual in-home preventive care visit.

UnitedHealthcare Hearing

Receive a hearing exam and access a wide selection of hearing aids.

Provider network

See any doctor who accepts Medicare patients and the plan.

YOU CHOOSE!



UnitedHealthcare

Consumer Driven Option

100% covered services

- ✓ In January, the Health Plan funds a Personal Care Account (PCA) members can use for covered medical services. Members are covered at 100% until the PCA is exhausted. The Plan funds the PCA at \$1,200 for Self Only and \$2,400 for Self Plus One and Self and Family.
- ✓ Preventive care and screenings
- ✓ Well-woman care
- ✓ Healthy pregnancy and tobacco cessation programs

Save money with virtual visits.

Pay just 15% of the plan allowance for Virtual Visits, less than the cost of an in-person office visit

In-network copays

No upfront deductible, coinsurance or copay until you exhaust your PCA
Receive a discount on prescriptions when you use the OptumRx® Home Delivery



Your own Personal Care Account (PCA) to pay for medical expenses



Affordable premiums and comprehensive coverage



Nationwide UnitedHealthcare network



No referrals needed

2022 CONSUMER DRIVEN OPTION PREMIUMS

APWU Career Biweekly and Retiree Monthly **No Rate Increase!**



Self Only

enrollment code 474

Biweekly **\$69.65** Monthly **\$150.91**



Self Plus One

enrollment code 476

Biweekly **\$151.38** Monthly **\$327.99**



Self & Family

enrollment code 475

Biweekly **\$165.14** Monthly **\$357.81**

APWU Biweekly **★ Reduced Rate**

APWU career less than a year **\$69.65**

Postal Support Employees **\$69.65**

APWU career greater than a year in FEHB **\$13.93**

APWU career less than a year **\$151.38**

Postal Support Employees **\$151.38**

APWU career greater than a year in FEHB **★\$30.28**

APWU career less than a year **\$165.14**

Postal Support Employees **\$165.14**

APWU career greater than a year in FEHB **★\$33.03**



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

Das Issues Remedy Award on PM End of Day Button Case

On December 8, 2017, Arbitrator Shyam Das found that the Postal Service was in violation of the parties' Article 1.6.B Global Settlement Remedy Agreement (GSRA) in Level 18 offices when it created the Postmaster End of Day (PMEOD) button in the Retail System Software (RSS). The PMEOD button allowed postmasters to enter and exit RSS without completely closing out of the window. The button allowed postmasters to give false accounts of the amount of bargaining unit work they performed, which is limited to 15 hours each week in Level 18 offices.

In his December 8, 2017 award, Arbitrator Das remanded the remedy to the parties; however, after three years, the Postal Service had failed to provide the union with an acceptable analysis of the amount of back pay entitlement and the parties returned to the arbitrator for a decision on a proper remedy. After the initial hearing dates in August 2020 were postponed, the remedy hearings were held on December 3-4, 2020. Das issued his decision dated September 16, 2021, awarding \$20.5 million to be distributed: "(1) to affected bargaining unit employees as determined by the union; or if that option is declined by the union, (2) to clerks who worked in offices where the PMEOD function was enabled based on the relative number of days they worked during the period that function was enabled" (page 2 of his award).

This is just one more step in the battle to return work rightfully belonging to the Clerk Craft. While the Postal Service continues to put up obstacles, your union will not be deterred. We will continue to fight. This award should bring about a little vindication for the clerks in Level 18 post offices.

The Clerk Division at the national level filed the dispute after the Postal Service unilaterally changed the RSS logon start time on the PS Form 1412, in an effort to reduce their financial liability. Rest assured, this battle is not over. Stay tuned.

We will not stop until all the work that is rightfully ours is given to us.

On behalf of the Clerk Division, which includes Director Lamont Brooks, and Assistant Directors Lynn Pallas-

Barber and Sam Lisenbe, we would be remiss if we did not thank Memphis Region Clerk Division NBA Pamela Smith, who secured 1412 data during the Thanksgiving holiday for us to present as rebuttal evidence at the arbitration hearing, and Michael Barrett of the Buffalo Area Local, who compiled numerous excel spreadsheets in support of the data.

Clerk Craft officers will meet and discuss the two options offered by Arbitrator Das in his award regarding the remedy to determine the best possible manner in which to compensate those clerks affected by this violation. ■

Clerk Craft Planning Additional Training

During the last full week of January 2022, the Clerk Craft will conduct training via Zoom. The classes have not been finalized at the time of this writing; however, they will include training on Clerk Craft-related issues. We want to piggyback on the positive responses we received concerning the Clerk Craft Conference trainings.

Once exact dates and classes are confirmed, the Clerk Craft webpage on apwu.org will have the information, and local and state organizations will be notified.

Clerk Mentoring Program

In early 2022, Clerk Craft is planning to launch a Clerk Mentoring Program.

We want to assist each of our officers at the local level in bringing along at least one younger member in a similar fashion as the 'Big Brother' Program. The mentoring program will hopefully be utilized to train and encourage younger clerk craft members to get involved and stay involved with the union. They are our union's future, and we want them to have a strong foundation to keep the APWU secure.

“Deep Cleaning” MMO-03-20 Challenged by APWU



Assistant Director Terry Martinez, Director Idowu Balogun and Assistant Director Jason Treier

In March 2020, the Postal service notified APWU National that MMO-031-20 was being implemented in the field as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. MMO-031-20 superseded Flu Season MMO-109-09 and contained detailed information reflecting the guidance of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and prevention methods designed to reduce the spread of coronavirus (deep cleaning). The MMO also required additional cleaning (in many facilities, multiple times a day) in operational work areas, swing rooms, lobbies, restrooms, locker rooms and meeting areas using disinfectants, surface wipes and hand sanitizers.

THE UNION WELCOMES THE USPS’S ATTEMPT TO ABIDE BY THE GUIDELINES OF THE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL (CDC) RELATIVE TO FACILITY CLEANING GUIDELINES. HOWEVER, THE CHANGES TO CUSTODIAL CLEANING FREQUENCIES MUST BE NEGOTIATED WITH THE UNION AND INCORPORATED INTO MS-47 TL-5 AND T-L3 CLEANING HANDBOOKS.

When the union demanded that the additional cleaning be added to custodial staffing packages, management balked and we were forced to initiate a national level dispute.

The TL-5 MS-47 Handbook (Facility Cleaning) Section 5.10 requires *“the installation head/designated maintenance official will ensure **that all duties expected and anticipated to be performed by custodians are accurately identified in the completed staffing package.**”*

MMO-31-20 stated in part that *“this cleaning must be performed throughout the flu season (October-April) and whenever possible for coronavirus.”* The language is clear. Inasmuch as the additional “deep cleaning” required by MMO-031-20 was a directive from management to the field, the only conclusion drawn is that this work is anticipated to be performed and, as such, must now be added to the PS Form 4852 in custodial staffing packages.

The union welcomes the USPS’s attempt to abide by the guidelines of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) relative to facility cleaning guidelines. However, the changes to custodial cleaning frequencies must be negotiated with the union and incorporated into MS-47 TL-5 and TL-3 cleaning handbooks. ■

Jason Treier to Serve as Maintenance Division Assistant Director

In accordance with Article 21 of the American Postal Workers Union Constitution & Bylaws, Jason Treier (pictured above) will serve as Maintenance Division Assistant Director after being appointed by Director Balogun. Brother Treier received unanimous concurrence by the Maintenance Council, and started serving in the new position on Sept. 25, 2021.

In 2005, Jason was hired by the USPS as a PTF Clerk at the Lancaster, PA P&DC. He entered the Maintenance Craft in 2007 as a Level 4 Custodian. In 2008, he became a Maintenance Steward and the local Maintenance Craft Director in 2009. In 2014, Brother Treier served as the Director of Industrial Relations for the Lancaster Area Local.

In 2018, Brother Treier was appointed to the position of National Business Agent for the Eastern Region Maintenance Division, where he remained until his recent appointment to the HQ Maintenance Division.

Kenneth Lester to be appointed as new Maintenance NBA



Kenneth Lester

Director Balogun appointed Kenneth Lester to serve as the new National Business Agent for the Eastern Region Maintenance Division, and he was unanimously approved by the Maintenance Council. He started serving in the new position Oct. 25, 2021.

Brother Lester was hired by the Postal Service in the Maintenance Craft as an MPE Mechanic at the Philadelphia P&DC in 1987. He became a union steward in 1993 and subsequently served as the Local Assistant Maintenance Craft Director for the Philadelphia Area Local. Recently he was elected as the local Maintenance Craft Director prior to his appointment to the Eastern Region NBA position.

Read more about both appointments on apwu.org.

The Wheels of Justice Often Turn Slowly



Director Michael Foster and Assistant Director Kenneth Prinz

After over a year of discussions on the Step 4 grievances highlighted in this magazine, the APWU National and the USPS Headquarters parties have resolved three of the numerous outstanding MVS disputes.

During the recent and still ongoing Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) negotiations between the parties, we were also able to discuss unresolved working issues that affect MVS Craft members.

During negotiations, our determination to the members was that the MVS Craft had given back enough of our contractual rights to support the mission of the Postal Service with very little reciprocity or acknowledgement of the value of MVS employees. We had no more concessions to give despite the USPS proposals and demands for more regressive work rule changes. Any MVS gains in the developing agreement will be modest because of our determination for no give backs.

See apwu.org for future updates on the status of negotiations and the Step 4 settlements.

DOT Physicals Settlement

Case number Q18V-4Q-C 21001475 claims that the Postal Service violated previous agreements by permitting or authorizing its contractor, Caduceus USA Medical Services to:

- 1) compel employees holding a commercial driver's license (CDL) to sign medical record release forms at their Department of Transportation (DOT) physical;
- 2) subject employees to additional levels of medical review even after a medical examiner finds them medically fit;
- 3) withhold medical examiner certificates from employees; and,
- 4) require interstate medical examiner certificates in states where they are not required.

An agreement reached on September 21 states that parties will abide by the previous agreements. Employees will not be required to sign a medical record release to receive a DOT physical. The FMCSA does not require the medical examiner to provide a copy of the medical examination report to the employer.

The Postal Service will require DOT/FMCSA certified examining physicians to provide employees the determi-

nation of their exam upon completion and to issue a new medical examiner certificate to the employees if they are medically cleared to drive.

The agreement states, "USPS drivers holding a CDL are required to self-certify to their state that they operate or expect to operate in 'excepted interstate commerce' in accordance with 49 CFR part 383.71(b)(1)(ii), which will result in PVS drivers being exempt from the interstate requirements."

The Postal Service will not require DOT physicals where they are not required under the applicable state intrastate standards, provided the MVS employee has completed the self-certification process as outlined above.

Zero Base Settlement

Case number Q18V-6Q-C 21093372 claims the Postal Service was shifting duties of the Schedule Examiner Vehicle Runs to supervisors (and EAS employees) during the Zero-Base review or the national Transportation Logistics Training Program.

In the national arbitration case number Q10V-4Q-C 15292655, the Postal Service confirmed that "Schedule Examiner work is bargaining unit work, and that supervisors (and EAS employees) cannot perform bargaining unit work unless one of the exceptions provided for in Article 1.6 applies."

The settlement states that EAS employees shall not perform bargaining unit work when conducting Zero Base or similar management reviews.

Cell Phone Policy Settlement

Case number Q15V-4Q-C 19168222 claims the Postal Service failed to provide Article 19 notice when they made changes to the Employee and Labor Relations manual regarding the cell phone policy. The policy that the parties agreed to was that due to the size of the vehicles that Motor Vehicle Craft employees operate, the use of a cell phone while driving is impracticable.

Supervisors should only attempt to contact drivers via phone at the driver's scheduled stops and not while the driver is on the road. Consistent with safe driving practices, Motor Vehicle Service Craft employees may pull off the road to use a cell phone, provided there is a safe location to do so. Employees are not required to use their personal cell phone in the performance of their duties. ■

HRSSC Members Ratify a First Union Contract



Director Steve Brooks

The newest bargaining unit of the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, is made up of the employees working at the Human Resource Shared Service Center (HRSSC) in Greensboro, NC, who have officially ratified the terms of their very first Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The process leading to the terms of the agreement with the Postal Service was a long and exhausting one. I give so much credit to the members of the North Carolina Triad Shared Services Local Number 8016 for their patience in this process. We could not have gotten this done without the members of their negotiation team: Susie Sheppard, Ed Swaim, Katrina Hamilton, Mary Allen, and Mary Kelly.

Before joining the union, the HRSSC employees were EAS non-supervisory employees who had had enough of not being treated fairly in so many aspects of their employment, including subjective pay provisions, safety concerns, contractual rights and absolutely no say in their working conditions. These are the reasons that the employees approached the APWU.

Once their NLRB vote took place and the employees overwhelmingly voted to become a union, they moved forward with creating a Constitution and Bylaws, which established their officer positions, and election of officers for the local. They had been signing up members during the whole time the negotiation process was taking place. After hearing about the tentative agreement, they signed up more than 20 new members (a 26 percent increase to their local membership).

After agreeing to the non-economic terms, the parties still had the task of negotiating the economics of this agreement. Many thanks to President Mark Dimondstein, Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman and the Industrial Relations Department staff for their hands on involvement in this process. Having them involved expedited and enhanced negotiations.



(l-r) Chanteria Snipe, Communication Officer; Bruce Aaron, Chief Shop Steward; Carol Haywood, Vice President; Susie Sheppard, President; Debra Ingram, Treasurer and Kim Alexander-Hamilton, Legislative/Political Representative

Contract Gains

The terms of this agreement will afford the employees contractual rights they have not had, and a substantial change in pay structure. This group of non-bargaining non-supervisory employees were subject to a pay-for-performance salary process that was subjective and unfair.

The terms of the new agreement allow for yearly contractual increases, step progression salary increases every 44 weeks, a one-time slotting into a new pay schedule with advancement to a higher step based on seniority, and two cost of living adjustments per year based on the Consumer Price Index.

The terms in this agreement address all of the concerns that the employees had when they made the decision to unionize. It gives them the protections and the compensation that they have not had because they had no union representation.

The members voted unanimously to accept the terms of the Collective Bargaining Agreement and the terms are in effect from October 23, 2021 through October 22, 2024. Congratulations to the members of the NC Triad Shared Services Local and welcome to the APWU.

In Union Solidarity!! ■



AJ Jones, Eastern Regional Coordinator

Taking on Challenges Together

COVID-19 Continues

Brothers and Sisters, I hope and pray you and your families are healthy and staying safe. As the end of 2021 quickly approaches, we continue to deal with the COVID-19 Pandemic.

COVID cases are on the rise again with more folks being infected, especially with the Delta and Mu variants. Cases were down as a result of all the hard work we did in getting protocols in place. Once CDC restrictions were relaxed just prior to July 4 holiday, we started to see an increase in cases.

Daily MMO cleaning, Stand-up-Talks, and deep cleaning after a positive has been identified in a facility are crucial. Remember, a *PS Form 1767 Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice* is always in play and must be completed to document deficiencies. Grievances must be filed to address these serious concerns. I realize this is monotonous, but we must stay focused; together we can meet the challenges.

I would like to thank and recognize officers, stewards, and our members for all their hard work on the front line through some of our most difficult times we have ever faced as postal workers. You all are doing a tremendous job and should be proud of yourselves. I am proud of you; you are all true heroes. God bless our dearly departed.

LMOU Negotiations

Our contract was set to expire on September 20, 2021. In a final attempt to secure an agreement, the parties agreed to 'stop the clock' to allow for continuing discussions. Whether we achieve a voluntary agreement or are awarded a contract resulting from interest arbitration, it will lead to local negotiations. Both the union and management have the equal right to open negotiations, so don't get caught off guard.

Begin preparing by reviewing your Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU) in preparation for when that time arrives. Make notations in a current copy of items that present issues and how you would like to address

them. Perhaps you may find items that are in conflict or inconsistent with the CBA. I encourage all local officers to give their members an opportunity to have a say in what may be proposed. Engage them in the process.

Local Internal Safety and Health Committee

Internal Local Safety and Health Representatives are vital to having a productive Joint Safety and Health Committee meeting. Does your local have such a practice? Does your local meet prior to a joint meeting with the employer? If not, it may be something you would like to consider.

This process will provide your local an opportunity to engage your members in safety. Find out what is important to members and the safety challenges they face in performing their jobs. Gather data and review training records, appoint safety representatives, and review your *PS Form 1767 Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice*. Safety in the workplace engages our members and encourages them to be more involved in the union. Remember, "Failing to Prepare Is Preparing to Fail."

Consolidations Resurface

The USPS notified the APWU they would reactivate consolidations in 18 facilities that were previously on the table. President Dimondstein established a Consolidation Committee and appointed Vice President Debby Szeredy along with the five Regional Coordinators in an effort to fight back these resurfaced consolidations.

The USPS stated they would not be performing new studies to support this and instead would be using old data from years ago. They began sending impact notices and requested meetings at the regional level.

As we continue to take on new challenges together, my colleague coordinators, Central Region Coordinator Sharyn Stone, Western Region Coordinator Omar Gonzalez, Southern Region Coordinator Kenneth Beasley and Northeast Region Coordinator Tiffany Foster are here to fight back against these attacks on our members.

In Solidarity! ■



FROM the FIELD

Below are quotes from various APWU local and state publications throughout the country. All the publications listed are part of the Postal Press Association (PPA). For more information on the PPA, visit apwupostalpress.org or email ppa@apwupostalpress.org.

"A union is not like a club or organization that you join. It is a lifestyle that must become a part of the way you think, feel and act. The union must be protected and guarded, for it is the primary source for how we put food on the table, a roof over our heads and clothing on our backs. It sent my kids to college; it put that car in the garage, and it provides a pension for when I grow old. It allows me to go to the doctor when I am sick, and it even relieves my family of the stress of burying me when it is my time to leave this earth. I love my union because it has provided me a pretty good life."

- Jonathan Smith
New York Metro Area Postal Union President
The Union Mail

"I want you, the worker, the future of our local, to become involved in union activities. All local unions usually have union meetings once a month. Our local meetings are on the third Saturday of every month except for the months June and December. You can ask many questions at a meeting outside of work in a comfortable and safe environment. You can participate in making motions at your meeting and voting on issues of concern that will make both your local and your job better. You can ask to get training on how to become a union steward. You can volunteer to help at a picnic, a sports game, picket, or rally. You can bring your ideas on how to protect our jobs better. You can educate your officers on what has been going on at work that they may not be aware of and even run for office."

- Robert Proo
San Antonio Alamo Area Local
Maintenance Craft Director
Alamo Area Local Dispatch

"Think about what you have now, the good pay, guaranteed hours, a safe workplace, generous sick leave and vacation. Do you think these benefits were willingly given to you? No! Your union fought long and hard for them. Think about the current pandemic. The union made sure that safety protocols were established and followed and that you were given the PPE needed to do your job. Your union works hard for you..."

"All current or recently retired postal workers owe a debt of gratitude to the past employees that fought to get us what we have now. We need people that are willing to fight for the future generations of postal employees so they can have the same secure future that we all enjoy."

- Jim Bilek
Omaha Area Local Editor
Post Script

"A lot of people think that our local stewards are the 'boots on the ground' in the battle with management. This may be true to some extent, but the real heart of the matter is this: You are the 'boots on the ground.' You are the eyes and ears in every unit, on all three tours, on every floor in the building. The union is here to investigate problems or potential problems but we can only do that if we know about them."

- Timothy Frankland
Twin Cities (MN) Postal Data Center
Local Chief Steward
The Data Feedback



IATSE Local 600 members in Los Angeles on October 12

60,000 Hollywood Union Workers Reach Tentative Agreement Following Overwhelming Strike Authorization

On October 16, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) reached a tentative agreement with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP) on a new three-year contract. The agreement followed an overwhelming approval of a strike authorization by members, with nearly 90 percent of all members voting in favor.

IATSE – who represents behind-the-scenes film crew members including cinematographers, operators, grips, editors, costumers and others – had negotiated for several months, demanding adequate rest periods and better pay for its members working on sets for streaming content, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime and Apple TV programs and feature films. The companies producing streaming content are some of the largest and richest corporations in the world, and the work behind-the-scenes is often extremely difficult, with many crew

members expected to work 16-hour days with only 8 hours of turnaround time – a situation similar to Amazon workers in warehouses and distribution centers. Additionally, streaming shows often pay crew members much less for projects than those made by traditional Hollywood studios.

During negotiations, the AMPTP refused to meet IATSE's demands for adequate rest periods and better pay, leading to the union's call for a strike authorization vote. The new tentative agreement has language for adequate turnaround times and includes wage increases in each of the three years of the contract.

The agreement must be approved by IATSE members before it is ratified as a contract. As this issue goes to press, members are still voting. Updates will be provided on apwu.org.

Amazon Workers in Staten Island, NY File for Union Election

On October 25, workers at Amazon's Staten Island, NY facilities filed a petition for a union election, approved the same day by the National Labor Relations Board. The union drive is organized by the Amazon Labor Union, an independent organization led by former Amazon worker Chris Smalls, who was fired from the Staten Island JFK8 facility after organizing a walkout over inadequate health and safety protections during the pandemic.

The union drive is not just looking to organize workers at one facility; the Amazon Labor Union filed a petition to hold an election amongst Amazon workers at all

four facilities on Staten Island – more than 5,000 workers, according to the *New York Times*.

The election will be the second among Amazon workers in the U.S., following the April election in Bessemer, AL. While Amazon was successful in crushing that union drive, the NLRB is expected to order a new election in Bessemer due to the company's illegal unionbusting tactics.

The NLRB will hold a hearing in mid-November on when and how the election for the Staten Island facilities will be conducted.

Look for more updates on apwu.org.

South African Metalworkers Win Pay Raises Following Two Week Work Stoppage

On October 21, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) agreed to a new three-year union contract, bringing a two-week nationwide strike to an end. Representing around 155,000 workers across the country, NUMSA began the strike on October 5, responding to bad faith negotiating tactics from the Steel and Engineering Industry Federation of South Africa, the National Employers' Association of South Africa, and the Metals Engineering Industries' Bargaining Council.

Instead of negotiating, the trade associations made take-it-or-leave-it offers with inadequate pay raises that did not reward workers for their sacrifices during the pandemic. The associations, NUMSA General Secretary Irvin Jim told South Africa's *Fin24*, were attempting to create labor conditions "totally unregulated, like the apartheid regime where workers had no rights and could be fired willy-nilly."

"We [were] embarking on a strike as a last resort as we have no choice but to push employers to give workers their wage increases and improve their working conditions," Jim continued.

The strike caused over 500 million rand (about \$34 million) in losses for the sector, and forced the associations to come to the bargaining table. The new contract contains good pay increases and cost of living adjustments, as well as backpay to July 1.

10,000 John Deere Workers on Strike in Iowa, Illinois and Kansas

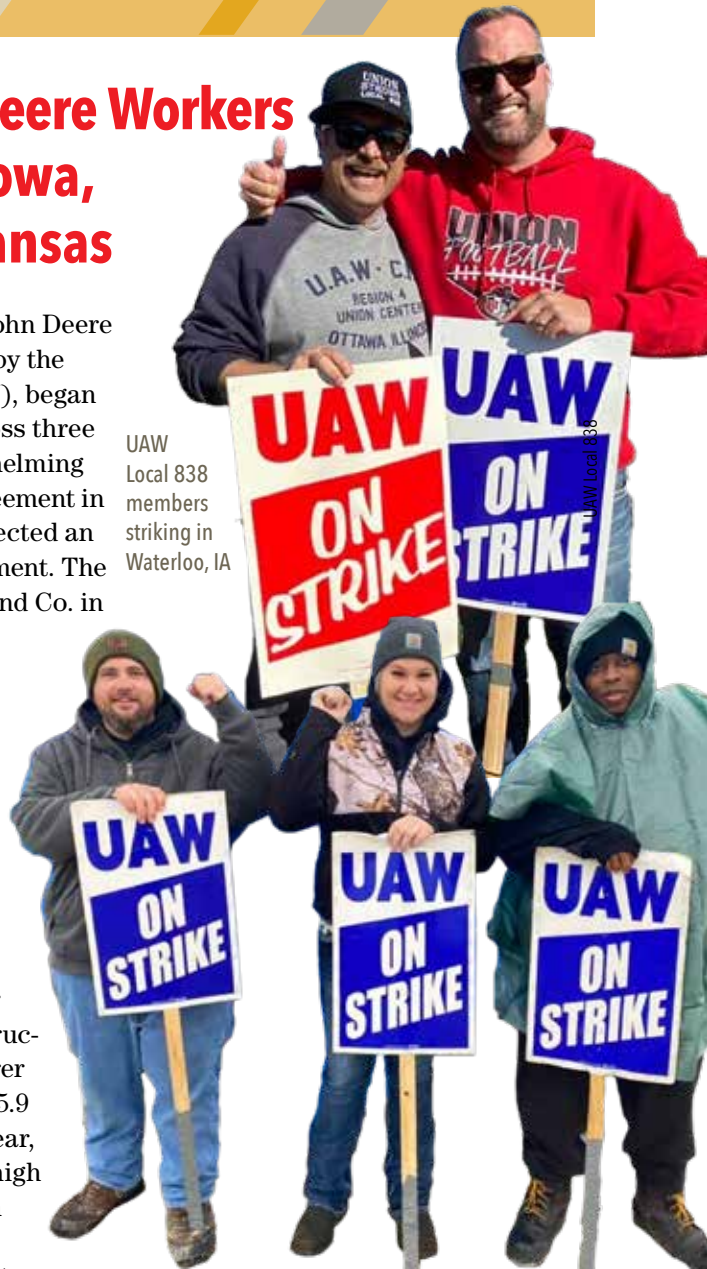
Approximately 10,000 John Deere workers, represented by the United Auto Workers (UAW), began striking on October 14 across three states, following an overwhelming rejection of a tentative agreement in October. Workers again rejected an October 31 tentative agreement. The strike is the first at Deere and Co. in 35 years.

During initial negotiations, union members were offered sub-inflation wage increases, with the company demanding steep and unacceptable cuts to the pension program, even as Deere and Co. is having its most profitable year on record. According to *Labor Notes*, "the farm and construction equipment manufacturer expects to rake in \$5.7 to \$5.9 billion in net income this year, far exceeding its previous high of \$3.5 billion in 2013," with CEO John C. May giving himself a 160 percent raise to \$15.6 million.

The company's demands would create a third tier, beyond the current two-tier system that sees workers hired after 1997 receive drastically lower pay, benefits, and pensions, and no post-retirement health care.

"I'm not thinking about me," Douglas Woolam, a 23-year employee at John Deere Seeding Group in Moline, IL, told the *Des Moines Register*. "I'm thinking about people behind me. My dad thought about people behind him. My aunt thought about people

UAW
Local 838
members
striking in
Waterloo, IA



behind her. And my grandfather thought about people behind him."

During the strike, the company bussed in salaried, non-union workers to operate heavy machinery in its factories, which led to multiple accidents. A UAW member was also killed by a vehicle on the picket line in Milan, IL.

As this issue goes to press, workers are still striking. Updates will be provided on apwu.org.

LABOR NEWS

1,400 Kellogg's Workers on Strike in Four States

At midnight on October 5, following the expiration of their union contract, 1,400 workers at Kellogg's facilities in Battle Creek, MI; Lancaster, PA; Omaha, NE and Memphis, TN walked out. The workers, represented by the Bakers, Confectioners, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM), are striking against management's insistence on widening the gaps in the current two-tier pay system, weakening pay and benefits for workers in the second "transitional" tier.

"For more than a year throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Kellogg workers around the country have been working long, hard hours, day in and day out, to produce Kellogg ready-to-eat cereals for American families," said BCTGM President Anthony Shelton.

"Kellogg's response to these loyal, hardworking employees has been to demand these workers give up quality health care, retirement benefits, and holiday and vacation pay. The company continues to threaten to send additional jobs to Mexico if workers do not accept outrageous proposals that take away protections that workers have had for decades," Shelton continued.

Kellogg's management has brought in scab labor to replace striking workers and refuses to bargain in good faith. The strike remains ongoing as this issue goes to press; updates will be published on apwu.org.



BCTGM Local 3G members and supporters on strike at the Kellogg's facility in Battle Creek, MI on October 27



1,300 Workers at Meal-Kit Company HelloFresh Voting to Form Union

On September, UNITE HERE filed a petition with the National Labor Relations Board to hold a union election for over 1,300 workers at meal-kit company HelloFresh. The election, taking place at the end of October, will cover workers at two facilities - in Aurora, CO and Richmond, CA.

HelloFresh is the largest meal-kit company in the United States. Workers at the company's facilities prepare, package and ship food to individual customers, who then follow a recipe and cook the food at home. Meal-kit companies saw massive growth during the pandemic, with many people opting to buy packages instead of going to grocery

stores for fresh ingredients. However, HelloFresh has not increased pay or staffing to adjust to the demand, leaving workers overworked and in dangerous working situations. On June 16, a massive pallet of frozen food fell, injuring multiple workers at the Aurora plant. In response, many workers began to organize a union.

In response to the union drive, HelloFresh has called in anti-union consultants, paying thousands per day to crush the drive even as some of their employees have experienced homelessness due to inadequate pay. Workers are forced to attend captive audience meetings and hear anti-union propaganda from management.

If successful, the union would become the first at any meal-kit company. Updates on the election will be published on apwu.org.

35,000 Health Care Workers Authorize Job Action at Kaiser

Following the current contract's expiration on September 30, over 35,000 workers across California, Oregon and Hawaii authorized a strike against health care corporation Kaiser Permanente. The workers are represented by 21 different union locals that make up the Alliance of Health Care Unions coalition, one of two major union coalitions that negotiate contracts with the company.

The main conflict in negotiations is Kaiser's insistence on creating a two-tier wage system, falsely claiming that current employees are overpaid. The two-tier system would massively cut pay and benefits for workers hired after 2022, which the company claims is needed to control costs. However, Kaiser made \$6.4 billion profit last year, and even returned a \$500 million CARES Act loan to the federal government, according to *Jacobin*.

Creating a second tier would impact not only Kaiser, but the entire health care industry. "The two-tier system would be disastrous," Jodi Barschow, president of the Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals (OFNHP), part of the Alliance, told *Jacobin*. "It wouldn't just impact us and Kaiser. Kaiser is industry-leading."

As this issue goes to press, the Alliance remains in negotiations with Kaiser and no strike has begun. However, further updates will be published on *apwu.org* should a strike begin or if an agreement is reached.

Thousands of South Korean Workers March For Economic Justice

On October 20, over 16,000 workers marched across South Korea in a demonstration against economic inequality. The one-day strike, organized by the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) built off the massive popularity of the hit Netflix show *Squid Game* - a show inspired by the brutal economic conditions faced by South Korean workers since the 2008 global financial collapse - using show-inspired costumes, signs and social media messaging to spread their message and demands.

According to *CBS News*, the main demands of the strike were "demanding an end to irregular employment contracts and laws they say fail to protect employees in small companies, with fewer than five employees, from discrimination."

Workers also demanded "the right for all workers to form unions; for the government to take more responsibility for ensuring job security as the country's economy transitions from industry to services; and for the strengthening of public transportation networks, medical care, housing and education."

President Dimondstein Speaks in Support of Brazilian Postal Workers at UNI Americas Event



On October 25, President Dimondstein spoke at a UNI Americas event in support of Brazilian postal workers and their efforts to keep the country's postal system public. The livestream event, called "Struggle Against Privatization of Post in Brazil," brought together union leaders, a Brazilian Senator, and other supporters to discuss the ongoing struggle against privatization in Brazil, and the path forward to keep *Correios*, the country's postal operator, in public hands.

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, a right-wing authoritarian politician, is committed to fully privatizing *Correios*. In September 2020, Brazilian postal workers engaged in a 35-day strike against privatization attempts and *Correios* management's attempts to considerably cut benefits. The strike ended following an order from Brazil's Supreme Labour Court.

"On behalf of the 200,000 postal workers in the American Postal Workers Union in the United States, we stand shoulder to shoulder with Brazilian postal workers in the two postal unions in your struggle to defend *Correios* and protect this vital public service for generations to come," President Dimondstein said. "Your struggle is our struggle. If the privatizers win, we all lose. When you, the workers and union, win, we all win."

The APWU is circulating a petition to the Bolsonaro government to keep postal services public. APWU members are encouraged to sign the petition and share with co-workers, family and community members. You read and sign the petition by texting BRAZIL to 91990. ■

New Book Explores Privatization Threats Across America

Keen readers of this column will know that Grand Alliance member *In the Public Interest* has been a vital resource in our struggle to defend the public Postal Service since the creation of the Alliance in 2013. In the Public Interest is a national nonprofit research and policy organization that helps unions, community organizations, advocacy groups and public officials understand how privatization of public goods negatively affects all of us.

We often run excerpts of *In the Public Interest* research briefs for readers interested in privatization battles elsewhere in the economy. ITPI has written extensively on the threats to the public Postal Service, sharing our campaign information with their readers and participating in the People's Postal Summit earlier this year.

Now, ITPI Executive Director Donald Cohen has a new resource available for readers who are keen to learn more about who is driving privatization and what their aims are. The book, *The Privatization of Everything: How the Plunder of Public Goods Transformed America and How We Can Fight Back*, also explores how privatization undermines our democracy and how we can collectively sharpen the tools in our defense of crucial public services. The book is co-authored with historian Allen Mikaelin, and is available directly from the publisher and at bookstores nationwide.

Below is a blurb from publisher the New Press:

"From water systems to private prisons, charter schools to exclusive patents on life-saving drugs, Cohen and Mikaelian describe an astonishing array of privatization scams and schemes and, helpfully, where some communities are successfully resisting."

—Annie Leonard, executive director, Greenpeace USA, and author of *The Story of Stuff*

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.

"An essential read for those who want to fight the assault on public goods and the commons."

—Naomi Klein

As people reach for social justice and better lives, they create public goods—free education, public health, open parks, clean water, postal services and many others—that must be kept out of the market. When private interests take over, they strip public goods of their power to lift people up, creating instead a tool to diminish democracy, further inequality and separate us from each other.

The Privatization of Everything, by the founder of In the Public Interest, an organization dedicated to shared prosperity and the common good, chronicles the efforts to turn our public goods into private profit centers. Ever since Ronald Reagan labeled government a dangerous threat, privatization has touched every aspect of our lives, from water and trash collection to the justice system and the military.

However, citizens can, and are, wresting back what is ours. A Montana city took back its water infrastructure after finding that they could do it better and cheaper. Colorado towns fought back well-funded campaigns to preserve telecom monopolies and hamstringing public broadband. A motivated lawyer fought all the way to the Supreme Court after the State of Georgia erected privatized paywalls around its legal code.

The Privatization of Everything connects the dots across a broad spectrum of issues and raises larger questions about who controls the public things we all rely on, exposing the hidden crisis of privatization that has been slowly unfolding over the last fifty years and giving us a road map for taking our country back.

We encourage all supporters of A Grand Alliance to consider reading Cohen's important new book as we continue our campaign to defend the public Postal Service and other public goods in this country. You can pre-order the book at <https://bit.ly/itpiAGA>. ■

Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard Reflects on 2021



Judy Beard, Director

As the pandemic and attacks on the rights of working people continue, 2021, like 2020, has proven to be an unprecedented year. As always, postal workers continue to serve the American people and fight for legislation that benefits workers, families and communities across the country.

With the start of the 117th Congress, our union laid out legislative priorities, ranging from postal reform to voting rights. Though much of the legislation we support has stalled, we continue to pressure elected officials to do their jobs, keep their promises and pass pro-worker, pro-Postal Service legislation.

Even in the face of considerable legislative roadblocks, we were still able to secure some crucial victories. In the last 12 months, APWU members successfully fought for the confirmation of three new members to the Postal Board of Governors, COVID-related paid time off to care for themselves and for their loved ones, and improvements in the workers compensation program.

Legislative Conference



Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY)

As postal workers, we know the importance of continuing to lobby our legislators to strengthen the people's Postal Service and the rights of the working class. That's why, on September 26, APWU members across the country virtually attended the 3rd Biennial Legislative Conference, titled "Keeping Up the Pressure, Fighting for Justice!"



Stacey Abrams

Designed to empower members with the knowledge and tools needed in our collective legislative fights ahead, conference workshops covered lobbying strategies, postal service operations, the 2021 and 2022 elections, and digital organizing.

Following workshops, conference participants reconvened for a panel answering the question "what does worker solidarity look like?" Panelists included Dominik Whitehead of the NAACP, Shanna Peeks with the United Mine Workers of America, President of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO Steven Tolman, and Susan Harley of Public Citizen.

As the conference wound to a close, we had the privilege of welcoming Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and voting rights champion Stacey Abrams as our keynote speakers. During his speech, Sen. Schumer told members that "[the] work you do... saves people's lives. I've never seen that more than in the last year where so many postal workers risked their lives to make sure that the mail went through... Whether it's delivering life sustaining items, the medications and other things people need or advancing our democracy through the mail... What you do is essential every day."

During her remarks, Abrams also expressed her support for postal workers and the critical role we have played amid the pandemic. "As COVID-19 threatened every facet of our society, you served a critical role in keeping the gears of our democratic process turning to help guarantee a free, fair, and safe election," Abrams said. "Despite pushback, you stepped up and processed a record number of mail in ballots – whether they were from our cities, suburbs or rural America, or from our service members overseas."

We thank both of these remarkable leaders for their support of postal workers and their dedication to the preservation of democracy.

By convening members of Congress, community and labor leaders, and workers together, APWU's 2021 Legislative Conference provided our union with the opportunity to delve deeper into our legislative battles, explore strategies for securing substantive legislative victories and prepare for 2022 elections.

Looking Ahead to 2022

The Legislative and Political Department will be hosting regional webinars to discuss APWU's legislative priorities, the election landscape and Hatch Act compliance. Information on these seminars will be posted on apwu.org. ■



Anna Smith, Director

Organize at Orientation

With thousands of Postal Support Employees (PSE) entering the postal workforce, it is essential that we offer guidance to our newly-hired co-workers, so they have the ability and tools to become active participants in their union. This can begin during the union part of new hire orientations. Knowledge is a powerful tool to have on your side.

In areas around the country, the Postal Service has been conducting new hire orientations virtually. These virtual events tend to have more of an “online course” feeling than they do a “virtual training” due to limited or no ability to communicate with the presenter.

All newly hired PSEs should have an opportunity for an APWU representative to address them in person. The union portion of orientation is a crucial step for PSEs to be provided information on what being union is about and an overview of some of the rights and benefits that have been achieved for PSEs.

A PSE is a PSE is a PSE

Every employee should login into liteblue.usps.gov and review your PS Form 50, in your Official Personal File (eOPF). On your PS Form 50, line 52, it will state what your official position title is. You can find corresponding info on your position by visiting APWU BQNET at <http://eseries.apwu.org/bqnet/>.

What you will not find listed is a PSE position title that some managers can frequently be heard using. These include “Holiday PSE,” “Temporary PSE,” “Peak PSE” or “360-PSE.” PSEs are hired for a term not to exceed 360 calendar days per appointment. As far as the contract goes, a PSE is a PSE; it does not matter when you were hired, or for how long.

A PSE is also not a Holiday Clerk Assistant. Annuitant Holiday Clerk Assistant (HCA) is when retirees have the opportunity to be rehired temporarily and work during a specific period.

The PSE workforce is comprised of employees who do not yet have career appointments but who enjoy union representation and negotiated rights.

The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), our union contract, covers all aspects of PSE wages, benefits, hours and working conditions.

Regardless of what time of year a PSE is hired, when PSEs are separated due to lack of work, re-appointments must be made by PSE seniority. PSEs will be re-appointed ahead of applicants who have not served as PSEs, provided the need for hiring arises within one year of the break in service. Some additional provisions secured for PSEs include:

- **Overtime Pay** at the rate of 1.5 times the basic hourly straight-time rate for work performed after 8 hours on duty in a service day, or 40 hours in a service week.
- **Penalty Overtime Pay** at the rate of 2 times the basic hourly straight-time rate, excluding the month of December, for all work in excess of 10 hours in a service day, or 56 hours in a service week.
- **Night Differential Pay** for hours worked between 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.
- **Higher-level pay for higher-level work** where by the event a PSE is temporarily assigned to a higher-level position, PSEs are to be paid at the higher-level rate for the time spent performing higher-level duties.
- **PSEs also receive the following 6 paid holidays:** New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. PSEs who work on a holiday will have the option to have their annual leave balance credited with annual leave or receive holiday pay.

You can find a PSE Rights and Benefits Brochure by visiting bit.ly/3mN5DTI or sending a request to organization@apwu.org.

Thank you for all that you do each and every day.

Best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season! ■

Afghanistan Veteran Resources



NEWS AND
RESOURCES
FOR VETERANS

Vantage Point, an official website of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, has released a four-part series focusing on Afghanistan Veterans and how they can get help through VA.

When the announcement came that U.S. forces would leave Afghanistan, our nation's longest war, it triggered a complicated wave of emotions through those who served in the country. At its peak, there were more than 100,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan in 2010.

The Afghanistan Series encourages veterans to get help for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and contains the following parts:

- *Afghanistan: How Veterans can reconcile service*
- *Afghanistan: How Veterans can learn from Vietnam Veterans*
- *Afghanistan: How spouses, caregivers can support Veterans with PTSD*
- *Afghanistan: Resources available for PTSD*

The first part of this series focuses on reconciliation.

Colón-López, the highest ranking enlisted member in the military, serves as an advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on all matters involving joint and combined total

force integration, utilization, health of the force, and joint development for enlisted personnel. He revealed that he suffered for years dodging his PTSD, and now encourages every veteran to get help for PTSD.

While some troops have reconciled their service, not all have. With the recent news and announcements over the end of the Afghanistan mission, VA facilities reported that they have started seeing an increase in veterans seeking help.

The second part of this series emphasizes how veterans who served in Afghanistan can learn from those who served in Vietnam. While the conflicts are different, there are parallels between the two.

The third part of it is directed towards spouses and caregivers, who are often on the front lines of helping a veteran deal with PTSD, and which can seriously alter a family's relationships.

While the entire series focuses on Afghanistan veterans, PTSD options are available to all veterans.

Veterans can get PTSD treatment at any VA medical center in the country, and at some large Community Based Outpatient Clinics, with nearly 200 specialized programs available.

Vet Centers

Vet Centers are community-based counseling centers. They provide a wide range of social and psychological services. Eligible veterans, active service members – including National Guard and Reserve components – and their families can use the services.

Vet Center staff offer individual, group, marriage and family counseling in addition to referral and connection to other VA or community benefits and services.

The Vet Center Combat Call Center can be reached 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-877-927-8387 (1-877-WAR-VETS).

Other Resources

The **Veterans Crisis Line** connects veterans in crisis and their families and friends with VA responders through a 24/7 hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255), PRESS 1. There is also a 24/7 online Confidential Veterans Chat or text message support at 838255.

The **VA Caregiver Support** program provides services to support family members who are taking care of a Veteran: 1-855-260-3274.

VA's Coaching Into Care program helps family and friends of returning Veterans find the right words to help their loved one get into care. For free, confidential coaching email or call: 1-888-823-7458.

The **Psychological Health Resource Center** offers 24/7 support for service members and their families. Staff can answer questions about mental health symptoms and help the service members and their families find resources. Call 1-866-966-1020, email, or live chat.

Give an Hour is a nonprofit organization offering free mental health services to U.S. military personnel and their families affected by service in Iraq and Afghanistan. ■

Source: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)



Joyce B. Robinson, Director

Preventing Identity Theft

The holiday season is beginning and identity theft is on the rise in the USA. Identity Theft occurs when someone uses your name, address, Social Security number, bank or credit card account number without your knowledge to open accounts and/or commit fraud or other crimes.

The identity thief may use your information to apply for new credit cards, change the mailing address on your current credit card accounts and run up high balances; acquire auto loans or phone services in your name; write bad checks or drain your bank account, and/or give your name to the police during an arrest. If/when they do not show up for the court date, an arrest warrant could be issued in your name.

Protecting Yourself from Identity Theft

These tips can protect you from identity theft:

Secure your Social Security number (SSN).

Don't carry your Social Security card in your wallet. Store it in a safe place.

Avoid giving personal information. Never give your Social Security number, mother's maiden name, or account numbers over the phone or the internet unless you know it's secure.

Be careful what you post on social media.

Identity thieves constantly monitor social media to obtain personal information.

Collect mail daily. Place a hold on your mail when away from home for several days.

Review your credit card and bank account statements. Compare receipts with account statements. Watch for unauthorized transactions. If bills or financial statements are late, contact the sender.

Install firewalls and virus-detection software on your home computer. Create complex passwords that identity thieves cannot guess. Change your passwords if a company that you do business with has a breach of its databases.

Use security features on your mobile phone.

Update sharing and firewall settings when you're on a public wi-fi network. If you use public wi-fi, use a virtual private network (VPN), to stop companies from tracking what you do online.

Shred receipts, credit offers, account statements, and expired credit cards. This can prevent "dumpster divers" from getting your personal information.

Store personal information in a safe place.

Keep personal information out of view of visitors or workers who may come to your home to perform services.

Review your credit reports once a year.

Be certain that they only include accounts that you opened.

What to Do If You Are a Victim of Identity Theft?

Place a fraud alert in your file by contacting each of these three nationwide consumer reporting agencies: *Equifax*: 1-800-525-6285, *Experian*: 1-888-397-3742, and *Trans Union*: 1-800-680-7289. Ask that they "freeze your credit files." Credit freezes prevent someone from applying for and getting approval for a credit account in your name.

Report identity theft to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) by phone at 1-877-438-4338 or by email at *IdentityTheft.gov*. Ask that the nationwide consumer reporting agencies place "fraud alerts" in your file to let potential creditors and others know that you are a victim of identity theft.

File a report with your police department. This will serve as back up documentation for the credit bureaus and creditors. In addition, please consult with an attorney.

As we begin a new year, may God grant you Peace, Good Health, and Happiness in 2022! Be Blessed and Stay Safe! ■

The text is this article is from the USA.gov and the FTC Identity Theft websites.

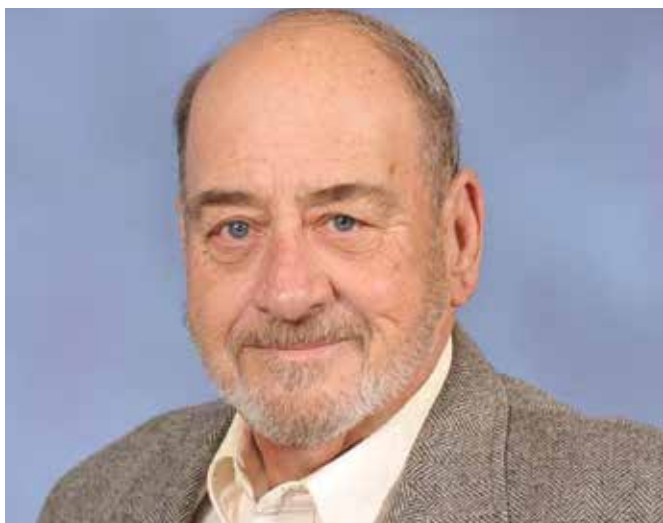


Nancy Olumekor, Director

APWU Retirees Still Fighting for Justice

The APWU Retirees Department was saddened by the death of Alfred “Al” LaBrecque, who passed peacefully on August 18, 2021, at the age of 84. Al was born into union activism in Flint, MI; his parents were among the leaders of the 1937 Sit Down Strike which gave birth to the United Auto Workers (UAW).

Al was a leader, mentor and fighter on behalf of APWU members throughout his 60-plus years of union membership. After serving in the U.S. Army for two years, Al first joined the Postal Service in 1957, serving as a clerk at the main post office in Flint. During his 33-year postal career, he held many local union leadership roles, including steward, vice president and president.



During the past 25 years he vigorously advocated for retiree issues. Al was elected as one of the first APWU retiree delegates to the National Convention. He never lost his voice – he repeatedly contacted Congress demanding that they take the right steps to Save the Post Office and secure retiree benefits, among many other issues. Al used his voice by writing letters to public and union media outlets, including in his “Personal View” column in the *Michigan Messenger*.

In his last column, Brother Al stressed the importance of the Postal Service in protecting democracy through its delivery of mail-in ballots in the 2020 election, with mail-in voting a key target in voter suppression efforts.

“GOP voter suppression bills here, there, everywhere! 49 states. 368 bills to suppress the vote. Outlandish restrictions. Yet, the motherload of all voter suppression continues unabated right under our collective noses,” he wrote. “The 2020 success of the largest, most secure election under the most trying conditions (i.e., midst of a viral pandemic, holiday mailing season, deluge of e-commerce packages) in American history is primarily due to voters’ ability to cast their no excuse ballots by mail...No more USPS, no more voting by mail...**the ultimate in universal voter suppression**, in one fell swoop...”

“The U.S. Postal Service, The Right to Vote by Mail, Our American Democracy; all inextricably bound together and in serious peril,” he continued. “The American mailing and voting public deserve to know.”

His passion of recognizing and preserving the important role that the USPS has to every citizen must continue with all of us. Al’s words are a call to action now more than ever because of the recent decision by the USPS to slow down service standards.

Brother Al is survived by his wife, Michelle, his children, eight grandchildren, brothers and sisters. ■

Thank You!

Thank you postal workers, for showing up and moving the mail in service to America. Thank you, essential workers who are our families, our friends, and our neighbors for your continued service. Thank you to all the veterans and all the active military personnel for your service.

As we look back over the past 20 months, I am mindful of the many great unionists that APWU members and retirees have lost. The women and men who help to build this union and without their great work and commitment we would not be here.

As another year ends, I wish each of you Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, Good Health and Happiness in the New Year.

COLA Increase for Retirees

The 2022 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for CSRS annuitants is 5.9% and 4.9% for FERS annuitants.



Sarah Jane Rodriguez, Director

The New Medicare Advantage Plan is a “Home Run!”

For their 2021 medical coverage, more than 7,000 APWU Health Plan High Option members chose the new UnitedHealthcare® Medicare Advantage (PPO) for APWU Health Plan. This plan was designed as an enhanced level of High Option benefits exclusively for FEHBP eligible retirees that have Medicare Part A and Part B**.

Delivering on all of the benefits of Original Medicare (Part A and Part B), the UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage (PPO) for APWU Health Plan includes:

- \$0 out of pocket costs for covered medical services
- A \$50 Part B monthly premium subsidy
- A \$40-per-quarter over-the-counter item allowance
- Prescription drug coverage (Part D)
- Dental coverage
- Hearing coverage
- A nation-wide provider network
- A gym membership



Hear from a New Medicare Advantage Plan Member

Recently, we spoke with former State of Maryland APWU President George Hayes about his experience using the UnitedHealthcare® Medicare Advantage (PPO) for APWU Health Plan. George was a United States postal worker who proudly served his community for 28 years, and is a

former Navy Anti-Submarine Warfare crew member. He is also a 26-year member of the APWU High Option Health Plan.

George has some health concerns, and was happy to see that the new Medicare Advantage plan included all of his specialists, as well as some additional benefits and features.

“When I looked at the UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage (PPO) for the APWU Health Plan, I went through it very thoroughly,” he said. “It really piqued my interest because not only could you go in and out of network for your doctors, you have SilverSneakers® to help with exercise and a \$40 credit for vitamins and other over-the-counter items every 3 months.”

He also noticed how easy the plan is to work with. “I go to the doctor and they bill UnitedHealthcare automatically. When I call customer service, I always get an answer and they are always courteous. It’s a home run!”

How to Enroll

If you are already enrolled in the APWU High Option Plan, you can call UnitedHealthcare to elect the Medicare Advantage (PPO) plan for APWU Health Plan. You can enroll today! Call UnitedHealthcare toll-free at 1-855-383-8793, TTY 711, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. local time, 7 days a week.***

If you are not yet a member of the APWU Health Plan High Option, you’ll need to enroll during Open Season, which goes from November 8 through December 13, with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Once your enrollment into the High Option Plan has been processed by OPM, you can call UnitedHealthcare to elect the Medicare Advantage plan. Call UnitedHealthcare toll-free at 1-855-383-8793, TTY 711, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. local time, 7 days a week. ■

Benefits, features and/or devices vary by plan/area. Limitations and exclusions apply.

SilverSneakers is a registered trademark of Tivity Health, Inc. © 2021 Tivity Health, Inc. All rights reserved.

Plans are insured through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or one of its affiliated companies, a Medicare Advantage organization with a Medicare contract and a Medicare-approved Part D sponsor. Enrollment in these plans depends on the plan’s contract renewal with Medicare.

**The UnitedHealthcare® Medicare Advantage (PPO) for APWU Health Plan is offered as an enhanced level of benefits to members of the APWU Health Plan High Option and is a part of FEHBP. It is important that you do not cancel your enrollment in the APWU Health Plan’s High Option, if you elect to disenroll from the High Option, you will no longer be eligible for the UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage (PPO) plan.*

***You and your dependent(s) must be enrolled in Medicare Part A and Part B and/or continue to pay your Part B premium to be eligible for coverage under UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage (PPO) plan for APWU Health Plan. Medicare Part A and Part B must be primary, meaning that you are not actively employed.*

**** Enrollment is voluntary, retirees may opt in or out of the enhanced level of benefits at any time throughout the year.*

APWU 2022 LEAVE CHART

BROUGHT FORWARD		PAY PERIOD BEGINS														EARNED THIS PERIOD				USED THIS PERIOD				BALANCE	
		ANNUAL	SICK	SAT	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	ANNUAL	SICK	ANNUAL	SICK	ANNUAL	SICK	ANNUAL	SICK
	Jan. 1, 2022			JAN. 1 New Year's Day																					
	Jan. 15					JAN. 17 MLK Day																			
	Jan. 29																								
	Feb. 12																								
	Feb. 26																								
	Mar. 12																								
	Mar. 26																								
	Apr. 9																								
	Apr. 23																								
	May 7																								
	May 21																								
	June 4																								
	June 18					JUNE 19 June 19th																			
	July 2																								
	July 16																								
	July 30																								
	Aug. 13																								
	Aug. 27																								
	Sep. 10																								
	Sep. 24																								
	Oct. 8																								
	Oct. 22																								
	Nov. 5																								
	Nov. 19																								
	Dec. 3																								
	Dec. 17																								
	Dec. 31																								

Leave year Begins: PP 02-2022 Jan 1, 2022 Leave year Ends: PP 02-2023 Jan 13, 2023



Partner with a health plan
that helps you protect
what's most important.

You.

OPEN SEASON HOTLINE

800.PIC.APWU (8:30a.m. - 7p.m. ET)

VIRTUALOPENSEASON@APWUHP.COM (response within 48 hours)

WWW.APWUHP.COM (click on Open Season)

“

FROM OUR MEMBERS

Dana W. in the benefits area deserves a very high rating and recommendation. She went above and beyond trying to straighten out our problems and she is just wonderful. So thank you so much and thanks to Dana, kudos to her!

“

FROM OUR MEMBERS

The customer service representative was very friendly, very helpful, and she was able to make it easy for me to understand what was going on with my claims.

“

FROM OUR MEMBERS

I just want to leave a note saying that I have received excellent customer service from APWU. Those girls are well trained, they know what they're talking about and they don't give you misinformation. They're um very helpful, never snobby. The customer service I just have to say is super excellent and that is hard to find these days.

“

FROM OUR MEMBERS

I want to say one thing about the customer service representative who helped me. Her name is Kay and she did such a great job of keeping me from bouncing back and forth between phone calls trying to iron out a problem with my lab provider.

“

FROM OUR MEMBERS

I'm new to the APWU Health Plan. The customer service rep was wonderful—polite, positive, cheerful and friendly. She understood my questions, gave me plenty of time to ask them and didn't talk over me. It was an all-around really good experience.

“

FROM OUR MEMBERS

I am calling from a hospital and other facility and I spoke with Tyeace Brown she was patient, she explained things to me and she was wonderful and she was very, very kind and I want to give her kudos! Thank you!

“

FROM OUR MEMBERS

The customer service representative was very professional and very knowledgeable. She answered all my questions, and the best thing about it, she listened to my concerns, didn't rush me, and you could tell she had a smile on her face.

Member Testimonials

2022 HIGH OPTION PREMIUMS

APWU Career Biweekly and Retiree Monthly



Self Only
enrollment code 471

Biweekly	Monthly
\$106.39	\$230.51



Self Plus One
enrollment code 473

Biweekly	Monthly
\$212.96	\$461.41



Self & Family
enrollment code 472

Biweekly	Monthly
\$268.83	\$582.46

ENROLL DURING OPEN SEASON
November 8 – December 13

2022 CONSUMER DRIVEN OPTION PREMIUMS

APWU Career Biweekly and Retiree Monthly **No Rate Increase!**



Self Only
enrollment code 474

Biweekly	Monthly
\$69.65	\$150.91



Self Plus One
enrollment code 476

Biweekly	Monthly
\$151.38	\$327.99



Self & Family
enrollment code 475

Biweekly	Monthly
\$165.14	\$357.81

APWU Biweekly **★ Reduced Rate**

APWU career less than a year	Postal Support Employees	APWU career greater than a year in FEHB	APWU career less than a year	Postal Support Employees	APWU career greater than a year in FEHB	APWU career less than a year	Postal Support Employees	APWU career greater than a year in FEHB
\$69.65	\$69.65	\$13.93	\$151.38	\$151.38	\$30.28	\$165.14	\$165.14	\$33.03