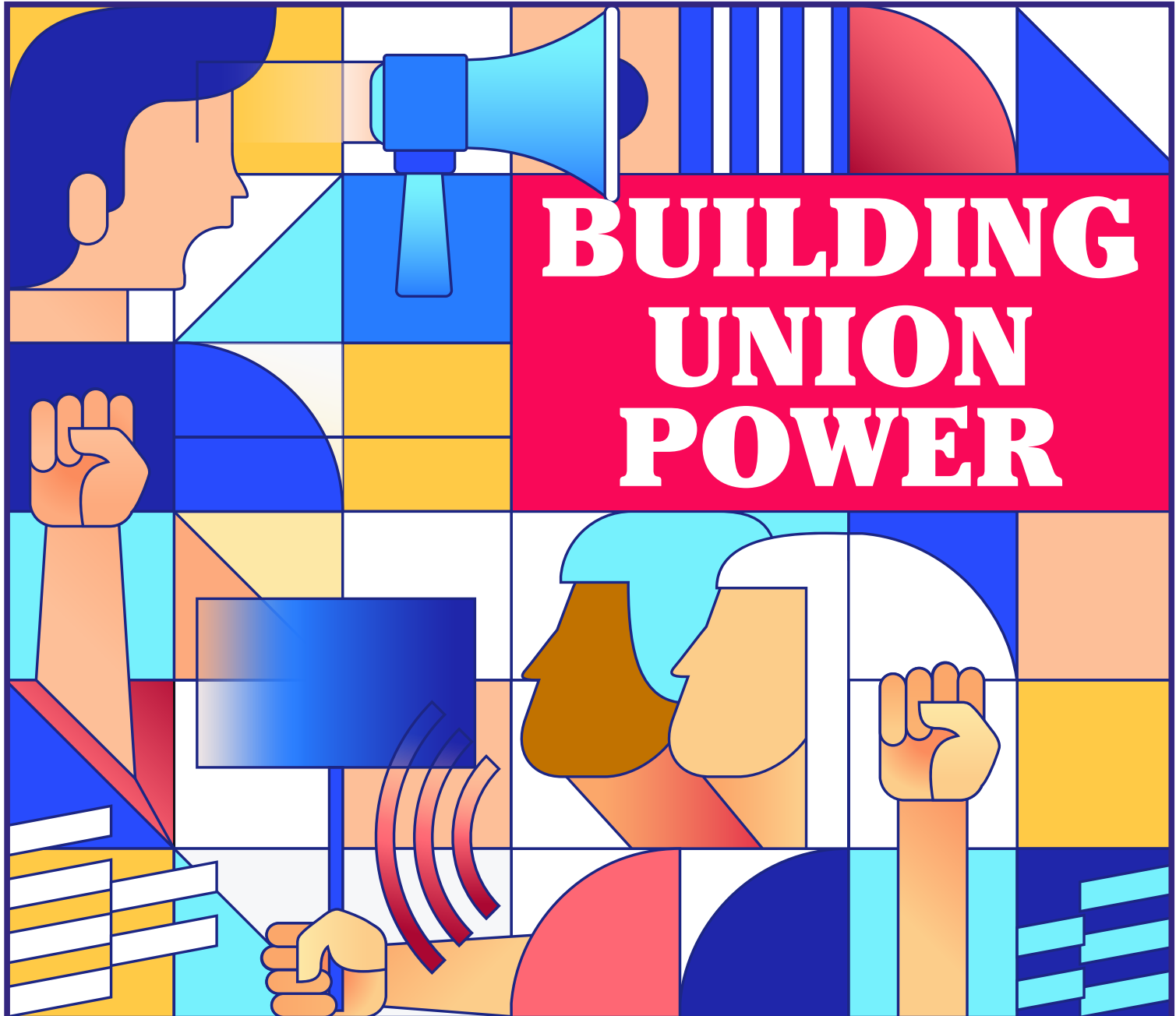


THE AMERICAN

Postal Worker ^{APWU}

May/June 2022



National Organizing Drive Underway

16



13

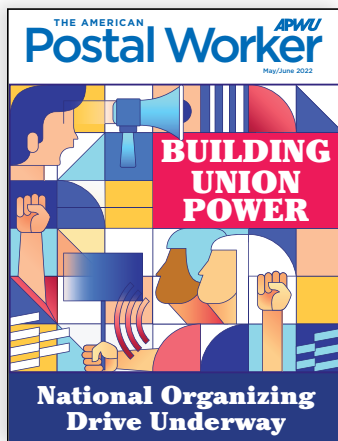


CONTENTS

FEATURES

- 6** Building Union Power
- 8** New Union Contract Implementation Moves Ahead
- 9** Zimmerman Steps Down, New HQ Appointments

- 11** New Postal Vehicles Deliver Controversy
- 13** APWU Solidarity in Colombian Elections
- 15** Spotlight on Workplace Safety
- 16** Amazon Workers Unionize
- 17** Book *First Class* on Role of USPS
- 17** Report: Pandemic Impacts the Poor
- 22** From the Field
- 24** Labor News



ABOUT THE COVER:

APWU's Organizing Campaign, *Building Union Power*, Is Launched! See pages 6-7.

COLUMNS

- 4** PRESIDENT
APWU: Building Union Power
- 10** VICE PRESIDENT
Service Standards & Vote-By-Mail
- 12** SECRETARY-TREASURER
It Pays to Have a Union!
- 14** INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
Honored to Be Your IRD
- 21** SOUTHERN REGIONAL COORDINATOR
Importance of Critical Thinking and Common Sense

DIVISIONS

- 18** CLERK DIVISION
Filling Clerk Craft Residual Vacancies
- 19** MAINTENANCE DIVISION
When Can I Expect a Return to Full Per Diem?
- 20** MOTOR VEHICLE SERVICE DIVISION
Still Standing, Still Fighting

DEPARTMENTS

- 23** HOMEFRONT
Issues Facing Women Veterans
- 26** LEGISLATIVE & POLITICAL
Postal Reform Signed Into Law
- 27** ORGANIZATION
We Can Do More!
- 28** RESEARCH & EDUCATION
Your Rights Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act
- 29** HUMAN RELATIONS
New Beggings, New Goals for Human Relations
- 30** RETIREES
What is Disability Retirement?
- 31** HEALTH PLAN
Asthma and Seasonal Triggers

The American Postal Worker

(ISSN 0044-7811) is published bimonthly by the American Postal Workers Union,
AFL-CIO 1300 L Street NW, Washington, DC, 20005

www.apwu.org

Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC and additional mailing offices
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
THE AMERICAN POSTAL WORKER, 1300 L Street NW, Washington, DC, 20005

Mark Dimondstein	President - Editor
Debby Szeredy	Executive Vice President
Elizabeth Powell	Secretary-Treasurer
Charlie Cash	Industrial Relations Director
Lamont Brooks	Clerk Division Director
Idowu Balogun	Maintenance Division Director
Michael O. Foster	Motor Vehicle Service Division Director
Steve Brooks	Support Services Division Director
Sharyn M. Stone	Central Region Coordinator
AJ Jones	Eastern Region Coordinator
Tiffany Foster	Northeast Region Coordinator
Kennith L. Beasley	Southern Region Coordinator
Omar M. Gonzalez	Western Region Coordinator
Judy Beard	Legislative & Political Director - Assoc. Editor
Anna Smith	Organization Director
Joyce B. Robinson	Research & Education Director
Daleo Freeman	Human Relations Director
Sarah Jane Rodriguez	Health Plan Director
Nancy E. Olumekor	Retirees Department Director
Sam Lisenbe	Clerk Division Assistant Director
Lynn Pallas-Barber	Clerk Division Assistant Director
Terry B. Martinez	Maintenance Division Assistant Director
Jason Treier	Maintenance Division Assistant Director
Kenneth Prinz	Motor Vehicle Service Division Assistant Director

CLERK DIVISION NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENTS

Robert D. Kessler	Liz Swigert
Shirley J. Taylor	James Stevenson
Peter Coradi	Daniel F. Skemp
Stephen Lukosus	Vince Tarducci
Tom O'Brien	Brian Dunsmore
Pamela Richardson	Sonia Canchola
Brian Dunn	Vicki Carios
Frank Rigiero	Michael William Funk, Jr.
Jack Crawford	Jim DeMauro
John Jackson	Doris Orr-Richardson
Robert Romanowski	Pamela Smith
Linda J. Turney	Charles Tillman
Stella 'Joann' Gerhart	Ashley Cargill
Chuck Locke	Devendra 'D' Rathore
Martin J. Mater	Diann Scurllark
Mike Schmid	Eric Van Dyke
Michael Sullivan	Joe Jolley
Bernard C. Timmerman	Todd Elkerton
Rachel Walthall	

MAINTENANCE DIVISION NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENTS

John Gearhard	Craig Fisher
Jeffrey S. Beaton	Dave Sarnacki
Louis M. Kingsley Jr.	Hector Baez
Curtis Walker	Kenneth Lester
Carlos Paz	

MOTOR VEHICLE SERVICE DIVISION NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENTS

Joseph LaCapria	William Wright
Bruce Amey	Dyrike Shaw
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

GO! Creative, LLC

Design and Layout



APWU - "Building Union Power"

PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN

Postal worker union power, whether at the bargaining table, on the workroom floor, or on Capitol Hill, begins with each and every member. You are the foundation of our strong union!

As we celebrate the impressive victories of our new collective bargaining agreement and historic postal reform legislation, it is a great time to continue **"Building Union Power!"** with the APWU's national organizing campaign.

Our local and state organizations do a good job organizing. Even though our union is forced to function under the pro-corporate "open shop" laws where some workers can unfairly reap union-won gains without belonging to the union, 80% of postal workers belong to the APWU. Some locals are outstanding, organizing well over 90% of their coworkers!

**A CHAIN IS ONLY AS STRONG AS ITS
WEAKEST LINK AND NON-MEMBERS
UNDERMINE OUR POWER AND
UNITY ON EVERY FRONT – AT THE
BARGAINING TABLE, IN THE
DAY-TO-DAY BATTLES ON THE
WORKROOM FLOOR, AND IN THE
CONTINUING FIGHT TO PRESERVE
AND EXPAND THE PUBLIC
POSTAL SERVICE.**

So, four out of five postal workers, just like you, understand that voluntarily belonging to the union and paying union dues translates into better wages and benefits, job security, more rights on the job, a safer workplace, and dignity and respect.

But we can do even better.

The **"Building Union Power!"** organizing campaign is now well underway. As we conclude the 50th anniversary year of the APWU, we have set a goal of signing up at least 5,000 new members from the current ranks of the non-members by July 1 (See pages 6-7).

Being 80% organized means 20% of our coworkers benefit from the collective gains of the union, without ever doing their part. This number even includes thousands of newer postal workers, former PSEs, who have been converted to career status in a positive, life changing, union-won event!

A chain is only as strong as its weakest link and non-members undermine our power and unity on every front -- at the bargaining table, in the day-to-day battles on the workroom floor, and in the continuing fight to preserve and expand the public Postal Service.

You are the key to making the organizing campaign a big success. Get some membership forms from your local or state union officers or stewards (or use the online sign-up process) and talk to your coworkers about joining the union, getting involved, and paying their fair share. Share how important the union is to you and the well-being of all postal workers – from COLA increases to COVID health & safety, from seniority and bidding rights to the right to file grievances, from no lay-off protections to career conversions.

Throughout the country, we are aiming for a "face-to-face" conversation with every non-member. You may find many non-members whom no one has talked to about joining the union and will willingly do so. With others, you will likely encounter the classic excuses: "the union didn't win my grievance;" "I don't like my local president or shop steward;" "why pay dues when the union has to represent me anyway;" "the union doesn't do anything for me."

Folks, the excuses are all bull! In their selfish act of individualism, non-members are riding our backs, too cheap to cough up a couple of bucks a day for our common cause of constantly improving the lives of postal workers and our families. Workers do better when we work together in strong solidarity, beginning with union membership.

Thanks to all of you, and the many thousands of local, state, and national union leaders and activists, our union is strong. But let's make the APWU even stronger with a successful **"Building Union Power!"** campaign. ■

President Biden Signs Postal Reform Into Law

**Prefunding
Mandate Scrapped,
Landmark Bill
Provides Billions
in Relief to USPS**

On Wednesday, April 6, President Joe Biden signed the *Postal Service Reform Act* into law at a White House ceremony. President Mark Dimondstein and Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard were invited to witness the signing ceremony and represent the APWU.

“This is a historic achievement for our union,” said President Dimondstein. “Congratulations to every postal worker who has organized for over a decade to ensure this long-needed postal reform legislation became law. The *Postal Service Reform Act* marks a tremendous victory for our union, for all postal workers, our families, and for the people of the country who depend on robust, reliable, and sustainable universal postal services.”

The *Postal Service Reform Act* (PSRA) contains many key elements that have long been a priority for the APWU. First is the elimination of the congressional mandate that USPS prefund future retiree health benefits. This mandate required the Postal Service to set billions of dollars aside each year to prefund retiree health benefits 75 years into the future. The prefunding mandate alone is responsible for 84% of USPS’s losses since 2007. Lifting of the mandate is expected to save the USPS roughly \$27 billion over the

next 10 years and immediately eliminates \$53 billion of past due prepayments on the USPS books.

Three important service-related features are included in the new law. The PSRA increases transparency of USPS management, allowing the public, Congress, and regulators better insight into USPS service issues. It also mandates that USPS continue to provide a six-days-per-week, integrated delivery network – packages and letter mail moving together – long into the future. Finally, the PSRA allows USPS to enter into agreements with State, local, and tribal governments to provide a whole range of new products and services.

Another major element of the bill is the integration of future postal retirees into the Medicare system. While USPS and postal employees have contributed to Medicare for decades, roughly a quarter of retirees do not fully enroll in Medicare. Starting in 2025, all postal retirees will have Medicare as their primary payer and a postal-only FEHBP plan as a secondary payer. These changes are expected to save postal retirees money by eliminating out-of-pocket medical expenses and by mitigating future premium increases, while saving USPS \$22 billion over the next ten years.

The PSRA passed both chambers of Congress earlier this year after more than a decade of debate and consensus-building among the postal unions, congressional leaders, mailers, and postal management. It garnered broad, bipartisan support, passing the House in February by a vote of 342-92 and passing the Senate in March with a vote of 79-19.

“APWU applauds every member of Congress who has worked alongside our union to achieve this critical legislation,” said Legislative and Political Director Beard. “We especially recognize the leadership of Chairwoman Maloney and Ranking Member Comer in the House, and Chairman Peters and Ranking Member Portman in the Senate for their steadfast, bipartisan resolve in crafting this bill. Postal workers fought hard for this bill and Congress heard our voices loud and clear.”

“The path to winning this legislation was long and hard-fought,” said Dimondstein. “We should all take heart in this tremendous victory and remember that together, our union is a force to be reckoned with. Now, the struggle continues to defend the public Postal Service, to protect good jobs, and to win improved and expanded postal services and justice for all workers.” ■

ORGANIZING TO BUILD

THE GOAL OF THE BUILDING UNION POWER CAMPAIGN IS TO SIGN UP 5,000 NEW MEMBERS TO THE UNION.

Last July, the APWU began a year of commemorations around our 50th anniversary. Born of the merger of five unions in July 1971, brought together through the historic courage of postal workers in the Great Postal Strike of 1970, the APWU has been a force in improving the lives of postal workers and fighting for all the working class for half a century.

Despite the many achievements of our union, we continue to face serious challenges that threaten our job security, our pay and benefits, and the very future of the Postal Service. So, how can APWU members best prepare for the next 50 years of collective struggle through the APWU? We can start today by building union power and committing to grow and strengthen our union.

That's the theme of the 2022 APWU internal organizing drive – **Building Union Power**. The organizing drive kicked off on May 1, International Workers' Day, and will run until July 1.

Building Union Power is what the union is all about. Since our beginning, the APWU has brought postal workers into collective struggle, coming together to win the types of changes, both at work and in the wider society, that benefit postal workers, our families and our communities.

Today, about 80% of postal workers are organized. That's great! But it also means that some 20% of our coworkers across the country don't belong to our union. The goal of the

Building Union Power campaign is to sign up 5,000 new members to the union. It's an ambitious goal, and to meet it, APWU members of all stripes – from national leaders, to local officers, from activists to rank-and-file members – will need to contribute. Organizing is every member's responsibility!

Why Organize?

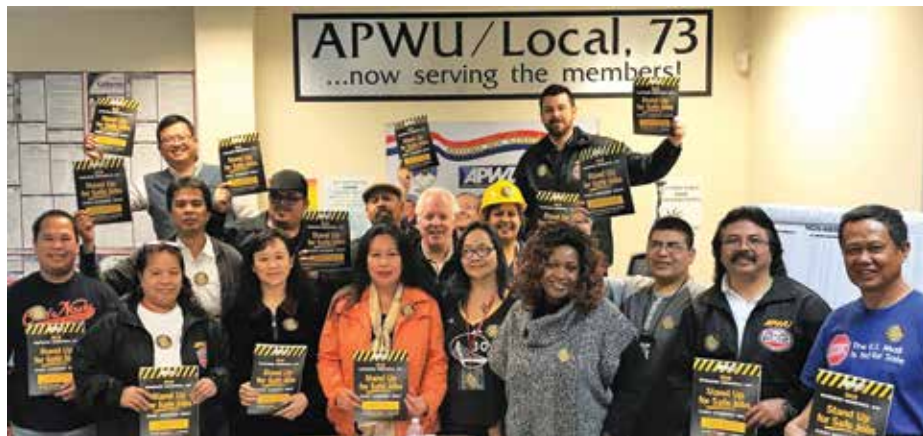
Often when we highlight organizing victories, we're talking about new organizing wins, where workers are winning union recognition for the first time. Of course, our union is already well-established and recognized by the Postal Service. The **Building Union Power** campaign, however, is an "internal" organizing effort, focused on the non-members in our workplaces. Why is this important?

First, the union derives its power from its members, joining together, exercising their collective voice to win on issues that matter to them. The more members in the union, the more representative it is of the workforce, the louder its collective voice, and the harder it is for the boss to play workers off one an-

other. Quite simply, there's power in numbers.

Second, internal organizing is an opportunity to make the union stronger by exercising our union muscles. Having conversations with coworkers, identifying and addressing workplace issues, recruiting new activists and leaders – these are all things we can achieve when we develop a plan to grow the union, talk to non-members and find out what's most important to postal workers today. Talking and acting like a union – leading and engaging in collective campaigns, and signing up new members – gives us an opportunity to flex our union muscles and grow stronger together.

Everything the union does exists in the context of our relative strength compared to others. When the national negotiators sit across from the Postal Service to bargain for our contract, the Postal Service knows how strong and active the union is. When we lobby members of Congress, they know how many postal workers are in their district and how often they're phoning congressional offices or attending town halls. By signing up more members and making our local, state and national



UNION POWER

structures more active, we increase our power to win the things we all care about. That's true whether it's wages and step increases, career conversions, health and safety fights, or any range of legislative priorities.

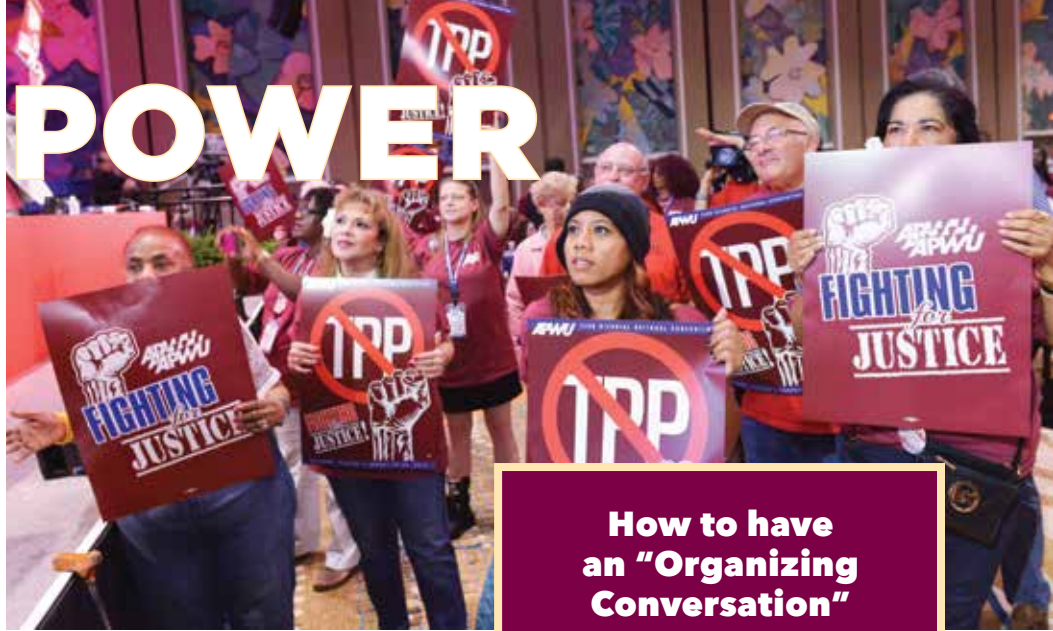
How do we organize?

If you ask ten veteran organizers about the best way to organize a workplace, you'll likely get ten different anecdotes about what's worked for them in the past, what hasn't, and lessons they've learned along the way. But at the start of every organizer's favorite tactic is one simple, and crucial tool – the organizing conversation.

No matter how good your leaflet or brochure, no matter how advanced an organizer's technology, good organizing always starts with a worker asking their coworker to have a conversation. Quite simply, there are no shortcuts to union organizing. We've got to get talking to our coworkers. That's true in new organizing campaigns, and it's true for our **Building Union Power** campaign as well.

Before a non-member signs up and joins the union, they're going to have to hear from an APWU member first. That needs to be someone who's prepared to learn about the non-member's interests and concerns, to share their experience of how the union has improved their job and their life, and ask the non-member to join us in the collective effort to make positive change for postal workers at their workplace and across the country.

It's likely that for many of those non-members, the Postal Service will be their first job where there's been a union presence. There's no better messenger about why joining the union is important than a dedicated, enthusiastic union member.



To be most effective, locals and state organizations across the country have been asked to form organizing committees as part of the **Building Union Power** campaign. Ask your local leadership what their plans are for the campaign, how you can get involved, and the best way to start reaching out to non-members.

The APWU Organization Department, led by Anna Smith, has developed a toolkit of helpful material to bring along with you when reaching out to non-members. This includes various brochures on the benefits of union membership, highlights of important victories the union has achieved, and more.

To access these tools and get involved in this critical organizing drive, visit apwu.org/unionpower.

"It's been an exciting start to the year," President Dimondstein said kicking off the campaign. "We won an awesome new contract and we just passed historic postal reform legislation. We've won these battles and many more because our union is ready to fight for what matters to postal workers. We'll be even stronger when we've signed up the non-members in workplaces across the country and grown our union family. Everyone can be an organizer – let's do this together!" ■

How to have an "Organizing Conversation"

1. Introduce Yourself

- Let them know it's an important conversation.
- Ask about a workplace issue.

2. Identify Their Issues

- Ask about what's important to them, what they hope for, what they'd like to change at work.

3. Agitate and Educate

- Help them understand "who decides" or "who's standing in the way" of workers getting what we need. Draw the distinctions between our goals and those of management or politicians in the way.

4. Hope: A Vision for Change

- Show your coworker how the union is our tool to win changes at work. We've made "who decides" do what we want them to do before. Share a story about a successful collective action in your workplace, a bargaining victory or a campaign you took part in.

5. Call the question

- "Are you ready to stand with us?" Ask them to join the union. We're stronger together, with everyone inside the union. Ask them to get involved in the union.

New Union Contract Implementation Moves Ahead

New Pay Scale
and COLA
Increases



Workhour guarantees for PTFs



Career Conversions
for PSEs



Retroactive Pay
Increases



The implementation of the 2021-2024 Collective Bargaining Agreement is moving forward. With ratification of the agreement on February 28, the provisions of the agreement went into effect. The membership of the union has already seen the effects of some of those provisions. For example, work or pay guarantees for Part-time Flexible (PTF) employees to include the four (4) hour daily work or pay guarantee, and the 24-hour per pay period work or pay guarantee are in effect. The guaranteed one day off per week for PTFs is also in effect, along with many other provisions of the agreement.

As previously announced, the pay provisions of the agreement are being programmed and will begin to be paid in pay period 13 (which starts on June 4, 2022), and show on paychecks received on June 24, 2022. This would include the 1.3% due to career employees from November 2021, the 2.3% due to Postal Support Employees (PSEs) from November 2021, the \$1310 per annum COLA due to career employees on February 26, 2022, extra pay for PTFs due to the Juneteenth holiday, and the additional 50 cents per hour for PSEs. Beginning pay period 14, starting on June 18, 2022, the slotting of the additional steps

and elimination of steps for Grade 8 employees will begin as well. Of course, once that is all in place, the Postal Service will be able to provide the date of the retroactive pay that will be owed the employees. It is important to note that the retroactive pay will take time to calculate and will be paid later in the year.

One significant provision of the agreement goes into effect on April 23, 2022. PSEs who have reached 24 months of relative standing within their installation (Level 4 RMPOs excluded) will be converted to career employees. They will be converted to a PTF in Level 20 and below offices or to Full-time Flexible (FTF) in Level 21 and above offices. This is a significant step forward for the non-career workforce. **Guaranteed Conversion!**

The Postal Service has provided approximately 1,200 names of PSEs who will be converted on April 23, 2022. During negotiations, it was estimated that the conversions under this provision would be closer

to 2000, however, through the other conversion mechanisms of the Clerk Craft Residual MOU, conversion agreed to through national MOUs, and through the hard work of dedicated representatives in the grievance process, many of

the PSEs estimated to be converted were converted prior to April 23, 2022. This proves that the contract is working well to get conversions prior to the 24-month provision, which is a stop-gap to ensure PSEs are converted.

The APWU believes more than the 1,200 conversions should be taking place and we have provided a list of names to the Postal Service that have been identified in the data we have that should be converted. We are seeking clarification on those names to make sure that no one who should be converted is missed. Data review and conversations with the Postal Service are continuing to take place to ensure proper conversion.

The 2021-2024 Collective Bargaining Agreement took a big step forward for the wages, hours, and working conditions for hundreds of thousands APWU members. It is a contract that can be built upon in the future and a contract that protects rights and benefits fought for over decades of collective bargaining. ■

IRD Zimmerman Steps Down; New Appointments at APWU HQ

APWU Industrial Relations Director (IRD) Vance Zimmerman stepped down from his position effective March 26, 2022 after first being elected IRD in 2016.

In a letter to President Dimondstein, Vance Zimmerman shared, “To represent working men and women and help better their lives and their families’ lives has been the highlight of my life. Every day to further the union cause and strengthen the APWU has brought me great joy and pride. I have developed numerous friendships and relationships throughout my career that I will always cherish. It was a great honor to have been the Chief Spokesperson for the last two national negotiations...I am proud of what was negotiated and know it will help the lives of thousands of APWU represented employees... The COVID pandemic has affected many families negatively and recently it has affected mine. Therefore, I cannot give 100 percent of my time to the APWU. The job of Industrial Relations requires and deserves someone who can devote all their time and energy to the great members of the APWU.”

Zimmerman was first elected Industrial Relations Director in 2016 after 15 years as a National Business Agent in the Maintenance Craft. Prior to being elected NBA, Zimmerman served in various leadership positions of the Greater Cincinnati Area Local.

“Brother Zimmerman’s outstanding leadership at the national level has been a tremendous asset to the APWU,” said President Dimondstein. “Among other invaluable work, he ably led the union through the 2018



interest arbitration, the health and safety crisis of the COVID pandemic, and the recently negotiated and overwhelming ratified new Union Contract. Postal workers across the country have benefited from his dedicated work and the union is stronger for Vance’s contributions over many years. He will be sorely missed.”

Charlie Cash Appointed New IRD

In accordance with the APWU National Constitution, President Mark Dimondstein filled the IRD vacancy by appointing Charlie Cash, with the approval of the National Executive Board on March 22, 2022.

Charlie Cash had served as Executive Assistant to the Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman for the last five years. Prior to coming to APWU Headquarters, Brother Cash served as president of the Salt Lake City local for eleven years. “Charlie Cash is fully prepared to step into this vital position. He has done a terrific job at APWU HQ since 2016 and I look forward to working with him to advance the cause of postal workers and all of labor,” said President Dimondstein.

“I want to thank President Dimondstein for this appointment and the Executive Board for their approval,” said Charlie Cash. “I look forward to building on the work we have done in the Industrial Relations Department under Vance Zimmerman’s leadership over the past five years and supporting the members—who make up this great Union -- in facing the opportunities and challenges ahead.”

Daleo Freeman Appointed Human Relations Director

President Dimondstein also appointed Daleo Freeman to serve as Human Relations Director, filling a vacancy in that position. Brother Freeman’s appointment was also approved by the National Executive Board at the March 22 meeting.

Daleo Freeman has served as the elected President of the Cleveland Area Local for the past ten years and also currently serves as the Ohio State APWU Vice-President. He began his postal career in 1994 and quickly became a union activist and leader.

“On behalf of the members, I welcome Brother Freeman to his new role as APWU Human Relations Director and am confident he will bring bold ideas and energy to the many facets of the Human Relations Department,” shared Dimondstein.

“I am excited for this new opportunity and look forward to working with all the officers and members to further strengthen the work of the APWU,” said Daleo Freeman. “I sincerely appreciate the confidence of President Dimondstein and the National Executive Board.” ■



We Need Better Service Standards to Secure 2022 Mail Ballot Protections

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

Mid-term elections are November 8, 2022. All 435 seats are up for election in the House of Representatives, with 48 members having announced their retirement. Thirty-five Senate seats are up for election in this cycle. Vote-by-mail can make the difference in electing the representatives we need to save the Postal Service. The USPS's obligation is to assure that every person's mailed-in ballot makes it to election authorities on time. It is dangerous when the USPS continues to delay and slow down first-class mail, which includes our mail ballot service. Part of the voter suppression tactics across the country has been to shorten the time period for when mail ballots are sent and returned, knowing that the USPS has degraded service standards.

Eight States conduct their elections entirely by mail - CA, CO, HI, NV, OR, UT, VT, WA. Two more, NE and ND, permit counties to opt into conducting elections by mail. Nine States - AK, AZ, FL, KS, MD, MO, MT, NM, WY, allow specific small vote-by-mail elections for certain small jurisdictions. (*Statistics from National Conference of State Legislatures, a nonpartisan organization*).

USPS mail delay complaints have increased due to:

- degraded service standards made by the PMG,
- consolidation of mail processing facilities that have damaged our network,
- continued violation of contracting out at transportation hubs instead of utilizing our postal workers,
- decreasing prompt air mail services
- and raising prices for service, while refusing to fix the delayed services.

Prior to 2013, the Postal Service provided its best service to our country. First-class mail was delivered overnight in many cities. Mail delay complaints were low, and service performance was high. The degradation of Postal Service Standards degrades the work and pride of postal workers.

We must go back to the 2012 Service Standards, protect and build back our mail processing network to provide prompt mail service.

You can help by educating more people on how to vote-by-mail, and to vote for those Representatives that will protect vote-by-mail and support going back to the 2012 Service Standards.

Let's Make the National APWU Organizing Drive May 1 - July 1, 2022 a Historic Labor Victory

Unionizing the workplace has become big news around the country. It's time to join in and make our APWU union stronger, with the goal to have all our non-members make the bold choice to become 100% unionized. When we sign up our non-members, we stand and support each other as APWU Family. Our benefits far outweigh those workers who have no union or contract. Our union is worker-led, of multi-racial, multi-gender workers who are not afraid to fight, helping to enforce our contract, and to stop hostile work environments. Our work environment needs fixing but it is truly a collective effort. Show the Postmaster General that we are not afraid to fight and build until we are 100% strong.

Contact your local union representative and ask how you can help. There will be lots of incentives for locals to reach their goals, and plenty of material to educate non-members as to why it pays to belong and stand together. Put together a committee to plan a Union Appreciation Day or Week, breakrooms chats, have sign-up parties, set up a special table or rack with 1187 forms, educational materials and computer availability to sign up online. Contact our Organization Director Anna Smith and keep updated by visiting apwu.org/unionpower. ■



New Vehicles Deliver Controversy



In February 2021, the Postal Service announced that it had awarded the production contract for the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV) to Wisconsin-based Oshkosh Defense. Since that announcement, however, the deal with Oshkosh and the Postal Service's plans for the NGDV have been mired in controversy.

The NGDV is slated to replace the iconic Grumman Long Life Vehicles (LLV), first introduced on letter carrier routes in the late 1980s. The LLV has far exceeded its life expectancy, and letter carriers are understandably eager for new delivery vehicles, especially with the increased comfort and safety features planned for the 50,000 – 165,000 new NGDVs to be purchased over the next ten years.

The Postal Service is facing increased pressure, however, to reconsider their initial plans for procuring the NGDV. Two main issues are proving particularly controversial. First is an environmental issue. Despite the looming climate emergency and growing evidence that electric vehicles (EVs) are well-suited for mail delivery, the Postal Service has so far only committed to buying 10,000 EVs in its initial purchase of the NGDVs.

Second is a labor issue. Workers at Oshkosh De-

fense's main production facilities in Wisconsin are unionized with the United Auto Workers. But despite a stellar track record of quality production by UAW members in Wisconsin, Oshkosh has announced that they plan to build the postal vehicles at a new facility in "right-to-work" South Carolina, apparently in an effort to reduce labor costs.

These two issues have propelled the Postal Service's plans for the NGDV into the spotlight. The entire labor movement has thrown its support behind the UAW and their calls that the NGDV be union-made. In a letter to the Postal Board of Governors, the presidents of the APWU, the NALC, and the UAW called on the USPS to "urge [Oshkosh] to reconsider" its decision to move production to South Carolina. "Wherever the vehicles are built, we urge the Postal Service to direct Oshkosh Defense to negotiate an agreement with the UAW to ensure the

company remains strictly neutral in any union organizing efforts and workers are given the right to an efficient and fair majority sign-up process," the letter continued.

The AFL-CIO has rallied union members to sign petitions to the USPS and Oshkosh. The labor movement's message is simple: Build it Electric, Build it Union.

The question of the climate impact of the NGDV purchase has been grounds for increasing activism as well. In March, at a congressional hearing on the subject, lawmakers questioned the Postal Service's assumptions about the long-term climate impact and cost of gas-powered vehicles. Carolyn Maloney, chairwoman of the House Oversight Committee, said that the USPS's calculations underestimated gas prices and overestimated maintenance costs for electric vehicles, tilting their conclusions toward

buying more gas-powered trucks. Lawmakers also pointed out that the NGDV's estimated 8.6 miles per gallon falls well below standards for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The Biden Administration has issued an Executive Order intended to make all federal vehicles "clean and zero-emission" by 2035. The stalled Build Back Better bill would provide \$6 billion for the USPS to buy electric vehicles and charging stations. The Environmental Protection Agency has written to the Postal Service, urging USPS to reconsider its plans and to buy more EVs.

In late April, a number of environmental groups, the UAW, sixteen states, and the District of Columbia sued the Postal Service in federal court, claiming USPS has failed in its environmental analysis of the truck purchase.

"UAW members and our partners in the environmental movement are united in a vision for the future where public dollars support good, union jobs and invest in a cleaner future," UAW President Ray Curry said.

The plaintiffs in the case are asking the courts to halt the production of the NGDV until USPS has more thoroughly analyzed the climate and community impact of its' multi-billion-dollar purchase. ■





It Pays to have a Union Presence in the Workplace!

SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

This can be interpreted literally or figuratively when our local and state officers organize our non-members. While the overall benefit of belonging to APWU is always “There is Strength in Numbers,” collectively we become more substantial when we have 100% participation. Belonging to the APWU while achieving goals and overcoming challenges provides a particular sense of pride and solidarity, and promotes meaning of the U and I in Union.

In the literal term, it pays to have a union presence in the workplace because when we organize the non-members, their membership equates to additional revenue the union can bring into our campaigns. Figuratively, it pays to have a union presence in the workplace because there are additional benefits that come with strong APWU union presence. Our National, Local, and State officers gain a tremendous advantage when dealing with postal management when negotiating our Collective Bargaining Agreement, as well as other initiatives that impact our members.

Local and state officers should consistently find ways to engage their membership with innovative ideas and organizing drives to promote and encourage APWU membership. While our Collective Bargaining Agreement and representation are important aspects of membership, there are additional benefits i.e., National and Local Scholarships, Voluntary Benefits Plans, discounts to goods, services, and more. APWU is counting on you to do your part during the National organization drive May 1 2022 -July 1, 2022 by taking the initiative and asking your coworkers, “Are you a Member of the APWU?” if not, direct them to the on-line membership application. We are the union and with numbers comes strength!

Travel and Expense Policy

While we are adjusting to our new normal, in-person conventions and conferences are convening across the country. Local and State officers should adopt a local Travel and Expense Policy. It is recommended the policy not be included verbatim in the constitution and bylaws because doing so would require desired changes to the language to go through the amendment process. Language referring to the Travel and Expense policy is what is preferred. When adopting a travel and expense policy, the items that should be included and consistent with

authorized expenditures in your local and state constitution and bylaws are as follows:

- Expense Filing and Approval
- Travel Arrangements
- Air Travel
- Lodging/Hotel
- Ground Transportation
- Meals
- Per Diem
- In Town Meetings and Assignments
- Personal Car Usage
- Car Rental
- Lost Time Reimbursement
- Reimbursement for Lost Annual and Sick Leave

To fulfill LMRDA and IRS requirements, all authorized expenditures are required to be properly documented with an expense voucher, original receipts, approved PS 3917 for LWOP/lost time and mileage log when applicable. It is important to establish what will be reimbursed when properly documented and receipted, and what will be compensated at the GSA rate. Local and State Treasurers should use GSA.gov to assist in determining the correct amount payable for per-diem by state and county and the GSA mileage rate for calendar year 2022 is 58.5 cents per mile. All expense vouchers should be submitted within thirty (30) days of the expense being incurred. ■

August 2022 APWU National Convention Resolutions Deadline June 6, 2022

June 6, 2022 is the deadline for acceptance of resolutions printed in the convention book. Please continue to send any and all convention resolutions to 2020-2022resolutions@apwu.org.

Secretary-Treasurer Training August 19-20, 2022

The Secretary-Treasurer's Department is offering Fiduciary Responsibilities Training and QuickBooks Beginners Training August 19 (9:00 am- 5:00 pm) and Saturday, August 20 (9:00 am – 2:00 pm). There is no fee for the event and it will take place at the Gaylord National Harbor.

APWU PARTICIPATES IN COLOMBIAN ELECTION OBSERVATION

For decades, a series of repressive governments controlled by the wealthy elite of Colombia have engaged in political violence directed against Colombian union leaders and social activists. Despite recent efforts to secure a lasting peace, Colombia continues to be “the deadliest country for workers and unionists,” according to a report of the International Trade Union Confederation. Political repression has had an effect on Colombia’s electoral process as well.

Two APWU members, Grisselle Nieves and Gabriel Medina of the Puerto Rico Area Local, recently made an important contribution in the struggle to advance democratic rights in Colombia. They participated as international election monitors to Colombia’s parliamentary elections which were held on March 13.

The election observation mission was coordinated by the Misión de Observación Electoral (Electoral Observation Mission, “MOE”), a Colombian civil society organization recognized by the Colombian National Election Council. The APWU members were joined by 87 other trade unionists from around the world, a delegation brought together by UNI Global Union, of which APWU is a participating organization. Puerto Rico Area Local President Juan-Carlos González Del Valle was instrumental in organizing their participation.

UNI was asked to organize the international delegation by the Colombian union federations, who were “concerned about the critical human rights situation in the country, [and] the increase in the number of murders of social leaders,” including fellow trade unionists.



Medina, Nieves and Juan Riquelme from the Chilean Postal Workers pose for a photo before heading to polling locations.

The MOE and the Colombian unions sought international representatives to help “promote democratic participation, provide transparency and build trust so that all Colombians can exercise their right to vote impartially.”

“The presence of such a large group of union members in Colombia, certified as impartial certified observers, was covered extensively in the media and showed Colombian workers the strength and commitment of the international labor movement to democracy everywhere,” said Marcio Monzane, Regional Secretary of UNI Americas.

Brother Medina and Sister Nieves were both deeply touched by their experience in Colombia. Reacting to the history of violence and political repression facing working people in Colombia, Medina said, “It was extremely humbling to experience the labor movement in Latin America. They experience ten-fold what we’ve experienced. It’s strengthened my conviction to keep fighting for the APWU.”

One impression Sister Nieves shared was just how much they had in common with the people they met and worked with: “We are workers, we work the floor, we have our family. Representing and being part of the union in this initiative is very important,” she said. “We understand that we have done important work for Latin America, not only Colombia, and we hope that these initiatives will continue to grow and we can do this for other countries that need to be part of this vision of a more progressive, worker-focused Latin America.”

In addition to their work as election monitors, Nieves and Medina gave a presentation on the APWU’s history, structure, and campaigns to postal trade unionists from Chile and Colombia. They learned how those unions face struggles similar to the APWU’s, especially the need to defend and expand quality services, the struggle against postal privatization, and the need to build strong, vibrant unions.

“I want to commend Sister Grisselle and Brother Gabriel for the incredible solidarity they’ve shown through this mission,” said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. “Workers around the world are joined by our shared struggles. The fight for justice, workers and union rights and democracy in Colombia continues. All postal workers should be proud of Grisselle and Gabriel’s contribution to this cause.” ■



I'm Honored to Be Your IRD

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR CHARLIE CASH

Union Family, it is an honor to be your Industrial Relations Director. I am honored by this appointment made by President Dimondstein and ratified unanimously by the National Executive Board. I am excited to work each and every day for the members of this great union.

I do want to share a brief history of my time in the Postal Service and the APWU. I started at USPS 28 years ago in April of 1994 as a non-career Transitional Employee (TE) at the Salt Lake City Remote Encoding Center. I joined the APWU on day one. My father, who was a retired postmaster said to me, “Charlie, you’re gonna hear from the union today.” I expected to hear that I should not join the union—I was wrong. He said, “I raised an honorable son, you will join the union and won’t be no scab.” Now, 28 years later, after serving in various positions in the Salt Lake City Area Local, including shop steward, maintenance craft director, and local president, I am in my sixth year working at APWU headquarters. I had been serving in the Industrial Relations Department as the former director’s assistant, helping run the day-to-day operations of the department, researching, helping prepare for negotiations, meeting with the Postal Service at the director’s side, and more, all while learning with each passing day. Although I am the “new” director, I am not a new person in the department. I look forward to serving the members for the foreseeable future.

The implementation of the updated and new provisions of the 2021-2024 *Collective Bargaining Agreement* is moving forward. The dates of the implementation and effective dates of the pay provisions have previously been posted and can also be found elsewhere in this magazine (see page 8). But other important parts have just recently been implemented or are moving towards implementation. Not as fast as we all would like, but they are moving forward.

For example, on April 23, 2022, nearly 1,200 Postal Support Employees (PSEs) were converted to career status due to the 24-months of relative standing provision of the new contract. We believe that more conversions may be due, and are currently in discussions with the Postal Service on those names. Additional data is needed to

confirm whether or not the names in question are due to be converted. Of course, this isn’t the only conversion mechanism for PSEs. Other MOUs, the Clerk Craft Residual Vacancy MOU, grievances, etc. have all led to thousands of PSEs being converted, showing how well all parts of our contract work in concert with one another.

I DO WANT TO SHARE A BRIEF HISTORY OF MY TIME IN THE POSTAL SERVICE AND THE APWU. I STARTED AT USPS 28 YEARS AGO IN APRIL OF 1994 AS A NON-CAREER TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYEE (TE) AT THE SALT LAKE CITY REMOTE ENCODING CENTER. I JOINED THE APWU ON DAY ONE.

But we have more work to do on implementation. Other areas that we still don’t have firm dates on include the advanced leave for Part-Time Flexibles and other employees. Our new contract has historic changes to it. All those changes require massive amounts of computer programming, which we’re still waiting to be completed. What many may not know is that those employees who are programming all these changes are our Union Sisters and Brothers in the IT/AS Department of the Postal Service and members of the APWU Support Services Division. I know these Sisters and Brothers are working hard to get the necessary programming done. I, for one, appreciate their hard work and am honored that APWU members are doing this work.

Of course, part of implementation is printing of the new contract. The final version is going through the vetting process with the Postal Service but is expected to be done shortly and we are looking at printing to begin in mid-May.

As more dates are finalized and implementation moves along, look for updates to be sent to the field and posted on the APWU website.

***Solidarity Forever!* ■**

April 28th of each year is Worker's Memorial Day.

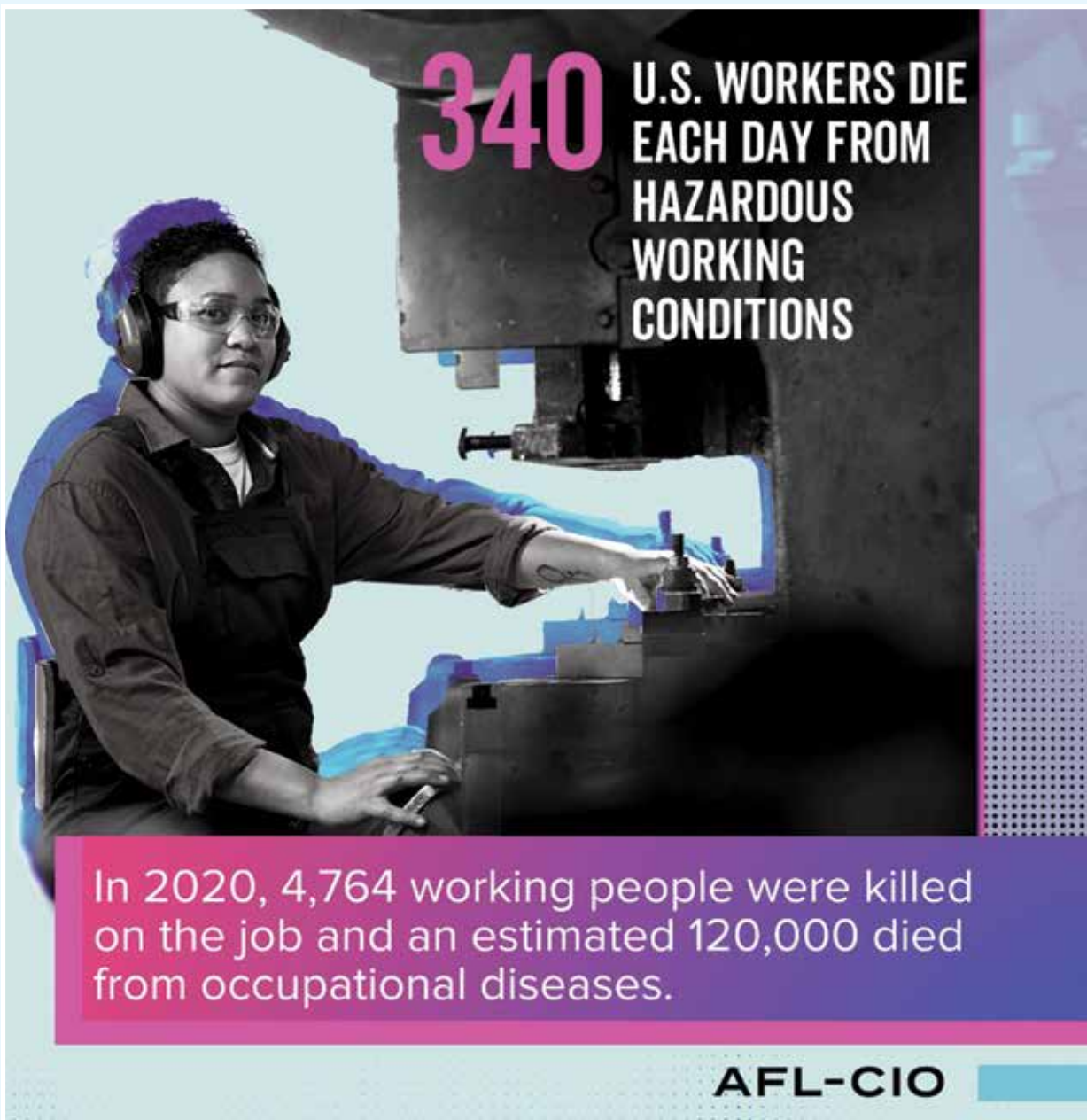
The day we remember those workers who have been injured, contracted an occupational disease, or lost their lives on the job.

Trying to earn a living is dangerous throughout the world. In 2020¹:

- ➔ Everyday, 340 workers were killed on the job
- ➔ In the United States alone, 4,764 workers were killed on the job
- ➔ An estimated 120,000 workers died from occupational diseases
- ➔ The two groups with the greatest risk of dying at work are Black and Latino workers
- ➔ Nearly 3.2 million work-related injuries and illnesses were reported by employers

➔ Musculoskeletal disorders make up the largest portion (21%) of work-related injuries and illnesses and the percentage is even higher in the Postal Service

➔ Evidence of underreporting is widespread and the actual estimated number of work-related injuries and illness is between 5.4 million and 8.4 million per year



➔ Rural states have the highest fatality rates in America

- ➔ Wyoming (13.0 deaths per 100,000 Workers)
- ➔ Alaska (10.7 deaths per 100,000 Workers)
- ➔ South Dakota (7.8 deaths per 100,000 Workers)

➔ North Dakota (7.4 deaths per 100,000 Workers)

➔ West Virginia (6.6 deaths per 100,000 Workers)

In 2019, the last year data was publicly reported for fatalities at the United States Postal Service, 15 Postal Service Employees were killed on the job. **More Postal Employees died on the job than all other federal agencies combined!**²

The Postal Service can be a very dangerous place to work! But you have the right to safe work environment!

Article 14 of the *Collective Bargaining Agreement* guarantees that right, saying:

It is the responsibility of management to provide safe working conditions in all present and future installations and to develop a safe working force.

Take action and demand your workplace be safe and hazard free! Submit a PS-Form 1767 *Report of Hazard, Unsafe condition or Practice* every time you see a safety issue and demand the hazard, unsafe condition, or practice be rectified! A PDF version of the form can be found here: apwu.org/1767

**Stand up for Safe Jobs!
Every Workers' Right**

1 *Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect*, 2022, AFL-CIO Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect, 2022 | AFL-CIO (aflcio.org)

2 United States Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration Federal Agency Injury and Illness Statistics by Year | Occupational Safety and Health Administration (osha.gov)

Amazon Workers Unionize

APWU President Dimondstein and ALU President Smalls at the April 24 ALU Rally.

On April 1, workers at the JFK8 Amazon warehouse on Staten Island, New York won a historic union election, forming the first ever labor union at an Amazon facility in the United States. Led by former Amazon employee Christian Smalls, who was fired by Amazon for leading a walkout over COVID-related safety concerns at the Staten Island warehouse, the workers' upset victory has amazed the labor movement, and sparked new hopes of unionizing the second-largest employer in the country.

Workers won the election by a wide margin, with 2,654 workers voting in favor of forming a union to 2,131 against. There were 67 challenged ballots, and 17 voided; 8,325 workers were eligible to vote.

"We want to thank Jeff Bezos for going to space, because while he was up there, we were organizing a union," said Amazon Labor Union (ALU) President Chris Smalls after official results were announced.

Smalls was first hired at Amazon in 2015, and had been working with the company for five years when he first decided to start the unionization effort with his friend and coworker, ALU Vice President Derrick Palmer. The two set up a tent and a table next to the bus stop located outside the warehouse, and began what was to become an extraordinary two year, grassroots, worker-led campaign.

"It seemed like a long shot," said ALU Vice President Derrick Palmer, "but we just went out there and did it—workers, unionizing the second-largest private employer in the country."

Now, building on the historic success of their April 1 victory, the workers of the ALU are attempting to win another union election at the warehouse across the street, known at LDJ5.

On April 24, to build support for the upcoming election, the ALU held a pair of rallies outside of LDJ5, and were joined by politicians and labor leaders from across the country, including Bernie Sanders, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, AFA-CWA President Sara Nelson, and APWU President Mark Dimondstein.

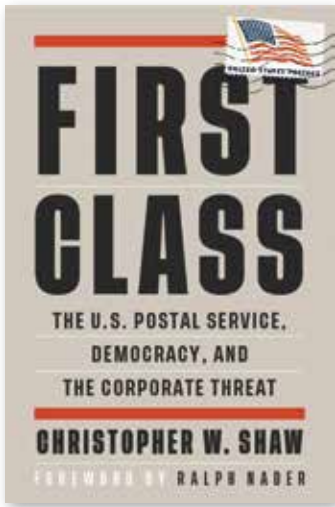
"You made history a few weeks and inspired workers all over this country. You've inspired unions all over this country," Dimondstein told ALU members. "Remember, it's you who create the wealth and make this company go round. You deserve and you've earned your fair share!"

Workers faced an uphill battle at the second warehouse, where Amazon spent millions of dollars hiring union-busting lawyers to the tune of \$400-an-hour, constantly harassing workers in captive audience meetings and spreading rumors and lies about the ALU and its leaders.

In the face of this harassment and intimidation, workers have stayed strong, and President Dimondstein has offered the APWU's full support to the ALU, saying in a recent statement, "The APWU stands ready to assist the newly organized workers in Staten Island in any way we can in the coming and challenging battle to win a good first union contract and stands ready to work with all Amazon workers and all unions in building Amazon workers' power at Amazon."

At press time, the results of the second union election at Amazon's BHM1 facility in Bessemer, AL remain unclear. The RWDSU secured a re-run election after proving Amazon illegally interfered in a union election last year. Of 2,375 votes cast, the union "yes" vote trails by just 118 votes, with 416 challenged ballots left to be counted. ■

New Book Highlights Important Role of USPS & Threats to Its Future



In the new book, *First Class: The U.S. Postal Service, Democracy, and the Corporate Threat*, author Christopher W. Shaw explores the Postal Service's public service mission and warns against threats that could undermine the agency. Covering the present day, the future, and over two centuries of history, Shaw's book argues that "a public service philosophy placed

the postal system at the center of American life, historically, and can guide the Postal Service to important future endeavors as well."

Shaw pays tribute to the essential role of postal workers, and notes that postal unions—including the APWU—have been the key to improving working condi-

tions at the agency. "The economic security that postal workers receive in return for their labor," he states, "is a product of their unions."

Shaw stresses that the U.S. Mail was created to promote American democracy. For over two centuries, the postal system has helped citizens become better informed voters. The importance of vote-by-mail to the 2020 election demonstrated yet again that the USPS is vital to a healthy democracy.

Shaw presents a number of reasonable ideas for expanding the Postal Service in the future. An expert on the history of postal banking, Shaw explains how introducing financial services would benefit both the public and the USPS. He also proposes creative ideas for offering government services at post offices and expanding into electronic communications services. In a foreword to the book, consumer advocate Ralph Nader writes that "instead of dismantling the Postal Service, this is the moment to expand postal services."

The book is available from <https://citylights.com> or contact your local bookstore. ■

Report: Pandemic Disproportionally Impacts the Poor

While the coronavirus was initially thought to be "a great equalizer," a new report commissioned by the Poor's People Campaign has found that the pandemic has hit poor and working people much harder than richer Americans.

The research shows that people living in poorer counties were two times as likely to die from COVID than those living in rich counties. That distinction was even wider during the various peaks of the pandemic, with poor people five times more likely to die during the Delta wave and three times more likely to die during the Omicron wave.

The report found that while people in richer counties were in fact more likely to be vaccinated against COVID, vaccination status did not account for the disparity in deaths experienced between rich and poor

people. What accounts for the difference is poverty. The 300 counties with the highest death rates during the pandemic had average poverty rates of 45 percent.

"The findings of this report reveal intentional decisions to not focus on the poor," said Reverend William Barber, co-chair of the Poor People's Campaign. "We cannot say that this is because of individual choices or behaviors."

"As this report reveals, poverty was not tangential to the pandemic, but deeply embedded in its geography," the report concluded. "Yet, failing to consider how poverty intersected with race, gender, ability, insured status and occupation during the pandemic created blind spots in our policy and decision-making, which wrought unnecessary suffering to millions of people."

"This summer, the campaign is organizing a mass mobilization of poor and low-income people in Washington, D.C. to fight back,"

writes Karen Dolan, Director of the Criminalization of Race and Poverty project at the Institute for Policy Studies, a research institution associated with the campaign. "On June 18, thousands of poor people and their allies will arrive in the capital, calling on lawmakers to treat the pre-existing conditions of a pandemic that's killed nearly 1 million Americans."

More information can be found at poorpeoplescampaign.org. ■



Highlights of the 3/30/22 Updated Q&A on Filling Clerk Craft Residuals Vacancies MOU



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

During the 2021 contract negotiations, the APWU and USPS agreed to improvements to the MOU, Re: Residual Vacancies – Clerk Craft, which necessitated new Q&As being added to the previous versions. Below are highlights of the new Q&A. A full copy can be found at apwu.org/ResVacClerk.

1. The reset date for the ratios was not reset with the new CBA and is carried forward from 6/1/20 – see the first paragraph and Q&A #1.
2. There is still some confusion as to when an employee is considered as “eligible” and able to apply in regular eReassign – see Q&A #4 and #5. The USPS Districts are required to monitor the eligibility of applicants in eReassign. An ineligible request should be removed and the employee notified as to when they become eligible. If you are aware that this is not happening in your District, notify the Clerk Craft Division
3. Q&A #6 – the FTR residual vacancies and the PTF vacancies are both included in the applicable ratio of 1:4 and 1:6 for transfers vs conversions.
4. Q&A #10 provides that the transfers for PTF vacancies are considered in conjunction with the PSEs conversions.
5. Q&As #13 and #14 address the Canvasses of both the FTR/NTFT residuals and the PTF vacancies – who will be canvassed within the 50-mile radius and that PTFs are now provided preference in both the FTR/NTFT residuals and the PTF vacancies. FTR/PTF career employees have access to regular eReassign. PSE only have access to the Canvass eReassign posting with a 50-mile radius.
6. Q&A #16 provides that once a PTF or PSE is successful in a Canvass transfer – they must remain in the new installation for 12 months.
7. Q&A #12 provides that during the life of the 2021-2024 CBA, the MOU on filling residuals controls and not the language in Article 37.5.
8. Employees placed through the canvass process, both PTFs and PSEs receive a new seniority date effective the date of placement.
9. Employees successfully placed through the canvass process, must remain in the new bid cluster for 12 months.
10. The review process as described in Q&A #17 is only applicable for the first residual vacancy in each block of 4/6 as applicable. The process will be continuous in blocks of 4/6 as applicable. This is NOT applicable to every vacancy in the block – only the first.
11. Q&A #18 addresses the process for employees to apply for a cross-craft reassignment into the Clerk Craft. These requests are considered in the order received amongst all eligible applicants pending in regular eReassign.
12. The PTF one-time opportunity provided for in the new CBA which provided preferencing rights to PTFs within the District into offices with 100 or more Clerk Craft employees from the March 2022 regular eReassign posting, will not count against the ratios of 1:4 or 1:6.
13. Another important Q&A to point out is # 22. Previously there was no deadline for withdrawing a request in a Canvass. It is extremely important that the PTFs and PSEs understand that a change has been made that a request to withdraw must be made no later than 5 business days prior to being provided a reassignment date.
14. Q&A #23 make reference to the agreed upon BQ language.
15. Q&A #24 provides for the future conversion dates for the PSEs who are eligible for the 2-month automatic conversion.
16. The last Q&A #25 provides clarification on the seniority of PSEs converted on the same date in the same installation. ■

THERE IS STILL SOME CONFUSION AS TO WHEN AN EMPLOYEE IS CONSIDERED AS “ELIGIBLE” AND ABLE TO APPLY IN REGULAR eREASSIGN – SEE Q&A #4 AND #5.

When can I Expect a Return to Full Per Diem?



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

This full per diem agreement is a pilot program to encourage employees to attend off-site training without being forced to do so, and to encourage NCED or related off-site training facilities, to provide quality food that employees would want to purchase voluntarily. In the event quality food is not provided, employees will now receive full per diem and have the option of purchasing food elsewhere.

After the contract was ratified on February 28, 2022, the main question being asked by employees is, “When can I expect to receive my full travel per diem?” The agreement to pilot this program requires certain steps to occur prior to the full per diem effective date. Those steps include:

1. Initial requirement for the parties to meet and discuss within ninety (90) days of the effective date of the 2021 collective bargaining agreement. We recently concluded our first meeting and it was very productive and on schedule.
2. The pilot program is planned to begin no later than six (6) months after the conclusion of our ongoing, scheduled meetings and discussions.
3. The pilot program will last three (3) years from the first day it is implemented and employees begin receiving their full per diem.
4. The per diem provisions of the MOU are applicable to all APWU crafts.
5. The APWU will announce the effective date for implementation of the pilot program on the APWU web site.

Which Promotion Eligibility Register is right for me?

As it relates to filling vacant maintenance positions, there are three types of registers; In-craft, In-service, and Entrance. It is important to understand the difference between the three when reading the new MOU Re: In-Service Examinations, Register and Eligibility Ratings. First and foremost, existing maintenance craft employees, under the In-craft process, can test or update at any time for all occupational groups within their installation. The only restriction is that there is a 6-month waiting period before an employee can update again.

On the other hand, In-service testing and In-service registers open once per year during the month of March and is commonly referred to as the “In-service Open Season.” In-service testing for eligibility ratings and placement on In-service registers (and for test results to be placed in an employee’s eOPF) applies to (1) non-maintenance craft, career employees that are interested in entering the maintenance craft, and (2) existing maintenance craft employees that are interested in receiving eligibility ratings for occupational groups not found within their installation.

Lastly, Entrance registers are for people not yet hired by the Postal Service that want to enter the maintenance craft, and for existing, non-career employees who are interested in entering the maintenance craft. See below the verbiages from USPS Handbook EL 304 in part.

USPS Handbook EL 304 Maintenance Selection System (MSS) Processes

There are three different processes for filling maintenance positions in the Postal Service: In-craft, in-service, and entrance.

In-craft Process

Career maintenance craft employees are given first priority in filling vacancies in the maintenance craft. Article 38 of the USPS/APWU National Agreement defines a career maintenance craft employee referred to in the MSS as an *in-craft* employee.

In-service Process

When it becomes apparent that in-craft procedures will not meet present or future staffing needs, the Postal Service looks to career employees who are qualified to fill the maintenance positions.

Entrance Process

When it becomes apparent that neither in-craft nor in-service procedures will meet present or future staffing needs, the Postal Service recruits outside applicants.

In summary we highly recommend that all Maintenance employees should apply for the In-Craft Promotion Eligibility Register only. After all, every day is an open season for the Maintenance Craft employees. Contact your Local Officers then your National Business Agent for RMSS related question. ■

Still Standing Still Fighting



Director Michael Foster and Assistant Director Kenneth Prinz

To the MVS members who were not yet hired during the Craft struggles at the turn of the 21st Century, when the Postal Service instituted numerous initiatives and programs designed to reduce Postal Vehicle Service (PVS), and Highway Contract Route (HCR) transportation costs, welcome. To the numerous Postal Support Employees who have been hired and converted to career status as a result of the overwhelmingly ratified Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), welcome.

As we move forward with a new agreement, it is important that the next generation of postal workers understands the past as we look to the future. We need to know our craft history and the challenges we have faced.

The Breakthrough Productivity Initiative (BPI) was introduced to the Craft in the early 2000s. This type of program, designed to cut costs, ultimately resulted in drivers in various parts of the country being excessed under Article 12 to other crafts in 2009. Some MVS members, tired of the uncertainty of being a postal truck driver, never returned to the Craft even after the union was successful in resolving many of these disputes.

During the years of 2010-2016, the Postal Service's intentions, again, were to greatly reduce PVS employees.

In 2004, the MVS Craft took to National Arbitration a case in which management failed to provide the Union with the HCR renewal notice required in Article 32.2 Highway Movement of Mail. The Craft sought a standard remedy, when management failed to timely provide the notice. Arbitrator Das ruled that there would not be one remedy but instead that these cases would be decided with the facts and circumstances present in that case.

No matter how management attempts to change or modify the brand and our image, the USPS will forever be classified as a transportation business. We transport mail, plain and simple.

In the 2010 Contract Negotiations, the APWU and the MVS Craft responded to the USPS cries of financial woes and dire straits, and negotiated a CBA that gave billions of dollars in work rules and salary concessions in exchange for the promise of bringing work and jobs into the bargaining units.

Management's promises made in the 2010 agreement remain unfulfilled, as the USPS took the money and ran.

AS WE MOVE FORWARD WITH A NEW AGREEMENT, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE NEXT GENERATION OF POSTAL WORKERS UNDERSTANDS THE PAST AS WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE. WE NEED TO KNOW OUR CRAFT HISTORY AND THE CHALLENGES WE HAVE FACED.

During 2012-2013, management attempted to contract out the entire PVS operations in California because they didn't want to invest in vehicle modifications to meet emissions regulations in the trucking industry. When that effort failed, the USPS notified the APWU that they were considering under Article 32 contracting out 162 PVS sites, which were essentially the entire PVS operations throughout the country except for the Bulk Mail Centers, (now known as NDCs).

Arbitrator Goldberg rejected this action and ruled that the USPS couldn't consider contracting out PVS until they first complied with the 2010 MVS Jobs MOU.

In 2016, the Craft again went to National Arbitration to challenge numerous violations of Article 32.2. In this dispute, the MVS Craft challenged the fact that the USPS had renewed 212 HCRs without notice to the Union. Although the 212 routes had been either consolidated or eliminated, there remained 110 routes still being operated. Arbitrator Das awarded these routes, which have become known as the "Das 110", to be performed by PVS for the term of a regular contract.

Thus began an era of positive changes for the Craft -- employees were hired, more vehicles were purchased, and PVS operations were established in installations that previously never had PVS.

During these trying times, we have continued to extol the work ethic, reliability, and value of MVS Craft employees, with the advantage of having these duties performed in-house. To quote Winston Churchill, "those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it."

"Looking forward, fighting back." ■

SOUTHERN REGIONAL COORDINATOR

ALABAMA | ARKANSAS | FLORIDA | GEORGIA | LOUISIANA | MISSISSIPPI | NORTH CAROLINA |
SOUTH CAROLINA | OKLAHOMA | TEXAS | TENNESSEE



Kenneth Beasley, Southern Regional Coordinator

The Importance of Critical Thinking and Common Sense

I felt the need for the above title in order to raise the awareness and consciences of our union members, with the hope that doing so can have some influence and effect on our members. We all in some way participate in the political process and have concerns of how it effects our lives and the lives of our family. It can seem sometimes that the whole world is losing their desire for decency, character, and integrity. I have to turn off and stop listening to social media, that is often times saturated with misinformation and disinformation, that leaves many of us in a state of confusion. There are many narcissists out there who are leading people astray for their own selfish reasons and it has nothing to do with improving you and your family's quality of life. Think about what you are thinking about. Beware of the gaslighters who are cunning and persuasive to unsuspecting and agreeable people.

Most people want the truth. We all have an inner compass that tell us the difference between right and wrong. Sometimes we suppress our common sense or override it. The right thing and the truth can be contaminated with a lot of untruths. Weigh the evidence, examine it closely, and then come to your conclusion. What we may think to be complex, may not be so complex if you just take the common-sense approach. When carefully thinking your decision through, make sure that it's for the benefit and good of all.

Every day in the workplace, at home and in public, we ought to be in a sustained mode of trying to make things better if we want a successful and brighter future for postal workers. If we use critical common sense, we could cure some of the ills. Don't be afraid to speak truth to power!

The other reason I write on this subject is because we have so much divisiveness and unnecessary political turmoil in America. The midterm political elections are coming up and I hope that our union members and their families will turn out again like they did in recent elections. Our union members have seen the positive results of a good contract, postal reform, the appointment of

a pro-labor Supreme Court Justice, and the new Juneteenth holiday.

Let's Organize and Have Fun Doing It

Organizing our coworkers on the workroom floor will empower our members with more confidence when facing management and politicians – both friend and foe. APWU seeks to galvanize the members and prove that there is “strength is in numbers.”

MOST PEOPLE WANT THE TRUTH. WE ALL HAVE AN INNER COMPASS THAT TELL US THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG. SOMETIMES WE SUPPRESS OUR COMMON SENSE OR OVERRIDE IT. THE RIGHT THING AND THE TRUTH CAN BE CONTAMINATED WITH A LOT OF UNTRUTHS.

All APWU members should join the movement to sign up non-members.. There is no one style or way to get them to join. Many have their own unique way of soliciting and persuading coworkers to get them to understand the benefits of being a union member. The hardnosed non-member may say something negative; you should have hundreds of things positive to say back to them. Tell a story of the many important union victories, successful grievances, and negotiations that they benefited from. Try to convince them it's their moral obligation to join the union.

My fellow coordinators Sharyn Stone-Central Region, AJ Jones-Eastern Region, Tiffany Foster-North Eastern Region, and Omar Gonzalez-Western Region are asking for each union member to help facilitate a robust organization drive and have fun doing it. Now let us all “do the right thing and let us all “keep the faith.”

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.

The most important member is you – the member that is reading this article. Belonging to the Union is the best bargain that your money can buy. You may ask, “How is that?” We fight for you when management does what they want to instead of going by the contract. Other benefits are work hours, working conditions, annual leave, sick leave, seniority rights, overtime pay, job security. Management cannot come out of the office and just tell you to leave and not ever come back. That is a big deal. So many people on other jobs are let go at the snap of someone’s fingers. Not with our job! What a bang for your buck just by paying union dues. Other folks on other jobs would line up around the corner to have what we have by belonging to the union. So, why don’t you want to be a member? You will have people fighting for you that you don’t even know. So, sign up and make your voice count.

--Myrtle Nichol,
Arkansas Postal Workers Union
Second District Vice President
The Arkansas Postal Worker

I am five years into my career, still a baby in post office terms! But the knowledge I have gained through my Local 380 membership is priceless and has helped me to understand the necessity of the tireless and often thankless work that is done on our behalf. I cannot stress enough the importance of learning and knowing your rights as an employee and union member. This knowledge empowers you to be able to have a voice in the room, contribute directly to the decisions that affect your work life, and gives you the platform to hold those in charge accountable when things go wrong. Whether it is negotiating contracts, advocating for us through grievances and EEOs, or doing their best to keep us updated on the latest COVID-19 developments, our union is only as strong and effective as its membership. So it is my hope that this publication also highlights our strengths as a collective and increases our individual engagement so we continue to progress and affect change well into the future.

--Jasmine Cuffee
Albuquerque (NM) Local 380 Editor
Union Writes

Unfortunately, our leaders in this local are not getting any younger and we stand to lose a few great, knowledgeable representatives due to retirement in the next couple of years. Who among you is going to step up and fight for your rights? Who is willing to write statements and start fighting with us? We are stronger together, people. Become a steward, take some initiative and start working to protect our hard-earned rights and benefits! It takes more than a handful of stewards to accomplish the work that needs to be done. If you are already a steward, please take a hard look at yourself and make sure you are doing all you can do as well. There are training opportunities and all sorts of ways to pitch in more. And as you always do – keep fighting the good fight!

--Jennifer Kowalczyk
480-481 Area Local (MI) Clerk Craft Director
The Communicator

Our union works hard for us, very hard. But without them at the front line fighting for our jobs and work, where would we be? Kellogg’s was in the news recently because of a union strike. Their employees were fighting for fair treatment after being overworked and mistreated during the ‘Essential Workers Only’ time period. Kellogg’s had planned to reward them for their hard work by shipping jobs to Mexico, but public support and their strong union helped to stop those plans. If you’re reading this newsletter, you’re a part of our union and I salute you for it. Stay in and remain in. Attend meetings when you can.... Volunteer when the opportunity arises... The more people lifting, the lighter the load gets.

--Michael Greene
Western Michigan Area Local Editor
WMAL Voice



Issues Facing Women Veterans

Women have served in the United States military with distinction for generations. Since the Revolutionary War, long before women could formally serve, hundreds of women disguised themselves as men to serve in the armed forces. Thousands more served in critical roles such as battlefield medicine and intelligence. Hundreds of thousands of women answered the call to serve in the World Wars, and their invaluable contributions were recognized when women became permanent members of the armed forces in 1948.

Today, there are two million women veterans living in the United States. Women are serving today in record numbers, accounting for nearly 20% of active-duty military personnel, and 10% of the current veteran population, which is projected to grow to 18% of the total veteran population by 2040.

With these statistics on the rise, an increasing numbers of women are turning to the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) to address post-deployment health issues and readjustment challenges.

VA, along with other institutions within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), are required to keep pace with the rapid growth of the women veteran population, and ensure that they have equity in access to resources. Although VA has made concerted efforts to ramp up services to meet the increasing demand, they have struggled to meet the unique health care and support needs of women coming to VA for care. Despite much of their recent progress, some women veterans continue to face significant barriers accessing health care and other earned benefits, and still do not receive proper recognition for their service.

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) raised several issues in a 2014 report titled *Women Veterans: The Long Journey Home*. As a result, the 114th and 115th Congresses enacted comprehensive legislation that focused exclusively on women veterans, which included provisions specific to issues and recommendations for changes that DAV suggested.

In the 116th Congress, there remained a heavy focus on women veterans' issues, which resulted in 11 congress-

sional hearings, and passage of several important pieces of legislation pertaining to women veterans' health care services and infrastructure; suicide prevention and mental health; and the creation of an Office of Women's Health within the VHA to oversee women's health programs as well as counseling and legal services.

Additionally, in 2019, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee established the bipartisan Women Veterans Task Force, and entrusted it with increasing the visibility of the two million women who have served in the U.S. military and to promote inclusivity and equitable access to comprehensive healthcare, benefits, education and economic opportunity, and other federal resources, particularly at VA.

The primary concern is creating a cultural transformation in which women veterans are visibly recognized for their service to the nation, and have a sense of belonging. In order to access the resources that are available to them, the VA must first foster an environment that is safe and respectful. The Task Force develops policy specifically focused on supporting women veterans, and on transforming existing systems and institutions with an eye on equity, through outreach, oversight, and legislation. ■

Women Veterans Task Force Policy Priorities:

1. **Culture:** Ensuring a welcoming and inclusive culture at the VA
2. **Healthcare:** Providing equity and access to VA healthcare, including women-specific care, such as gynecology and obstetrics
3. **Economic Opportunity:** Improving economic opportunities for women veterans and their families
4. **Benefits Access:** Guaranteeing that women veterans have equal access to VA benefits, including education, disability, and pension benefits.

A safe environment with women veterans-centered policy, and the transformation of existing systems to better ensure equity among this growing population, is long overdue.

Source(s): Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Disabled American Veterans (DAV)

LABOR NEWS



More 'Grande' Victories for Starbucks Workers United

The organizing at Starbucks locations, chronicled in these pages over the past few editions, continues at a remarkable pace. Workers have voted to join the Starbucks Workers United at nearly three dozen Starbucks stores since the first SBU victory in December at a Buffalo location.

At press time, the union has now won 35 of 37 elections at Starbucks stores, with NLRB petitions filed at more than 120 additional stores.

In a show of the increasing militancy of the organizing moment, SBU members at stores in Kansas and Washington led strikes at Starbucks stores before they had even won their recognition elections. The union there cited poor staffing and ongoing union-busting as reasons for their strike.

Recent union wins include workers at Starbucks in Pittsburgh; Richmond, VA; Baltimore; and at Starbucks' flagship Seattle Roastery, joining the list of unionized Starbucks stores. ■

California Grocery Workers Threaten Strike, Win Big Contract

More than 47,000 grocery store workers in Southern and Central California have made real gains in their latest contract with a number of major supermarket chains after threatening a major strike.

UFCW members across seven locals were in joint bargaining with supermarket chains: Ralphs, Albertsons, Vons, and Pavilions for their first contract since COVID hit their industry particularly hard.

"The pandemic and its deadly impact on our communities may not be over, but the essential workers who keep California's grocery stores running have proven it is possible to secure a fair deal when driven by solidarity," the UFCW committee said in a statement.

"Grocery store workers have served our customers throughout the most difficult moments of our lifetime," said UFCW Manny Estrada. "We've kept the stores open and have contributed to the companies' success. This is a well-deserved contract." ■

Workers at Apple Stores Joining Unions

Workers at Apple stores in Atlanta and New York City are racing to win the first union election at the technology giant's retail stores.

In New York, workers are organizing as the "Fruit Stand Workers United" with Workers United at the Apple's flagship Grand Central Station store.

In Atlanta, more than 70% of the 100 salespeople, technicians, creatives, and operations specialists have signed authorization cards with the Communications Workers of America, which represents many workers in tech.

"Apple is a profoundly positive place to work, but we know that the company can better live up to their ideals and so we're excited to be joining together with our coworkers to bring Apple to the negotiating table and make this an even better place to work," said Derrick Bowles, Apple employee and CWA member.





UE Grad Student Workers Shaking Up Academia

In a massive new organizing victory, nearly four thousand graduate workers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology recently won their union and organized with the UE as the MIT-Grad Students Union (MIT-GSU).

The MIT graduate workers organized to address a number of concerns they faced at the prestigious university, including workplace harassment, poor pay, housing insecurity, and lack of access to healthcare.

Many of the MIT graduate workers are research assistants, who not only conduct their own research, but are also responsible for teaching and grading many undergraduate courses. Despite their heavy workload, many faced uncertainty about their future at the university and many struggled to afford housing in expensive Cambridge, MA.

MIT-GSU member JS Tan wrote in the MIT paper *The Tech* about how the organizing drive will have an impact beyond the grad worker's time at MIT. He said, "We are scientists, technologists, designers, artists, writers, and tinkerers, and we will spend our post-MIT careers working at cutting edge technology institutions all over the world — from global biotech firms like Moderna or Pfizer to bootstrap startups building the future of the internet. We're inspired by all of our colleagues who will move forward together not only to win our election, but also to bring the community and solidarity that we've built over the course of this campaign to workplaces all over the world."

Elsewhere around the country, UE-represented grad workers are leading a recognition strike at the University of Indiana Bloomington. Their 2,500-member bargaining unit voted to unionize with the UE last year, but still hasn't been recognized by the school administration. UE grad workers at Kenyon College in Ohio are also on strike, fighting for better pay, more training opportunities and more stability for grad workers. ■



Sacramento Teachers & Support Staff Strike Victory

Teachers and other school workers in Sacramento concluded an 8-day strike in Sacramento with a tremendous new tentative agreement.

Organized with the Sacramento Teachers Union and SEIU Local 1021, the education workers were demanding increasing staffing, additional resources for students, and improvements in pay. Because of a staffing crisis, before the strike, more than 10,000 students were without a permanent teacher.

"From start to finish, our members have been united in the belief that schools should be adequately staffed with a teacher in front of every classroom," says SCTA President David Fisher. "We stayed strong, and as a result we now have a contract that will help us attract and retain staff and provide our members with modest raises." ■

Negotiations in Rail Heat Up

Ten railroad worker unions, bargaining jointly as the Coordinated Bargaining Coalition (CBC) are in a heated struggle for a good new agreement with Class 1 Railroads. The unions, collectively representing more than 100,000 workers, have been in negotiations with the railroads, represented by the National Carriers' Conference Committee (NCCC), for more than two years.

The CBC has alleged that the NCCC refuses to bargain in good faith. The NCCC's latest pay offer amounted to a \$600 bonus for workers for the rest of 2022 that would have to be paid back should the parties come to a later agreement. The CBC unanimously rejected this offer, noting that members have carried the railroads through the pandemic and onto record profits. They panned the offer as "somewhere between a loan and a payday advance."

The industry is facing severe staffing shortages, as years of cost-cutting measures in service of a "just-in-time" model have hollowed out portions of the workforce. The rail unions are calling for the parties to proceed to arbitration to advance the stalled talks.



Judy Beard, Director

Postal Reform Signed into Law

On April 6, President Joe Biden signed the Postal Service Reform Act into law. This was the result of over 15 years of fighting for comprehensive postal reform.

At the signing ceremony, President Biden was extremely complimentary of postal workers and the Postal Service, stating, “today, we enshrine in law our recognition that the Postal Service is fundamental to our economy, to our democracy, to our health, and the very sense of who we are as a nation. And this bill — this bill recognizes the Postal Service is a public service, and we’re ensuring that it can continue to serve all Americans for generations to come.”

A bipartisan group of Congressional leaders, who were critical in this legislation passing, were in attendance along with representatives from the four postal unions and other stakeholders.

APWU Labor 2022 Kickoff

On April 19, 2022, your Legislative and Political Department hosted a virtual Labor 2022 Midterm Election Kickoff to provide updates on the political landscape as well as an overview of the APWU Labor 2022 program.

THE 2022 MIDTERM ELECTIONS
WILL DETERMINE WHICH PARTY
WILL CONTROL THE HOUSE AND THE
SENATE IN THE 118TH CONGRESS AND,
ULTIMATELY, WHAT ISSUES BECOME A
PRIORITY IN THE NEW CONGRESS.

Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard addressed attendees and stressed that, “while we continue to celebrate the victory of Postal Reform, it is vital that we turn our attention to the 2022 midterm election. Our fight for justice never ceases, and part of that fight includes encouraging our union family to vote and electing pro-worker, pro-Postal Service candidates.”

The 2022 Midterm elections will determine which party will control the House and the Senate in the 118th Congress and, ultimately, what issues become a priority in the new Congress. Issues like workers’ rights, voting



APWU President Mark Dimondstein and Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard attend the Postal Reform signing ceremony at the White House.

rights, jobs with good benefits and living wages, LGBTQ+ rights, reproductive rights, infrastructure, and climate are at risk. That’s why APWU is making sure members are registered and ready to vote, beginning that effort with this kickoff event.

APWU President Mark Dimondstein helped to kick off the event with motivational remarks around engaging in the election process to protect voting rights. The APWU Legislative and Political Department outlined the APWU internal Labor 2022 program and highlighted voter education and engagement efforts. A host of dynamic and deeply knowledgeable speakers participated in the event. The first speaker, Maggie Koebbe, provided an overview of the AFL-CIO’s Labor 2022 program and how affiliated unions can plug in to get-out-the-vote work being done by State Federations and Central Labor Councils. After her, Michael Li of the Brennan Center provided an in-depth presentation on partisan redistricting and its impact on competitive elections. Mindy Holmes, APWU’s General Counsel, gave an in-depth presentation on the Hatch Act.

Postal workers have always played a critical role in elections throughout our country’s history. In 2022, we’re continuing that legacy and mobilizing our fellow members to vote and to encourage their friends and family to do the same. We encourage you to begin now by checking your voter registration status. You can find resources on that, APWU’s Labor 2022 program, and how to get involved, by visiting apwu.org/labor-2022. ■



Anna Smith, Director

We can do more!

Most locals and states across the country have gotten very accustomed to, and have a process for, bringing new members into the APWU during New Employee Orientations. However, using orientation alone as our only avenue for organizing simply won't sustain us. As a union, we have to deepen our commitment to organizing at every level of the union. It's the key to keeping our union strong, and growing even stronger.

We should be proud of what our union has accomplished in the past. Inspired by the courageous strikers in 1970, our union came together out of five separate postal unions. Since then, we've transformed postal jobs into decent, family-sustaining jobs. Our union has led fights to preserve, protect and expand the Postal Service. We've defeated attempts to privatize the Postal Service, to outsource our work, to excess our jobs and more.

But there are many more struggles to come that will undoubtedly require a strong union to defend our jobs and advance the interest of postal workers and our families.

There is no field of work left untouched when it comes to technological advancements replacing work that was once performed by the workers. The Postal Service is no exception. It doesn't seem all that long ago when we were spending hours sorting letters manually. Preserving our jobs, work, rights, benefits, and our futures can and should be top priority of every employee of the USPS.

The threat of privatization is still present. While we defeated a serious privatization attempt in 2018, there are still many on Capitol Hill prepared to break up the USPS and sell it for parts.

The postal reform legislation was a key recent victory. We ultimately prevailed because the union was strong and members lobbied Congress for more than a decade for the bill. Now, we must continue the fight to expand services and deepen the Postal Service's role in our communities.

These victories, and the challenges to come, will require us to keep our union strong, and to grow even stronger.

Every member like you and I have already made the decision to stand together to maintain and build on gains we

have made. Yet, today we still have coworkers who have yet to make the decision to stand with us.

Make no mistake, any coworker of ours who chooses to remain a non-member is making the decision to go against everything we are fighting for. As we stand together as APWU Members, every non-member is standing against us.

OUR GOAL FOR THE BUILDING UNION POWER CAMPAIGN IS TO REACH THOSE NON-MEMBERS IN NEW WAYS, TO SHOW THEM WHY A STRONGER UNION IS IN THEIR INTEREST, AND WHY GROWING THE UNION'S POWER BENEFITS ALL OF US.

When you and I stand for living wages so we can provide for ourselves and our families, the non-member is standing against us.

When you and I stand for safe working conditions, the non-member is standing against us.

When you and I stand for affordable health care for our families, the non-member is standing against us.

When you and I stand for Sick, Annual and Family Medical leave, the non-member is standing against us.

When you and I stand for work hours and schedules that permit for home life, the non-member is standing against us.

I realize some say that we have coworkers who will never join. This doesn't mean we don't stop asking. It doesn't mean that we let them come to work and pretend they work in a non-union environment.

Our goal for the **Building Union Power** campaign is to reach those non-members in new ways, to show them why a stronger union is in their interest, and why growing the union's power benefits all of us.

So get out there, talk to your coworkers about what matters to them, about why the union matters to you, and let's keep **Building Union Power** for years to come. ■



Joyce B. Robinson, Director

Your Rights Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act

The text in this article is from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

The Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) promotes the accuracy, fairness, and privacy of information in the files of consumer reporting agencies. It requires that consumers must be told if information in their file has been used against them. Companies that use a credit report to deny application for credit, insurance, or employment – or to take another adverse action against consumers – must tell them, and must give the name, address, and phone number of the agency that provided the information.

A “SECURITY FREEZE” ON YOUR CREDIT REPORT PROHIBITS A CONSUMER REPORTING AGENCY FROM RELEASING INFORMATION IN YOUR CREDIT REPORT WITHOUT YOUR EXPRESS AUTHORIZATION. IT’S DESIGNED TO PREVENT CREDIT, LOANS, AND SERVICES FROM BEING APPROVED IN YOUR NAME WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT.

Correcting Inaccurate or Incomplete Information

If you discover inaccurate or incomplete information in your file, write the consumer reporting agency, list the name of the company, and the information that is inaccurate. After the company receives notice of a dispute, it must investigate, review the relevant information, and report the results back to the credit reporting agency. If the company finds the disputed information is inaccurate, it must notify all three nationwide credit reporting companies so they can correct the information in your file. See www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore for an explanation of dispute procedures.

A Security Freeze and/or Fraud Alert

A “security freeze” on your credit report prohibits a consumer reporting agency from releasing information in your credit report without your express authorization. It’s designed to prevent credit, loans, and services from being approved in your name without your consent.

Be aware that using a security freeze may delay the approval of your application regarding a new loan, credit, mortgage, or the extension of credit. As an alternative to a security freeze, you can place an initial one (I) year or extended fraud alert on your file. The business is required to take steps to verify the consumer’s identity before extending new credit.

How Long Does Negative Information Stay on Your Credit Report?

FCRA places time limits on some information that appears on the report, such as 10 years for bankruptcies and seven years for civil judgments and paid tax liens. Criminal convictions have no limitation; they remain on the credit report indefinitely. A lawsuit or an unpaid judgment against you can be reported for seven years or until the statute of limitations runs out, whichever is longer.

Obtaining Free Credit Reports

All consumers are entitled to one free disclosure every 12 months, upon request, from each nationwide credit bureau and from nationwide specialty consumer reporting agencies. To order your report, visit www.annualcreditreport.com or call 1-877-322-8228 toll free. Ordering a report from a different agency every four months will provide frequent updates and help ensure the accuracy of the information.

Beware of “Imposter” Websites

Only annualcreditreport.com is authorized to give the free annual credit report under the law. Other websites that claim to offer “free credit reports” and “free credit services” are often not legitimate. Services are charged to a credit card after a trial period. **If you get an email, see a pop-up ad, or get a phone call from someone claiming to be from annualcreditreport.com or the three nationwide credit reporting companies, do not reply or click on that link.**

Many companies use information that’s in your credit reports to send you unwanted offers of credit and/or insurance that you did not request. You may opt out of receiving this information by contacting the nationwide credit bureaus at 1-888-5-OPTOUT (1-888-567-8688). ■



Daleo Freeman, Director

New Beginning, New Goals for Human Relations

I would like to begin by thanking President Dimondstein and the National Executive Board for appointing me to the position of Director of Human Relations. I extend a very special thank you as well to all the members of the APWU for supporting your union and the collective spirit that motivates all of us representing you.

There is much work to be done in this department. Before we get to the goals that we intend to accomplish, it's helpful to revisit the constitutional duties of the Human Relations Department. The APWU Constitution states the Director "shall prepare and direct programs in the area of Equal Opportunity, Civic, Community Service and all other related programs." The Director shall also make recommendations to the President for Representatives to handle OWCP and EEO cases on an as-needed basis.

It is my goal as Human Relations Director to build a National Network System across the country to meet members where they are. There is so much more to representing the membership and the Union than simply utilizing the grievance procedure. So, in accordance with the constitution our department will strive to continue to protect of our members' rights and benefits, keep members aware of the available resources to assist them in various needs, and continue to build on the great accomplishments of those directors who came before me. I'll seek to continue the work of former Director Sydney Brooks, who helped lead the way, with others, in combatting discrimination and ushering in an end to apartheid in South Africa; and former Director Sue Carney who fought for the rights of our Veterans and injured members. We will put forth a strong effort into making sure that all the Veterans in our ranks will be recognized for their sacrifices and contribution.

We must continue with these battles and the ones facing us today. It is imperative that we have a nationwide effort to make sure everyone has and uses the various union resources we have to offer. With respect to OWCP, with my input, President Dimondstein will appoint regional resource assistants for OWCP to carry out programs to train,

support and assist locals in the fight to make sure injured employees are fully aware of their rights under the law.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is underutilized and I hope to bring more awareness to the benefits that this program provides. This is a shared priority of the Union and the Postal Service, to provide EAP assistance widely and expeditiously.

THE APWU CONSTITUTION STATES THE DIRECTOR "SHALL PREPARE AND DIRECT PROGRAMS IN THE AREA OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, CIVIC, COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ALL OTHER RELATED PROGRAMS." THE DIRECTOR SHALL ALSO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PRESIDENT FOR REPRESENTATIVES TO HANDLE OWCP AND EEO CASES ON AN AS-NEEDED BASIS.

Another major objective I want to address as the Human Relations Director is the Human Side of what we do. This entails involving members and their families in other organizations, building alliances beyond the APWU to address issues that affect everyone. We must continue to forge a nationwide coalition that makes sure the public knows that the labor movement is integral to everything they do. Also, there is value in making sure that we all, as union members, are accessible and available to help all of our sisters and brothers no matter where they are and provide the necessary support from the union.

In conclusion, I look forward to applying my experience as a 28-year Postal Employee, 25-year Union Advocate, and my 4-plus terms as a Local and State union leader to this new position. This experience has led me to understand that everyone must be included in the process and your ideas about how to better expand our Human Relations Department are more than welcome. Let's continue to forge ahead in solidarity. ■



Nancy Olumekor, Director

What is Disability Retirement?

A disability retirement annuity is a benefit provided to protect you when you are no longer able to provide useful and efficient service in your current grade or pay level because of a medical condition. Disability retirement should be a last resort, and is appropriate only when reasonable efforts to preserve the person's employment have failed. The basic requirements are:

- 18 months' federal civilian service - which is creditable under FERS.
- A medical condition, which is defined as a health impairment resulting from a disease or injury, including a psychiatric disease.
- Become disabled for useful and efficient service in current position.
- Disability must last more than year.
- USPS must verify that they cannot accommodate your disabling condition. A deficiency in service with respect to performance, conduct or attendance, OR in the absence of service deficiency, showing that your medical condition is incompatible with either useful service or retention in the position.
- Must apply before separation or within one year thereafter.
- Must apply for Social Security disability benefits when you apply for FERS disability. Social Security disability rules are different from those of federal retirement. You can contact Social Security by telephone, online at www.ssa.gov or visit an SSA office.

You must contact HR Shared Services Center (HRSSC) to request an application for Disability Retirement. HRSSC will mail you instructions along with forms to apply for disability retirement and the medical documentation form(s). All of these forms should be returned by mail with a tracking number as proof of submission to HRSSC. Once HRSSC receives the completed *Applicant's Statement of Disability* then a second booklet containing the *Application for Immediate Retirement* is mailed to you. Make sure you check "Yes" to Question 8, "Is this application for disability retirement" on the *Application for Immediate Retirement*. When you receive this

second booklet, schedule an appointment for retirement counseling with HRSSC.

OPM considers the documentary evidence you, your physician, and your agency provide. Your claim can be allowed only if the evidence established that you meet all of the criteria. OPM will review the application and contact you or the employer, if necessary, before a final opinion is rendered. If disallowed, you will also be given information about requesting reconsideration.

Disability benefits under FERS vary depending on the retiree's age and amount of service at retirement. FERS disability retirement benefits are recomputed after the first 12 months and again at age 62, if the annuitant is under age 62 at the time of disability retirement.

A final important point to remember is if you are under the age and service requirements for immediate retirement when you apply for disability retirement, then your OPM annuity will be reduced by a portion of the Social Security benefit. Therefore, you must notify OPM once you are approved for disability by Social Security (SSA). If you do not provide notice of SSA approval, OPM will ultimately be notified you are receiving benefits from SSA, then you will be notified of an overpayment and given a notice to repay monies to OPM.

Contact RetireeQandA@apwu.org if you have additional questions on disability retirement. ■

Older Americans Month-May 2022

The 2022 theme is Age My Way, focusing on aging in place - how older adults can plan to stay in their homes and live independently for as long as possible. This is an opportunity for all of us to explore the many ways older adults can remain in and be involved with their communities.

SAVE THE DATE

APWU Pre-Convention Retirees Conference

Saturday and Sunday, August 13-14, 2022 at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center in National Harbor, MD.
Retirees are encouraged to register by Thursday, June 19, 2022.

Asthma and Seasonal Triggers



Sarah Jane Rodriguez, Director

When you have asthma, it's important to know what is happening in your airways, as well as common asthma symptoms. Understanding asthma symptoms can help you know what your triggers are, when you need quick-relief medicines, and when you are having a medical emergency. There are three changes in your airways when you have asthma:

1. Swelling inside the airways
2. Excess mucus clogs the airways
3. Muscles tighten and squeeze around the airways

This swelling, clogging, and muscle tightening makes your airways smaller or narrower. This makes it harder for air to flow easily through your airways, and it becomes harder to breathe. This causes asthma symptoms, also known as an **asthma episode, flare-up, or attack**. It can happen at any time. Mild symptoms may only last a few minutes, while more severe asthma symptoms can last hours or days.

Common signs and symptoms of asthma include:

- Shortness of breath
- Cough
- Chest tightness or pain
- Wheeze (a whistling sound when you breathe)
- Waking at night due to asthma symptoms

Not everyone with asthma has the same symptoms. You may only have one symptom, or you may have many symptoms.

For many people, certain seasons and asthma go together. Triggers, such as seasonal allergens, play a large role. In fact, seasonal asthma is often referred to as **allergic asthma**. If you have asthma, you may have noticed that it worsens during certain seasons. For some people, spring, summer, and fall may be particularly challenging times of the year. That's because seasonal allergens may trigger asthmatic symptoms.

When you're allergic to something, your immune system perceives the allergen as an invader, which must be attacked. In response to the allergen, your immune system produces immunoglobulin E (IgE). IgE is an antibody that triggers the release of histamine when allergens activate it. Histamine causes allergic symptoms such as a runny, itchy nose; watery, itchy eyes; and sneezing.

In people with asthma, this process may also impact their lungs and airways, causing asthmatic symptoms.

Common triggers of seasonal asthma include:

- **Pollen** – trees, grasses and weeds
- **Mold and Mildew** – both indoor and outdoor
- **Cold Weather** – can force you indoors where you're more vulnerable to dust mites, cockroaches, pet dander and mold
- **Hot Weather** – both hot and dry or hot and humid

How can the APWU Health Plan help?

If you have seasonal asthma, your doctor can create a treatment plan geared towards prevention and treatment of allergic asthma attacks. The medications used may include a combination of over-the-counter (OTC) solutions, and prescribed drugs.

If you have the High Option or the Consumer Driven Option:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing and treatment, including materials (such as allergy serum) • Allergy injections | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-network: 15% of the Plan allowance |
|--|---|

Call your doctor about seasonal asthma if you:

- need a rescue inhaler daily, or several times a week
- have a cough that won't go away
- get dizzy or feel lightheaded
- take medication that's unable to control shortness of breath or wheezing

Seek urgent medical care if you:

- develop a blue color on your lips and fingernails
- can't talk or walk at your normal pace without getting winded
 - experience rapid breathing;
 - experience flaring nostrils upon inhalation. ■

Sources: <https://www.aafa.org>
<https://www.mayoclinic.org>
<https://www.healthline.com>

Group Legal Services Plan



Simple, Personal & Affordable Legal Services

- ★ Comprehensive coverage for services of a personal nature.
- ★ Identity Theft Coverage.
- ★ Coverage for spouse and dependents included.
- ★ Over 3,500 Panel Attorneys nationwide.

Consider what it would cost for:

- A Divorce
- Writing a Will
- Buying / Selling Your Home
- Identity Theft Services
- Adoption / Child Custody
- Contesting a Speeding Ticket
- Being Sued

OPEN
ENROLLMENT
MATERIAL
WILL BE
MAILED
SOON

ACCEPTING ENROLLMENTS: Aug. 1 to Aug. 31st, 2022

Call to enroll over the phone or refer to our website for more information.

Dental Insurance Plan



Our Plan Will Keep You Smiling :)

- ★ Members can utilize any dentist they choose, this means **keeping your current dentist**.
- ★ APWU Health Plan members automatically receive a **7.5% premium reduction** off of this plan's rates.
- ★ \$1,500 calendar year maximum per insured person for all covered services.

2 Great Choices!

After deductibles and other requirements are met this Plan will pay:

High Option

- 100% for preventive services
- 80% for basic services
- 50% for major services
- 50% for orthodontic services

Low Option

- 100% for preventive services
- 50% for basic services
- 50% for major services
- 50% for orthodontic services

Open Year Round for Enrollment

Dental Plan underwritten by Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, New York, New York



Voluntary Benefits Plan®

Providing benefits to **APWU Members and their families** since 1986.

For more information on this and other benefit plans, visit us at **www.VoluntaryBenefitsPlan.com**

...or Call us at **1-877-229-0451** Monday through Friday 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. EST

VOLUNTARY BENEFITS PLAN • P.O. BOX 12009 • CHESHIRE, CT 06410

