

THE AMERICAN

Postal Worker

APWU

March/April 2024



ENERGIZE!
MOBILIZE!
ORGANIZE!

**For a Strong,
New Contract**

**Building
Union Power
Organizing Drive**

**Building a Better
Postal Service:
Staffing Up to Serve
Our Communities**

**The 27th Biennial
National Convention**

**Protecting Jobs and
Service in the Face
of Network Changes**

ALL ON DECK TO FIGHT FOR OUR FUTURE



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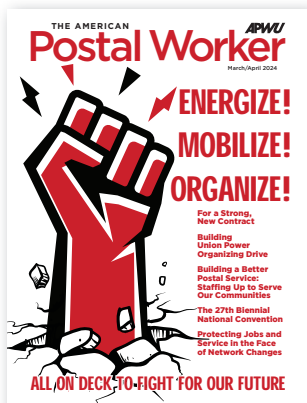
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ABOUT THE COVER:

It's all on deck for APWU members in 2024. Just as a fist is stronger than its individual fingers, we are called to action together to energize, mobilize, and organize for the fights we face in the year ahead.

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“The Only Constant is Change”

– Greek Philosopher Heraclitus

PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN

Postal management’s network “modernization” plan, mostly driven by changing communications and advancing technology, is underway. Members are legitimately concerned about its impact on jobs and service.

You deserve honest and fact-based assessments and perspectives from your national union leaders.

Whether positive or negative, operational changes are not new.

For generations, much of the mail was manually sorted on trains. By the early 1970s the Railway Mail Service ended, and distribution moved to fixed buildings.

The advent of mechanization introduced the Letter Sorter Machines (LSMs) where operators keyed one letter every second. Crews of 17 clerks replaced twice as many manual sorters. There were around 100,000 LSM clerks. LSMs were eventually replaced with bar code and optical character reader (OCR) machines. Today, two Delivery Bar Code Sorter (DBCS) operators can sort more mail in an hour than the entire LSM crew.

In the 1990s, tens of thousands of clerks worked in over 50 Remote Encoding Centers (RECs) typing in information when OCRs were unable to read the addresses. With advancing technologies, only one REC is now needed.

Rapidly advancing technology has become part of our daily lives – from computers, smart phones, and online shopping, to emailing, texting, and electronic bill paying. Massive amounts of information (and misinformation) are just a click away.

While we marvel at this technological revolution, we should recognize that it deeply affects the Postal Service and our jobs.

The internet has drastically reduced mail volume, especially First-Class mail, historically the main driver of postal revenues. At its 2001 peak, First-Class letter volume was 103 billion pieces. Last year, the USPS delivered 46 billion First-Class letters. Even if we are successful in our ongoing efforts to restore “overnight” July 2012 Service Standards, letter volume will continue

to decline (hence the need for expanded postal services.) Few letters now have stamps, negatively impacting retail services. In the last 20 years, the average daily delivery per address has dropped from six pieces to less than three, while e-commerce has caused a welcome increase in packages.

The reality is that changes in the mail mix, from fewer letters and flats, to more packages, result in changes to the workforce, machinery, transportation, and buildings.

We cannot stop the march of changing technology. Those who claim otherwise are doing you a disservice. How to make technology work for workers such as winning a shorter work week is a long-run challenge.

Management has the right to build new buildings and deploy new equipment, *but they do not have the right to delay the mail.*

Management also has the right to move employees to where they need them, *but not in violation of our union contract.*

Through it all, we will keep our “eyes on the prize” – a vibrant public Postal Service for generations to come, with good union jobs and job security. From the local level to national leadership, the APWU will continue to unite with the people against any parts of “modernization” plans that degrade service. We will continue to enforce the contract when it comes to moving and excessing employees. We will stand firm in upcoming negotiations to protect our career job security protections – the no lay-off clause and the 50-mile limit on excessing. We will wage the vital fight for new and expanded postal services. We will continue to share updated information with the members.

Postal workers have faced generations of changes in technology, methods of communications, and far too much mismanagement. But here we stand, union strong! Yes, the seas may be stormy. By linking arms with each other, building unity with labor and community allies, and forthrightly facing the winds of change, the sturdy ship APWU, built over generations of struggle, will chart the path to safe harbor and a bright future for postal workers and the postal public. ■

FIFTH COLA INCREASE ANNOUNCED

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

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

COLAs are separate and in addition to general wage increases. This is the fifth cost-of-living increase under the 2021 contract. The first increase, effective in February 2022, amounted to \$0.63 per hour, or \$1,310.00 annually. The second, effective in August 2022 was \$1.18 per hour, or \$2,455.00 annually. The third, effective in March 2023, was \$0.10

per hour, or \$208.00 annually. The fourth, effective August 26, 2023, was 0.48 per hour, or \$998.00 annually. The total cumulative COLAs received so far during the 2021-2024 National Agreement is \$2.56 per hour, or \$5,325.00 annually.

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

Rising inflation underscores the importance of our negotiated Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLAs) within our union contract, made possible by the strength of our membership. COLAs are our best protection against inflation. Postal workers are some of the few U.S. workers who receive

COLA increases. Even in the postal world, we are the only postal union that has maintained full COLA in our union contract.

Combined COLAs so far under the 2021 Contract now total \$5,325 annually for full time career workers.

Feb 2022	\$1,310
Aug 2022	\$2,455
Mar 2023	\$208
Aug 2023	\$998
Mar 2024	\$354
Total	\$5,325

“Once again, union-won COLAs prove how invaluable our contractual rights are to postal workers and our families,” said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. “We will continue to fight to maintain full COLA provisions in our upcoming contract.”

Go to apwu.org/pay-information to view pay scales. ■



UNION CONTRACT SURVEY:

Make your Voice Heard

The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA or union contract) between the APWU and the USPS sets the wages, hours, rights, benefits, job security and working conditions of APWU-represented postal workers. The current contract expires on Sept. 20, 2024, and preparations are already underway with the official negotiation period beginning this June.

The APWU national negotiating team is guided by formal resolutions that are passed by various local and state organizations, and are debated and voted on at our national conventions. We encourage you to work with your local or state union leadership regarding this formal resolution process.

However, we also want to hear from each and every one of you. Let us know what your priorities are for a new union contract.

Please fill out the survey by visiting apwu.org/survey, or by scanning the QR code below. Alternatively, you can text the word “SURVEY” to 91990 to receive a link to participate in the survey on a mobile device.

Contract negotiations are challenging, as management always tries to chip away at our rights, wages, and benefits. Our union is always pushing forward to improve the well-being and job security of postal workers across the country.

Please take five minutes to complete the survey and help the APWU negotiate the best contract that we can in 2024! ■



Signing Up New Members =



Beginning Monday, April 1, 2024, APWU members all over the country will join together in an organizing campaign to build our collective power. By talking to non-member coworkers about the benefits of signing up as a member of our union, you can help strengthen our union as we prepare to open negotiations on our new union contract.

Our goal is to sign up 5,000 new APWU members between April 1 - June 25, when contract negotiations begin.

Why Do We Organize?

Building a stronger and more active membership makes us powerful. Whether we are fighting for a good, fair new union contract in June, protecting our jobs during proposed consolidations as a result of the Postal Service's network modernization, or defending our safety on the workroom floor, working together in a union is what wins the day!

Every year, as postal workers retire and new hires join our ranks, the privatizers and corporate giants hope our union will get weaker – that new hires will fail to join the union and pay their dues, and that we will all be weaker as a result. They count on us not talking to our coworkers about our union – they hope we will all say, "I'm too busy today, someone else will make sure the new person



signs up" until, one-by-one, our union shrinks, and we are too weak to fight off their attacks.



Union Gear: Recognizing Your Organizing Work

Members who sign up non-member coworkers have the chance to receive APWU union gear. If you signed up one or more non-members, please email: organization@apwu.org and include your name, Employee ID Number (EIN), your local or state organization, and the name of the non-member(s) you signed up to join.

- Sign up **1-2** non-members to receive an APWU t-shirt.
- Sign up **3-4** non-members to receive an APWU t-shirt and a thermal mug.
- Sign up **5 or more** non-members to receive an APWU t-shirt, a thermal mug, and a lunch tote!

Building More Union Power

The outcome of this contract depends on our union's power and leverage. We are the American Postal Workers Union! Since our first collective bargaining agreement in 1971, we have stood together time and time again to improve our wages, our benefits, and our rights in the workplace.

With the opening of contract negotiations just months away this is an important time to build our strength.

It's Easy to Get Started.

Will you join our campaign and talk to your non-member coworkers about joining the union? Simply take a screenshot of the QR code on this page and save it to your photo album. When you talk to a non-member about joining the union, pull up the QR code photo and have them scan it to fill out the membership form. ■

For more information on the APWU Building Union Power organizing campaign, visit apwu.org/union-power.



We are calling on all active members to have conversations with every single co-worker to make sure they're signed up as a member. That will put us in the best possible position to enter into negotiations for a new contract with the full force of our worker power behind us.



Here are some tips on how to talk to your non-member coworkers and help build a stronger union.

- **Talk to a local union officer** - find out who is a non-member in your facility.
- **Introduce yourself** - and let the non-member know it's an important conversation.
- **Identify their issues** - ask about what's important to them, what they hope for, and what they'd like to change at work.
- **Agitate and educate** - Help them understand "who decides" or "who's standing in the way" of workers getting what we need.
- **Hope is a vision for change** - Show your coworkers how the union is our tool to win changes at work. Share a union success story from your local or state APWU!
- **Call the question** - "Are you ready to stand with us?"
- **Ask them to join** the union and get involved.





Three lucky winners of the *American Postal Worker* quiz will receive a \$50 coupon for the APWU store so that you can

gear up and show your APWU union pride. To enter the quiz, email your answers to communications@apwu.org, together with your EIN by April 8, 2024. Winners will be randomly selected among those who correctly answer the following:

The quiz winners from the January/February 2024 edition of the *American Postal Worker* were:

Sandra Doblovosky (North Jersey Area Local)
John Ferguson (South Jersey Area Local)
Keith Correa (Greater Kansas City Metro Area Local)

APWU March-April QUIZ

1. A bipartisan bill was recently reintroduced in the House of Representatives that, if passed by Congress and signed into law, would allow temporary postal and federal employees who are promoted to career positions the option of "buying back" the time that they had worked as a non-career employee to use towards their retirement. What is the name of the act that would help many postal workers achieve a more secure retirement?
2. What form is used to report anything in the workplace that you think could jeopardize your health, such as dirty conditions, pests, mold, disturbed or broken building materials (tiles, insulation, etc.), and even hostile workplace environments?
3. On April 20, 1994, seven delegates from the APWU travelled to South Africa as election observers during the nation's first free and fair elections to help usher in the end of what type of political system of segregation based on race?

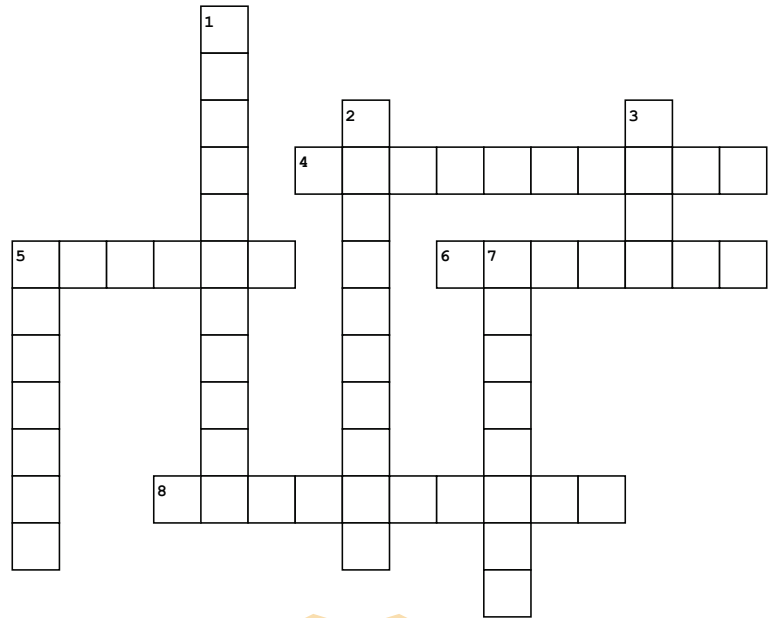
APWU Crossword Puzzle

Across

4. This form of mindfulness is one of the most studied approaches for handling stress.
5. Former APWU President William H. _____ was the first African-American president of a national union directly elected by members.
6. Each year, on April 28, the labor movement observes _____ Memorial Day to honor workers killed, injured, or made ill on the job.
8. Due to environmental concerns, the Postal Service has an expectation to purchase 66,000 electric vehicles (EVs) known as Next _____ Delivery Vehicles or NGDVs.

Down

1. Drivers for _____ Mail Service (AMS), voted "Union Yes!" to join the APWU on Jan. 9, 2024.
2. APWU veteran members are engaged in a campaign telling members of congress to keep private contractors: "Hands Off Our Veterans' _____!"
3. This year, the IRS is rolling out the Direct _____ pilot program that will allow many working class people to file taxes quickly and easily online for free.
5. The US had a postal _____ system from 1911-1967 that provided basic financial services to the community.
7. "Energize! Mobilize! _____!" is the theme of the APWU's 27th Biennial National Convention.



ARE YOU A LUCKY WINNER?

APWU members - Do you want another chance to **win a \$50 gift card** to use in the APWU store? Whether you want a shirt, a hoodie, or buttons to show your union pride; or a new copy of the contract to make sure you know your rights.... check the list below. If you see your name printed, email us at: communications@apwu.org by April 8, 2024 and we'll send you a promo code worth \$50 to use towards gear at apwustore.org.

Brenda Benitez (CA)
Marquis Griffin (TX)
Robin Felder (NY)

CROSSWORD ANSWERS:
Across: 4. meditation; 5. Burrus; 6. workers; 8. generation
Down: 1. Albuquerque; 2. healthcare; 3. file; 5. banking; 7. organize

Rank-and-File Bargaining Advisory Committee Appointed

With national contract negotiations set to begin on June 25, President Mark Dimondstein has announced the names of the APWU members who will serve on the Rank-and-File Bargaining Advisory Committee. In accordance with the APWU Constitution, each member of the National Executive Board appoints one person to the committee; a 14th member, appointed by the president, is a member of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Task Force.

The APWU National Negotiations Committee (NNC) has full authority to negotiate the terms of a new collective bargaining agreement. The Rank-and-File Bargaining Advisory Committee provides recommendations to the NNC. The Rank-and-File Committee must approve a tentative collective bargaining agreement before it can be sent to APWU members for a ratification vote.

The appointees are:

Kim Miller – President, Keystone Area Local (appointed by President Mark Dimondstein)

Michael Bates – President, Des Moines Area Local (appointed by Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy)

Wanda Harris – President, Miami Area Local (appointed by Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth Powell)

Philip Thomas – President, Omaha Area Local (appointed by Industrial Relations Director Charlie Cash)

Tony McKinnon – President, North Carolina Council (appointed by Clerk Division Director Lamont Brooks)

Dana Colletti – President, Manchester Area Local (appointed by Maintenance Division Director Idowu Balogun)

Darryl Gause – MVS Director, Atlanta Metro Area Local (appointed by MVS Director Michael Foster)

Penny Oliver – Vice President, Western Area Supply Center Area Local (appointed by Support Services Director Arrion Brown)

Sharon Curtis – Secretary-Treasurer, Greater Kansas City Metro Area Local (appointed by Central Regional Coordinator Amy Puhalski)

Sherry McKnight – President, Baltimore Francis Stu Filbey Area Local (appointed by Eastern Regional Coordinator AJ Jones)

Morris Brailsford – President, Brooklyn Local (appointed by Northeast Regional Coordinator Tiffany Foster)

Jonathan Cage – President, Dallas Area Local (appointed by Southern Regional Coordinator Yared Wonde)

Robert Waterhouse – President, San Diego Area Local (appointed by Western Regional Coordinator Omar Gonzalez)

VACANT - Deaf/Hard of Hearing Task Force (TBA by President Mark Dimondstein)

The Rank-and-File Committee will convene in early April. ■



The Better Staffing, Better Service campaign is continuing, with new materials making their way to APWU activists and allies across the country.

In February, APWU local and state organizations received copies of the campaign brochure, petitions, and a one-page leaflet to be circulated among the postal public.

Better Staffing, Better Service Campaign Hits the Streets

Members who need additional copies or would like to print their own can access all the materials at apwu.org/staffing.

In addition to the campaign literature, you can now visit the new campaign website at betterpostoffice.org. Postal customers can digitally sign the petition and alert the campaign to unexpected post office closures, long lines, and other short-staffing related service issues.

The website is a crucial tool in helping the campaign develop evidence of service issues that we can use to

push postal management and policymakers for real change that keeps retail lines short, post offices open, and creates safer workplaces. The public deserves quality services, and postal workers deserve quality jobs.

Every member is encouraged to join the campaign and help fight for better staffing and better service. Be sure to ask your local leaders how you can help out, circulate a petition, and talk to neighbors and allies about why the struggle to improve service is so important in your community. ■

MEMBERS



Detroit Amazon workers, who are organizing with APWU, met with Rep. Rashida Taib (D-MI-12).



Daniel "Dan" Switzer (right), a Motor Vehicle Operator and member of the Keystone Area Local #1566, is honored for a million miles of safe driving in the Postal Service.



Members of Central Florida Area Local #1462 raise awareness about hostile work environments and how APWU members can combat them.



IN ACTION

Former APWU National Business Agent, Greg Pofert and current Minneapolis Area Local President Peggy Whitney, attend a Jan. 7 NALC rally in support of letter carrier safety.



Members of the Southern Oregon Area Local rally against consolidations and long-distance trucking in Medford, OR.



Members of the Motor Vehicle Service (MVS) Division celebrate MVS awareness at the Detroit District Area Local on Nov. 11, 2023, with local and national officers of the APWU.



Members of Charleston WV Local 133, the West Virginia AFL-CIO, and unions, including NPMHU, Charleston WV, NALC 531, Charleston WV, and the United Mineworkers of America held an informational picket to inform the public about upcoming plant consolidations and possible mail delays.



Members of Dallas Fort Worth Area Local, including Local President Ben Martinez showed up for United Autoworkers (UAW) in their fall, 2023 strike. APWU members can continue to support the UAW by talking with our friends and family at non-union auto plants about why there should build a union. More at uaw.org/join



APWU delegates attend the 22nd Biennial Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) Convention in Minneapolis, MN.



I Believe Our Postal Service is Quickly Changing into a Failing Business Model and Our Universal Service Obligation to America is Disappearing.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

The Postmaster General (PMG) has degraded our Service Standards and he isn't stopping. His business plan is destroying us and has lost the confidence of our customers, which affects our mail volume and revenue. His plan drives us further away from meeting our service obligations. His network plan is not fixing service, nor is it fixing the work environment. The plan includes short staffing, excessing, and losing workers through consolidations. The failure to monitor or train the terrible managers contributes to the hostile work environment. It's so bad that the Postal Service can't retain new workers and has a high turnover rate.

Our customers trust us, but the overall rating according to the Pew Charitable Trust, has dropped from over 90 percent to 77 percent. I would surmise a poll today would be under 50 percent as we watch the PMG bulldoze the Postal Service into a "package trucking" business like the one he owned as a USPS trucking contractor. He is destroying many prompt services that America depends on and loves. Express Mail used to be the most affordable overnight service. The PMG's plan limits Air Mail service, and the latest report shows that the USPS is paying out more refund guarantees than what it takes in for Express Mail, even after his latest rate hike.

The public depends on prompt service to send birthday and holiday cards, letters to and from grandparents and children, postcards, care packages, and packages with items they can't fit in their suitcase. In some cases, it is difficult to get passports due to low staffing. The Postal Service used to process over 90 percent of passports in America, but not anymore. When there is no First-Class, there goes timely invitations for weddings, graduation parties, baby showers, special events, letters home from college students, care packages filled with love to support their work, letters and care packages from families that support the troops to keep their strength up, and the services that restaurants and businesses utilize through the Postal Service to grow their dreams of success. Let's not forget certified return receipt services that we use for legal protection in serving or notifying the courts, the Internal Revenue Service, and businesses in a timely manner; local deliveries from

pharmacies, hospital mail, veterans' mail services, and important letters and deliveries that rural communities need; shipments of live animals, bees, crickets, and fertilized eggs, live plants, food, dry ice, and water samples; medical tests and results; business mailers; non-profit groups; mailing needs of their supporters, religious organizations academia and newspapers; and retail deliveries for those Americans who work from home selling goods online all need an affordable Postal Service. Vote-by-Mail and political campaign mailings could face more delays with this plan, throwing democracy to the wind. Everyone needs to step up and stop the plan that **"Does Not Deliver for America,"** before it is too late.

THE PUBLIC DEPENDS ON PROMPT SERVICE TO SEND BIRTHDAY AND HOLIDAY CARDS, LETTERS TO AND FROM GRANDPARENTS AND CHILDREN, POSTCARDS, CARE PACKAGES, AND PACKAGES WITH ITEMS THEY CAN'T FIT IN THEIR SUITCASE. IN SOME CASES, IT IS NOW DIFFICULT TO GET PASSPORTS DUE TO LOW STAFFING. THE POSTAL SERVICE USED TO PROCESS OVER 90 PERCENT OF PASSPORTS IN AMERICA, BUT NOT ANYMORE.

As workers and community members, we want the Postal Service to provide mail services in a prompt, efficient, reliable, affordable manner, that does not discriminate as to the service you receive, based on where you live. Take action now! Write your letters to the Postal Board of Governors, the Postal Regulatory Commission, the Office of the Inspector General, your congressional representatives and state attorney generals, and get at least three other community members to write too. Track the delivery of the letters sent to their offices.

Save our mail service by using it now! ■

Network Modernization — Local Transportation Optimization



As part of the Postmaster General's *Delivering for America* (DFA) "network modernization" plan, the Postal Service is now implementing a new transportation plan, referred to as Local Transportation Optimization (LTO).

LTO started as a pilot in two locations - the Richmond, VA area and

the Green Bay, WI area. Thus far, the Postal Service is touting this as a "success." The plan, as initially explained to the APWU, was to look at retail and/or delivery units that were anywhere from 25-50 miles away from the processing facility that services those units and change their mail/parcel pickup and drop-off to once a day in the "AM." In the Postal Service's most recent presentation to the APWU, they suggested that the transportation network would be "optimized" by:

- Reducing truck trips by eliminating "PM" transportation.
- Improve truck utilization by collecting outgoing volume at the same time as dropping off incoming volume; and
- The optimization level of each office would be determined by the volume of mail at the office.

In late February, the Postal Service started up LTO in three other areas, including Phoenix, AZ; Atlanta, GA; and Portland, OR after which the Postal Service is planning to aggressively roll-out LTO throughout the nation in monthly phases through 2024. Contact your local leadership for information regarding who can tell you if LTO is scheduled for your area and when it could occur. With all aspects of the DFA plan, it could change at any time.

The National APWU leadership is concerned about how this will affect overall postal service(s). The APWU expects that the greatest impact will be in rural communities. The APWU will stand with communities where service is impacted by LTO to ensure that these communities continue to have reliable and efficient service. ■

Take Action on Workers' Memorial Day to Protect Our Health and Safety at Work

Each year, on April 28, we observe Workers' Memorial Day to remember workers killed, injured, or made ill on the job. It is a time to renew our fight to secure safe workplaces for all.

This year, on Workers' Memorial Day, we are asking you to work with your union brothers and sisters to identify safety issues in your local facilities or post offices and complete a PS Form 1767 (Report of a Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice).

For more information on how to report safety issues at work, see pages 16 - 17, and visit: apwu.org/speak-safe-jobs. ■

AVAILABLE NOW

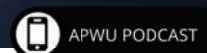
Did You Hear the News?

New episodes of the APWU podcast, "Communicating with You, the Member - A Podcast with APWU President Mark Dimondstein," are available now.

The podcast gives you the latest news and updates about our union's fights, as well as interviews, officer articles, and other timely information.

You can download the podcast on all streaming services, including YouTube, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever else you listen to podcasts regularly.

Find the feed at apwu.org/podcast or scan the QR code.





Workers' Compensation Insurance and Why it is Required!

SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

One of the legal requirements that local and state presidents and treasurers must comply with is obtaining workers' compensation insurance. Since local and state unions are treated as small businesses under state law, each local union that has employees must help fund the state's workers' compensation program. These employees can be full-time or part-time union officers, stewards, or members, as well as non-postal office staff. If they are injured while working for the union, then they are entitled to file for state workers' compensation benefits. It is state law!

Workers' compensation is an insurance program that is required in almost every state. It requires employers to pay for insurance and in return the union is covered for work-related accidents and injury. While an officer or steward would be covered by the federal workers' compensation while on official union time at the post office or while on official travel between post offices, when they are being compensated for work for the union, they must be covered under the state program. Workers' compensation insurance covers compensation for lost wages and earning power, reimbursement for medical treatment, and benefits paid to dependents in the event of a worker's death. It is important to note that the qualifications, exemptions, exclusions, limitations, and mandates differ from state to state.

The type of policy and rate of premiums for workers' compensation insurance is determined by each state. Your state may require coverage from what is known as the State Fund, which will collect the premium from the union. There are currently four states (Ohio, North Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming) that require coverage through the State Fund. If your state does not require purchasing coverage from a State Fund, then coverage can be purchased from private insurance companies authorized by the state. Workers' compensation is regulated on the state level, and each state has its own requirements and penalties. Each state government sets the premiums and benefits structure, but the actual insurance coverage is provided by the standard insurance companies and obtained through insurance agents.

Never assume that you do not need to have workers' compensation insurance. Failure to maintain coverage can result in severe fines. State fines vary. In Massachusetts the fine is \$100 per day, while in Michigan it is \$1,000 per day. In Louisiana, there is a \$250 fine for the first offense and \$500 for each subsequent offense. These are examples of the varying severity of fines for not maintaining coverage. The law does not exempt unions from their responsibilities. Local and state officials can contact Annette August-Taylor, Executive Assistant to the Secretary-Treasurer, by calling (202) 842-8538 or emailing aaugust@apwu.org if they have questions or need assistance with obtaining coverage in their state.

SINCE LOCAL AND STATE UNIONS ARE TREATED AS SMALL BUSINESSES UNDER STATE LAW, EACH LOCAL UNION THAT HAS EMPLOYEES MUST HELP FUND THE STATE'S WORKERS' COMPENSATION PROGRAM.

2024 IRS Standard Mileage Rate

Effective Jan. 1, 2024, the new standard mileage rate increased to 67 cents per mile for business miles driven. Please ensure that the correct rate is applied when compensating for mileage reimbursement requests. The documents required for mileage reimbursement submissions are the mileage log sheet and a copy of MapQuest or Google Maps.

2024 APWU 27th Biennial Convention July 15-18, 2024, Detroit, MI

Save the dates! Local and state officials should plan to attend the APWU 27th Biennial Convention held July 15-18 in Detroit, MI. Information pertaining to the Convention, Pre-Convention Workshops, and Division Conferences is located in the event section of the APWU webpage. ■

Albuquerque Truckers Vote "Union Yes" to Join the APWU

Drivers for Albuquerque Mail Service (AMS), a private freight company that provides contract mail hauling services in Albuquerque, NM, voted to join the APWU on Jan. 9, 2024.

The drivers filed for a union election in December because of numerous, long-standing issues regarding pay, transparency, and wage stagnation. Workers also cited the loss of vacation benefits as a reason for unionizing.

Many AMS drivers have pushed for unionization for a long time. As the problems workers faced increased, more of their fellow workers joined the cause. They reached out to New Mexico State APWU Vice President Charles Trujillo for guidance, who put them in touch with Albuquerque

APWU Local President Kenny Fajardo about starting their organizing campaign.

During the organizing campaign, AMS management employed scare tactics to discourage workers. However, the majority of workers stuck together, including truck driver Joe Baca, Jr. who has worked at AMS for 36 years. He provided words of encouragement, saying that "anybody [who] wants to unionize should. Stick together and just keep fighting no matter what scare tactics they use, just keep going forward and you'll be successful."

"These are exciting times and we look forward to integrating the AMS drivers into the Albuquerque Local," said Fajardo. "We will strive towards a respectable contract that we can



build on. The APWU has always been a progressive union through good times and bad. We want the same for our sisters and brothers of the AMS."

"I heartily welcome the AMS workers into the APWU" said President Mark Dimondstein. "The campaign was a terrific collaboration between Albuquerque local president Ken Fajardo and other local activists, and APWU Lead Field Organizer Rich Shelley along with Lori Cash, Chuck McFarland, and Ray Scanlan. I congratulate all involved!" ■

AFL-CIO Calls for Israel-Palestine Ceasefire

On Feb. 8, the AFL-CIO joined the calls for a ceasefire in the war between Israel and Palestine.

The APWU was one of the first affiliated unions to call for a ceasefire in the conflict that has claimed more than 30,000 lives and caused a humanitarian crisis for Palestinian civilians in the Gaza strip.

The AFL-CIO statement reads:

"The AFL-CIO condemns the attacks by Hamas on October 7th and calls for a negotiated cease-fire in Gaza—including the immediate release of all hostages and provision of desperately needed shelter, food, medicine, and other humanitarian assistance to Gazans—and reaffirms our support of a two-state solution for long-term peace and security." ■

Delivering a Sustainable Route to the Future



The Postal Service unveiled its new fleet of Ford E-transit battery electric vehicles and charging stations during the Charging Infrastructure launch at the South Atlanta Sorting and Distribution Center on Jan. 22, 2024. For more information on the modernization and electrification of the postal delivery fleet, [turn to page 22](#).



Shining a Light on Safety for Workers' Memorial Day

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR CHARLIE CASH

"It is the responsibility of management to provide safe working conditions in all present and future installations and to develop a safe working force." Do you happen to recognize that sentence? It is the first line of Section 1 of Article 14 *Safety and Health*.

When I first started at the Post Office in the mid 1990s, safety was not the first thing on my mind when I went to work. In hindsight, it should have been something I took more seriously while I worked on the floor. Like hundreds of thousands of other postal employees in those 20 years, I too sustained a workplace injury.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, 44,999 postal employees have sustained injuries.¹ However, I must qualify that number. I believe that it is significantly more than that. This does not account for the probable thousands of unreported workplace injuries. Also, in FY2023, 12 postal employees lost their lives due to workplace injuries/accidents.² The Postal Service consistently has some of the highest—if not the highest—number of injuries and deaths in civilian federal service. It is not an overstatement that the Postal Service is a dangerous place to work.

EACH POSTAL WORKER, REGARDLESS OF CRAFT, WORK LOCATION, OR DUTY, IS ENTITLED TO A SAFE WORK ENVIRONMENT.

Each postal worker, regardless of craft, work location, or duty, is entitled to a safe work environment. This includes freedom from hostile and harassing work environments. Management bears the responsibility to provide safe working environments, and each employee, union officer, or steward must hold management accountable when they fail to provide it.

¹ The Department of Labor provided this number to the APWU on February 5, 2024.

² As above.

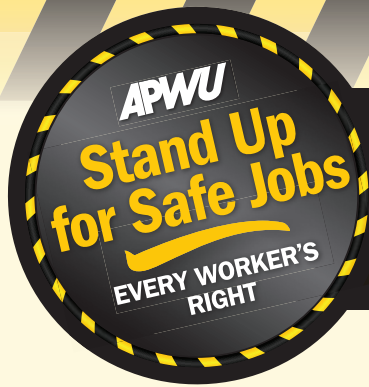
Each year, on April 28, the labor movement recognizes *Workers' Memorial Day*. It is held on the date that the *Occupational Safety and Health Act* went into effect—April 28, 1973. This law and the formation of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) was a step towards safer workplaces and providing basic safety protections to workers. But the laws are nowhere near as strong as they need to be. As referenced by the AFL-CIO, *"...the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) lack the resources they need to protect workers. Many employers and workers never see OSHA in their workplaces. Penalties are still too low to be a deterrent. Corporations exploit these weaknesses and create environments where workers are not adequately protected when they speak out against unsafe working conditions. Black, Latino and immigrant workers are disproportionately killed on the job. Workers still cannot freely join a union without retaliation from their employers."*³

Each year, on *Workers' Memorial Day*, we – the workers of the world – attempt to shine a light on the more than 300 workers around the world killed **every day** on the job. Nearly 5,000 workers are killed on the job each year in the U.S. – one of the safest countries to work. We, as workers, demand better laws to protect ourselves, participate in vigils to remember those who have died, and lead job actions in support of safer workplaces.

You deserve to come to work, put in a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, and come home to your families free of injury or occupational disease. Our contract demands safety. I am challenging all of you to demand safer workplaces not only on April 28, but every day. Use the processes that the APWU and the USPS have in place. Use your PS Form 1767 to put the Postal Service on notice of safety violations. Use the grievance process to enforce Article 14. Protect yourselves by being alert to workplace hazards. I want you to go home uninjured, you want to go home uninjured, and your loved ones feel the same.

Solidarity! ■

³ AFL-CIO Workers' Memorial Day website <https://aflcio.org/about-us/conferences-and-events/workers-memorial-day>



How to Report Hazards, Unsafe Conditions or Practices with PS Form 1767

Union family, there is never a bad time to make sure you are working in a safe environment. Take a look around your workspaces – do you see anything unsafe? If so, find the nearest PS Form 1767, Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice. Fill it out and give it to your supervisor. That way, management will have documentation that there is a safety issue that needs to get fixed.

This form is used to report hazards, unsafe conditions, work practices and, in the opinion of the APWU, hostile work environments. You should use this form to report anything that you think could jeopardize your health, such as dirty conditions, pests, mold, and disturbed or broken building materials (tiles, insulation, etc).

The form must be readily available and easily accessible to all workers on the workroom floor. You should not have to ask a supervisor for a form. They are not supposed to be locked up in a desk or stored where an employee cannot get them.

Section 814.1 of the Employee Labor Relations Manual (ELM) states: “Employees have the right to:

- a. Become actively involved in the Postal Service’s safety and health program and be provided a safe and healthful work environment.
- b. Report unsafe and unhealthful working conditions using PS Form 1767, *Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition, or Practice.*”

Although a fillable PDF form is also available on our website at apwu.org/1767, we recommend that you use the four-copy NCR form provided by the Postal Service in your workplace so that you can get a copy returned to you to see what abatement actions were completed or ignored.

You can also submit the form anonymously; however, you will not receive a copy of the form that includes management’s actions to abate the problem. Having a copy helps your union representative if they need to



file a grievance on a safety issue that is not being addressed.

Section 824.632 of the ELM states: “The immediate supervisor must promptly (within the tour of duty):

- a. Investigate the alleged condition.
- b. Initiate immediate corrective action or make appropriate recommendations.
- c. Record actions or recommendations on PS Form 1767.
- d. Forward the original 1767 and one copy to the next appropriate level of management (approving official).
- e. Give the employee a copy signed by the supervisor as a receipt.”

If you have questions about the form, need help completing one, or can’t find one in your office, please contact your local union representative. ■



Energize! Mobilize! Organize!

Convention 2024
Detroit, MI

27th Biennial APWU National Convention

is the theme of the American Postal Workers Union's 27th Biennial Convention, which is set for Monday, July 15 through Thursday, July 18, 2024, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the Huntington Place Convention Center in Detroit, MI.

The National Convention is the union's highest decision-making body and helps the union chart its course for the future. Approximately 2,000 APWU delegates will debate and vote on resolutions that will be introduced on a wide variety of subjects. The resolutions give focus to the union's goals and help us better serve our members.

Let Your Voice Be Heard

In accordance with the APWU Constitution and Bylaws, each local and area local is entitled to representation at the National Convention based on one delegate and one vote for each 25 members or fraction thereof. Each local is entitled to at least one vote.

State organizations are entitled to one delegate and one vote for each 25 members or fraction thereof in the state who are not part of a local. Each regional organization that is organized in place of a state organization and where no state organization exists is entitled to one vote for each 25 members or fraction thereof of the unrepresented members. (No local, state, or regional organization shall be represented by proxy.)

Each national officer holding an elective office shall serve as a delegate with the right to speak and one vote. The convention can authorize Members at Large (MALs) to vote, provided not more than three attend the convention. If more than three attend, the convention can apportion one vote to every three MALs. Five elected Retiree National Convention Delegates, one from each region, shall be seated at the National Convention. Each will have a voice and a vote. **Each State and Local Retiree chapter shall be entitled to one (1) credentialed delegate with a voice and a vote.**

APWU locals and state organizations are urged to send their full quota of delegates. Members-at-Large (MAL) also are encouraged to attend. *(Local, state, and regional organizations are reminded that they must adhere to the requirements of applicable federal laws when electing delegates).*

Convention Credentials

National Convention credentials must be signed by the local President and one of the following: Secretary, Secretary-Treasurer, or Treasurer. Beginning April 1, 2024, they will be able to log-on to the Members Only section of the APWU website and, in just a few easy steps, they will be able to register their members for credentials. Upon presentation of proper credentials, alternate delegates may be seated in place of regular delegates who will be absent from that point on.

Resolutions

June 1 is the deadline for the submission of resolutions for publication in the Convention Book. Resolutions are accepted from local or state affiliates, local and state retiree chapters or from Members-at-Large (who are the only members permitted to submit resolutions under their own signature). Resolutions adopted at division meetings, either during an off-year or immediately prior to the National Convention, are also accepted.

Resolutions from local or state affiliates and local and state retiree chapters must be submitted electronically through a special link on the union's website that will be accessible only to local/state/retiree chapter presidents and to local/state/retiree chapter secretaries, treasurers, and secretary-treasurers. There will be a box to check, certifying that the submitter is the authorized officer, which will serve as an electronic signature.

Members-at-Large must sign and submit their resolutions directly to the National Secretary-Treasurer prior to the June 1 deadline. Resolutions must be typed, double-spaced and submitted individually (one per page). Resolutions not properly certified electronically or signed will be returned.

Per Article 5, Section 3, of the APWU Constitution, the Secretary-Treasurer will submit the resolutions to the Screening Committee, which works to eliminate repetition and consolidate issues. Once the committee has completed its review, locals and pre-registered delegates will have an opportunity to view the resolutions on the APWU website.

Resolutions received after June 1 will be referred to the appropriate committees and will be presented at the National Convention as addendums, provided they have been properly authorized and signed, and provided they do not deal with subjects otherwise covered by the Screening Committee.

To achieve uniformity, it is requested that resolutions be structured as follows:

- The name of the appropriate committee to review the resolution, e.g., Labor-Management Committee;
- The article number and section of the Collective Bargaining Agreement or APWU Constitution and Bylaws the resolution addresses, if applicable;
- The resolution title;
- The names of the sponsoring locals, state organizations and/or Member-at-Large;
- The body or text of the resolution itself.
- A sample resolution format can be viewed online at apwu.org/resolutions.

Other Convention Events

Several other important union events will take place in the days before and after the convention. Meetings for each of the Divisions – Clerk, Maintenance, Motor Vehicle Service, and Support Services – are set for the weekend of July 13-14, as is the APWU Retiree's Conference. The BMC Conference will be held prior to the convention, on the afternoon of Thursday, July 11, 2024, from 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. ET. The APWU Research & Education Department will conduct a series of Pre-Convention Workshops on Friday, July 12. (The complete schedule of events can be viewed in the Convention pages at apwu.org.)



Plan Your Stay Well Ahead

Although the convention is months away, it is essential that locals, state organizations, members-at-large, and retirees make their arrangements as soon as possible. Everything you need to make your hotel and travel plans can be found at apwu.org/convention.

The APWU negotiated a special room rate for this year's convention at various hotels in downtown Detroit. The rate for single/double occupancy ranges between \$198/night plus tax to \$281/night plus tax, depending on the property. The cutoff date to make reservations under the group's block is Wednesday, June 19, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. ET.

Please make your room reservations directly with the hotel. Rooms and rates will be based on availability. You must use a credit card when booking online. You will receive a confirmation of your reservation via e-mail. Be sure to mention that you are with the American Postal Workers Union in order to receive the negotiated rates. Additional details, including links to book directly with the hotels, will be available at apwu.org/convention.

For each room, a one-night's-stay deposit, plus tax, is requested with payment by credit card. Failure to notify the hotel of a change in arrival date will result in cancellation of the reservation and the deposit will be forfeited. Cancellation policies will be outlined by the hotel on the confirmation received after making a reservation. Please visit apwu.org/convention for additional details.

Early departures are subject to a penalty set by the hotel. If you do not cancel per the cancellation policies mentioned above or do not arrive on your confirmed arrival date, your full reservation will be cancelled. Please note that APWU locals and state organizations may pay by check. Details can be found at apwu.org/convention.

Children's Programs, Car Rental

KiddieCorp, a professional childcare company, will provide activities for delegates' children ages six months to 12 years during the four days of activities on the convention floor, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Reservations are necessary. Submit the forms (available on the website) by June 17.

APWU has made arrangements with Enterprise/National for discounted car rental rates for convention delegates. Information regarding reservations can be found on the APWU convention webpage. ■

Clerk Division Continues RI-399 Training and Staffing



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

The Clerk Division has ramped up our training of clerk craft jurisdiction/machine staffing advocates for the Regional Instruction (RI)-399 process. After conducting a class on RI-399 at the All-Craft Conference in Las Vegas, NV in October 2023, the craft has pledged to persist in our educational efforts, as this is a continuing promise to fight the Postal Service's violations of craft jurisdictional national awards for certain types of duties in mail processing and staffing.

As the USPS accelerates Postmaster General DeJoy's 10-year plan and opens additional mail processing facilities, craft assignments at the local level to duties in automation are leaning towards the mail handlers, rather than complying with previous national-level determinations and national arbitration awards regarding craft jurisdictional assignments. The Clerk Division is determined to oppose these cross-craft violations with every tool in our possession.

As a result, Clerk Division Director Lamont Brooks scheduled an intense week-long training session between Feb. 26 – March 1, 2024. Those assigned to attend were: the five RI-399 Regional Dispute Resolution Committee (RDRC) members (all of whom are Clerk Division National Business Agents (NBAs)), three APWU-assigned Internal Assistance Regional Representatives for RI-399 (who are also NBAs), and 18 local RI-399 Clerk Jurisdiction & Staffing Advocates from all five APWU regions. Instructors for the class were Clerk Division Assistant Director Lynn Pallas-Barber, who also serves as the APWU liaison on the National Dispute Resolution Committee (NDRC), and APWU RI-399 NDRC Representative Ron Suslak.

The training examined the history of tripartite agreements between the APWU, the Postal Service, and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union, beginning with the first such Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 1992, and concluding with the 2018 RI-399 Update MOU. The class included a review of craft jurisdiction assignments for automated machines currently in use at mail processing facilities, and an explanation and discussion of how to conduct site visits. Wednesday's training consisted of analysis and dialogue on local

THE CLERK DIVISION IS DETERMINED TO OPPOSE THESE CROSS-CRAFT VIOLATIONS WITH EVERY TOOL IN OUR POSSESSION.

RI-399 craft jurisdiction inventories and a mock Local Dispute Resolution Committee (LDRC) meeting.

The final two days of the class consisted of clarifying LDRC disputes and the use of LDRC forms, filing position papers when a LDRC dispute is appealed to the RDRC, a discussion on arbitration awards in craft jurisdictional disputes, the content of RI-399 documents on the Clerk Division webpage, and guidelines concerning the differences between RI-399 craft jurisdictional disputes, and Article 7 cross-craft violations.

Clerk Division Director Brooks stated, "The Clerk Craft will not stand idly by and allow our work to be given away to the mail handlers by the Postal Service." He continued, "We wanted to bring in our newly appointed RI-399 craft jurisdiction and staffing advocates so they could consult with our experienced NDRC and RDRC representatives and learn as much as possible as we continue this fight for clerk craft work". These newly trained advocates will be used to assist locals in their respective regions. "Many thanks to APWU President Mark Dimondstein for his commitment to this endeavor and for approving the appointment of these advocates to assist our craft in this essential and crucial battle for the life of the clerk craft," Brooks concluded.

Clerk Craft members are urged to be attentive to craft jurisdiction issues in their mail processing operations and to contact their local RI-399 representatives if work assignments are inappropriately transferred to mail handlers. Mail processing facilities have experienced and will see more craft jurisdictional disputes as the Sorting and Delivery Centers and Regional Processing and Distribution Centers increasingly grow in numbers throughout the country. We must maintain solidarity within our ranks of the clerk craft to ensure that this battle is won and jobs are not lost to another craft due to the Postal Service's improper craft jurisdiction assignments. In union solidarity, the struggle continues. ■

Maintenance Craft In-Service Open Season March 1-31, 2024



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

Once a year, during the month of March (March 1-31), ALL career employees may request to be tested for Maintenance Craft eligibility ratings and placement on In-Service Registers. Also, during March, those career employees already on the In-Service Register have the right to submit a written request to remain on those registers and avoid the annual purge that occurs on April 1. Representatives from the APWU and the USPS signed National Questions & Answers (Q&As) on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Re: In-Service Examinations, Register and Eligibility Ratings.

Below is a list of all 16 questions & answers:

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

Yes.

Who is eligible to participate in the annual opportunity to test for Maintenance Craft eligibility ratings?

All career employees are eligible.

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

Yes.

If In-Service Registers do not exist, where are the exam results placed?

The HR MSS Coordinator is responsible for placing the results in the employee's eOPF.

What form must career employees complete when submitting a written request to participate in the March annual In-Service opportunity?

Management shall provide an Employee Maintenance Position Selection (EMPS) form as found in the EL-304 to employees.

What occupational group can career employees request to receive eligibility ratings for?

All Maintenance Craft occupational groups (MSS and non-MSS) that require an examination, except National Service Technician ET-11.

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

Yes.

What options are available for non-Maintenance Craft employees who have failed the structured interview, but received an eligibility rating on examination 955?

In subsequent years, the employee may (1) request to retake the examination for the structured interview only or (2) can request the opportunity to retake both the examination 955 and the structured interview. If the employee retakes examination 955, the highest achieved score is used as the eligibility rating.

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

Yes.

What happens if an employee is a "no show" for the proctored exam or structured interview during the In-Service process?

The employee is deemed ineligible and may request to take the exam/structured interview during the following year's annual opportunity.

Are there any changes to the way employees are ranked on In-Service Registers?

No, there are no changes.

If non-custodial In-Service Registers exist, how will employees be added in subsequent years?

Merged in score order.

If an employee on an In-Service Register declines to accept a position in the Maintenance Craft, is that employee's name removed from the In-Service Register?

No, the employee will be bypassed for that position.

When will In-Service Registers be purged?

Every year on April 1, beginning in calendar year 2023.

What must employees on In-Service Registers do to avoid the April purge and remain on In-Service Registers?

Employees must submit a written request by March 31st to the District HR MSS Coordinator. The exception is employees on custodial In-Service Registers, which are not purged.

Is there a specific form that employees must use to submit their notification to management of their intent to avoid the April purge and remain on In-Service Registers?

No, any written/mailed request to remain on the In-Service Registers will be accepted. ■

The Future is Here



Director Michael Foster and Assistant Director Garrett Langley

Many postal workers and patrons in years gone by remember the quarter-ton jeeps, the two-ton trucks, and the long-life vehicles (LLV's) that outlived their life expectancy by over 20 years. Customers could tell when their mail was being delivered by the distinctive “putt-putt” sound made by these types of gas-powered engines, some with speeds that wouldn’t allow for travel on freeways.

For many years, skilled Vehicle Maintenance Facility (VMF) employees have diligently maintained the postal fleet. At times, the ingenuity of these employees was what kept the fleet going. “Robbing Peter to pay Paul” types of repairs, taking parts off one vehicle or making parts in the shop just to ensure that there were enough vehicles to “make the dispatch.” As the nation grew, more addresses were created, and mail volume increased, so did the need for postal vehicles. Many more trucks were leased, drive out contracts that paid carriers to use their personal vehicles were used, but it still wasn’t enough. This self-sufficient government agency still needed congressional assistance to meet the demands of the country.

By this time America had serious concerns about the environment, global warming, and saving the planet for future generations. For the USPS to secure federal funds for vehicle purchases, there had to be a commitment for eco-friendly energy-saving vehicles.

NGDV and Ford E-Transit

The Postal Service has an expectation to purchase at least 66,000 Next Generation Delivery Vehicles (NG-DVs) in the battery/electric variant (BEV).

There are positives and negatives to having a fleet of electric vehicles. Each Post Office and VMF that will have a NGDV BEV vehicle must also have a corresponding number of charging stations; the greater the number of battery/electric vehicles, the greater the stress on the electrical grid. Charging stations take up space and can affect parking. There are fewer moving parts in a battery/electric vehicle which creates a reduction in maintenance requirements in the NGDV BEV, in comparison to a conventional gasoline-powered vehicle. The Postal Service mailbox-to-mailbox



type of delivery won’t fully utilize the vehicle’s ability to put electricity back in the battery while braking. NGDC BEV emits no pollution and almost no noise.

Recently, the USPS along with White House officials held an EV and Charging Infrastructure launch at the South Atlanta Sorting and Distribution Center to roll out the Ford E-Transit battery/electric vehicle as part of the fleet.

On Jan. 9, 2024, APWU representatives Garrett Langley, Michael Mize, Albert Lewis, and William Drew participated in First Article Testing for the Ford E-Transit vehicle at the Michigan Proving Grounds in Romeo, MI. The group evaluated the interior, exterior, and driving characteristics with safety and functionality in mind. The Ford E-Transit is a battery electric commercial off the shelf (COTS) lefthand-drive vehicle. The Postal Service purchased approximately 9,500 of these full-size vans that have an eight-hour charge time with an approximate range of 200 miles and should primarily be used on park and loop routes where box to box delivery isn’t required. The Ford E-Transit is marketed as an eco-friendly alternative to gas engine vehicles with less maintenance costs. The APWU representatives noted several issues during First Article Testing and notified the Postal Service in writing of our findings. A few notable concerns include the large center touch screen that could be a distraction, a sidestep that could become slippery in inclement weather, and a bulkhead door latch that could be a pinch hazard. ■

Tentative Agreements Reached!



Director Arrion Brown

The Support Services Division is proud to announce that we have reached tentative agreements on two separate contracts. After months of hard-fought negotiations, we have reached tentative agreements with 10 Roads Express for the Des Moines/Kansas City private sector mail haul driver's contract, and with the Postal Service on the National Postal Professional Nurses (NPPN) contract. The tentative agreements will have been distributed for membership ratification by the time this edition of *The American Postal Worker* magazine arrives.

We want to thank the negotiating committees of both groups for their dedication and commitment in the fight for a good contract. The Support Services Division leadership conducted numerous meetings with the negotiating committees to solicit proposals that would accurately reflect the concerns that needed to be addressed in negotiations. The meetings allowed us to enter negotiations with the confidence that we were addressing the core issues of the bargaining units. While we may not achieve all of our negotiating demands, it is critical that we make proposals based on areas where our members want changes and improvements.

Improvements for the Des Moines/Kansas City 10 Roads Express agreement include: driver compensation for scheduled and unscheduled layovers, an increase in light-duty pay from \$10 per hour to \$20 per hour, a decrease in the amount of time that seasonal/temporary employees can work – from 90 days to eight weeks, an increase in the outside domicile per diem from \$10 per meal (\$30 per day) to \$15 per meal (\$45 per day), and the inclusion of weather-related events that affect the majority of the workforce and natural disasters as exceptions to the attendance policy.

While we had successes in the improvements to the Des Moines/Kansas City 10 Roads Express contract, the company rejected our important demands of locking in pay rates above the wage determination and removing the on-board monitoring devices that drivers consider intrusive invasions of privacy. The union leadership and committee fought vigorously at the table for these demands, but our best efforts could not persuade the company to agree to those items.

WE HAVE REACHED TENTATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH 10 ROADS EXPRESS FOR THE DES MOINES/KANSAS CITY PRIVATE SECTOR MAIL HAUL DRIVER'S CONTRACT AND WITH THE POSTAL SERVICE ON THE NATIONAL POSTAL PROFESSIONAL NURSES (NPPN) CONTRACT.

In the future, it is imperative to build the external presence of driver strength and unity needed to achieve the demands that the company will not come to an agreement on. Unfortunately, we did not have the level of worker strength necessary to move the company during this round of negotiations. We are committed to creating a stronger more unified effort to achieve what our union members deserve in future negotiations.

The NPPN negotiations with postal management were extremely difficult. Despite those difficulties, we were able to secure non-economic improvements, increasing the Continuing Education Units available for reimbursement from \$500 to \$1,500, and including June-teenth as an observed federal holiday. The economic agreements were to continue to attach the NPPN yearly raises to the Department of Labor's Economic Cost Index for the duration of the agreement, with an additional one percent increase, to be distributed evenly over the first and last year of the agreement.

Management and the APWU worked to resolve a retention issue that has caused nurses to leave the Occupational Health Nurse positions at a high rate since the last collective bargaining agreement. A step retention incentive MOU pilot was developed, which will allow management to offer OHN's with at least three years of experience up to two additional steps to retain their employment if they are offered jobs outside of the Postal Service.

The experience in both negotiations created new leaders and reinvigorated our existing leadership. We will continue to work to make positive gains for APWU members in all our negotiations with the understanding that the strength of the union is the workers. ■



AJ Jones, Eastern Regional Coordinator

Stand Up for Service

We're currently experiencing the largest changes in the history of postal operations. Many of these changes have failed to demonstrate that they are in the best interests of our customers and are destined to negatively impact our communities. The 10-year plan can only be successful if it reduces productivity, degrades service, and increases costs related to expanding transportation. The reason for these changes is to accomplish throughput justification for machinery, and for producing unnecessary pollution. The USPS plan claims to yield a more efficient service, yet we haven't seen it in the early stages. Contact your representatives and request that they stand up for service.

BEING SUCCESSFUL WILL REQUIRE EACH OF US TO BE ACCOUNTABLE TO OURSELVES AND OTHERS, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY ENGAGE IN COLLABORATION AND INFORMATION SHARING.

Productivity goals have already been reduced from 98 to 95 percent. Overnight delivery is no longer an item, Express Mail is on its way out, the First-Class package is gone and is now called Ground Advantage. That is combined with understaffed facilities, moving towards a five-day delivery standard for some mail, and moving to a logistics program that will only allow for one truck a day, in the morning, to drop and pick up the mail from the previous day at post offices. This will have a direct impact on rural America.

These changes often result in the Postal Service implementing Article 12 when they determine that there is an impact. With this continued attack on our service and jobs, collaboration is key. We continue to deal with a high number of Article 12 events across the country. With the vast number of changes already in place and impending changes coming faster than ever, working together is paramount if we plan to be successful. Being successful will require each of us to be accountable to ourselves and others, and more importantly engage in collaboration and information sharing. Being success-

ful does not mean that none of our members will ever be impacted, but it does mean that the union will enforce the contract to the best of our ability.

The Crow Flies vs. The Car Drives

Part of the Article 12 process involves the Filling of Residual Vacancies MOU. How are the miles calculated and what is all the confusion about when dealing with Item #3 of the MOU?

APWU Special 21-Day Clerk Craft Posting reflected in Item #3 of the MOU provides that "...full-time regular Clerk Craft employees in an installation impacted by excessing, pursuant to Article 12.5.C.5, who request a transfer from an installation within the District or a 100-mile geographic radius through the eReassign Clerk Craft 21-Day Posting."

JCIM Article 12 page 27: "The one hundred (100) mile radius for 21-day eReassign is an actual geographic radius from the impacted installation." Sometimes referred to as "the crow flies." A successful bidder in this venue will be permitted to take their seniority but will not have retreat rights back to their previous facility.

In the event these jobs have no takers, then Article 12 allows for these residual vacancies to be withheld if they're within 50 miles of an impacted facility. If withheld, the local president must receive a notice to include the office of impact that it is being held. The radius for involuntary excessing, including the withholding of duty assignments, is measured by determining the shortest driving distance between the losing installation and the gaining installation. An easy way to remember this rule may be to remember that the crow flies 100 miles and the car drives 50 miles. Remember, driving distance could include going up and down a mountain, resulting in more miles than the crow would fly.

I, along with my colleague coordinators: Central Region Coordinator Amy Puhalski, Northeast Region Coordinator Tiffany Foster, Western Region Coordinator Omar Gonzalez, and Southern Region Coordinator Yared Wonde, stand strong and are here to help in any way we can. ■



Judy Beard, Director

Federal Retirement Fairness Act Reintroduced!

Late last year, *The Federal Retirement Fairness Act*, or H.R. 5995, was reintroduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-WA-06) and Rep. Don Bacon (R-NE-02). This bipartisan bill would allow temporary postal and federal employees who are promoted to career positions the option of “buying back” the time that they had worked as a non-career employee to use towards their retirement.

Temporary postal employees are non-career employees, such as PSEs, transitional employees, and casuals, who are unable to make contributions to their retirement benefits until they become USPS career employees.

Prior to 1989, postal workers were allowed to make retroactive “catch up” contributions to their retirement benefits, after they made career status, for all the time they worked as a temporary employee. Unfortunately, the authority to make retroactive payments expired on Jan. 1, 1989.

Under the proposed “buy back,” eligible postal workers would make a deposit equal to the amount that would have been contributed to their retirement benefits had they been career employees. The calculation is determined by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). This legislation would help postal and federal employees better prepare for their retirement. It would affect more than 100,000 APWU members who have converted from temporary to career positions.

As of Feb. 1, 2024, *The Federal Retirement Fairness Act* has 70 cosponsors in the House of Representatives. I urge every member to call their representative and ask them to cosponsor H.R. 5995. You can call the Legislative Hotline at 1-844-402-1001 to be connected at any time.

Remember, an injury to one is an injury to all. We are much stronger together in solidarity, so please help your fellow union members in this collective fight for full, on-time retirement benefits!

THIS BIPARTISAN BILL WOULD ALLOW TEMPORARY POSTAL AND FEDERAL EMPLOYEES WHO ARE PROMOTED TO CAREER POSITIONS THE OPTION OF “BUYING BACK” THE TIME THAT THEY HAD WORKED AS A NON-CAREER EMPLOYEE TO USE TOWARDS THEIR RETIREMENT.

Looking for 2024 Election Information?

Simply scan the QR code and type in your address to find upcoming federal, state, and local elections, plus relevant dates and deadlines.



REGISTER FOR OUR CONVENTION CLASSES!

Promoting COPA at the Local/State Level Training

**Friday, July 12, 2024,
from 2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.**

Learn effective strategies to help promote and solicit voluntary contributions for COPA.

2024 Elections Briefing

**Thursday, July 18, 2024,
from 7:00 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.**

Find out how you can get involved in the fight to elect pro-postal, pro-worker candidates this November.

To learn more about these classes and register online, please scan the QR code. ■



ORGANIZATION

The Benefits of “Being Union”



Anna Smith, Director

Most postal workers go to work, clock in, and do their fair day's work. In return, they receive pay for their efforts every other week. Most postal workers have a pretty satisfying postal career, retire, and move on to their sunset years.

A vast majority of postal workers also spend their entire federal service being a dues-paying union member. But far too many do not know what “being union” is really about. Sadly, some see “the union” as a third-party kind of legal aid of sorts.

“Being union” is understanding that we, the workers, band together to stand up to our employer and demand safe working conditions, livable wages, and work-hour guarantees. It's about combining our forces to deal with a quasi-government corporation.

“Being union” is realizing that, as a union, we have a legal standing under the federal labor laws of this country. The collectiveness of our joining together gives us legal recognition, under the National Labor Relations Act, to “bargain” – with all of the word's synonyms (*barter, negotiate, haggle, deal, discuss terms, understanding etc.*) – with our employer.

This year, our vacation leave, sick leave, health benefits, salary, step increases, life insurance, seniority protections, lay off protections, work hour guarantees, wash-up time, and overtime, to name a few, are all on the table when we go up against our employer in contract negotiations. All the benefits that we currently enjoy, and hope to maintain or improve on, are not just given to us by a benevolent boss. All this comes to us from us “bargaining” for them through being in a union.

For us to have stronger bargaining strength in our upcoming negotiations, we must be putting forth the effort into bringing every non-member into the fold by asking them to join the union and giving them the opportunity to stand with us and to be involved.

Our non-member coworkers are either with us or they are against us, and everything we have and continue to fight for. Choosing neutrality is not an option, our employer considers every non-member to be on their side. ■

Building Union Power - We are the American Postal Workers Union!

Join us in our **Building Union Power** organizing drive to sign up 5,000 new APWU members between April 1-June 25, when contract negotiations begin.

Simply take a screenshot of the QR code below and save it to your photo album. When you talk to your non-member coworkers about joining the union, pull up the photo with the code and have them scan it so they can fill out the membership form.

Members who sign up non-member coworkers have the chance to receive APWU union gear. If you signed up one or more non-members, please email: organization@apwu.org and include your name, Employee ID Number (EIN), your local, and the name of the non-member(s) you signed up to join.

- Sign up **1-2** non-members to receive an APWU t-shirt.
- Sign up **3-4** non-members to receive an APWU t-shirt and a thermal mug.
- Sign up **5 or more** non-members to receive an APWU t-shirt, a thermal mug, and a lunch tote!



For more information on the APWU Building Union Power organizing campaign, visit apwu.org/union-power.





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.

“Am I a true unionist? Yes, I belong to my union, I have been a member in good standing for over 39 years. I try to attend all local union meetings and give input when necessary... Is that enough? There is one particular part of the APWU Oath of Office that I believe I can do a better job of upholding. It is the fifth paragraph of the Oath, it states, “Last but not least I promise to purchase only union made articles, whenever available, and purchase from unionized retailers, whenever possible.” The next time you are out shopping for anything please take the time to look and see if you are supporting a unionized company and really concentrate on buying union made items.”

– Nanci Denayer, Secretary
Area Local 960
The 960 Dispatch

“We have all heard the saying, “What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas!”, Well, Roanoke Local 482 has made a point to change this policy... Members that do not go to conferences could be educated and informed by those that were in attendance.”

– Larry Scarberry, Editor
Roanoke Local 482
The Star City Postal Worker

“There has never been a time when the solidarity of our union has been more paramount. I don’t know any other way to say it. We have to be diligent and persistent in protecting our jobs. Despite our humanity and whatever differences we have, we must band together.”

– William Newkirk,
Clerk Craft Director
Raleigh (NC) Local 1078
The Rank and Filer

“I realize many would say, ‘What does [taking care of myself] have to do with my union?’ My answer is, as your union, we care about you. You all are our members, yes. But we are a family as well. All of you mean the world to us as representatives. We choose to represent to try to help our union siblings with their problems. We choose to take our time to assist you because you are family. So as your sibling, take care of yourself. In unity.”

– Mike Mize, State President
Michigan Postal Workers Union
The Michigan Messenger

Attend a Pre-Convention

The Research & Education Department will sponsor 24 Pre-Convention Workshops on **Friday, July 12, 2024**, prior to the start of the craft conferences and national convention, at the Huntington Place Convention Center, Detroit, Michigan.

All APWU members are welcome and must register online by the Monday, July 1, 2024 deadline. Participants are encouraged to register early, as classroom space is limited. Participants may sign-up for workshops after arriving in Detroit, but will have limited choices of workshops, as many will already be filled.

Below is a list of workshops and times.

APWU SEARCH: Simplifies searches for arbitration awards and decisions. Includes: how the interface works, the proper way to login and set-up the web browser, conducting searches using the multiple-tab feature, and methods to narrow searches. **New arbitration advocates or those whose skills needs refreshing, should attend this training. (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)**

Article 37.3.A.1 and MDAT: Outlines using MDAT to create and preserve jobs in the Clerk Craft. Assists in converting PSEs to career status; creating desirable duty assignments; maximizing PTFs in small offices; reducing disputes on reversions and abolishments; and reducing excessing when the USPS utilizes PSEs. **Participants must bring a fully charged laptop to the training. (2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)**

Basic Shop Steward's Training: Guidelines for new shop stewards. Focuses on proper documentation of grievances, and the duties, rights, and guidelines for shop stewards. **Participants must attend this workshop the entire day and cannot select another workshop. (10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.)**

Building Union Power Through Organizing: Teaches techniques and strategies to expand membership and build union power. An overview of the APWU's electronic membership sign-up process, tools available, free materials to assist local/state unions in its organizing efforts, and techniques to use to encourage coworkers to join the APWU's fight to preserve postal jobs and benefits. **(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)**

Communicating at the Grassroots Level: Includes aspects of creating, enhancing, and publishing a local/state newsletter from ground zero. Gives tips on using writing tools including Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Publisher, Excel, and Canva Design Platform. **(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)**

Dealing with a Hostile Work Environment and Handling Postal "Monsters": Utilization of the CBA and Postal Handbooks and Manuals to help combat abusive supervisors/managers, and deal with hostile work environment issues. **(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)**

Fiduciary Responsibility Training: Reviews the fiduciary and legal responsibilities of union officers, the LMRDA, the National Constitution, and basic financial principles. **New presidents, treasurers, trustees, and executive board members are urged to attend. (2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)**

Fighting to Save Jobs Due to Closures and Consolidations: Teaches how to take important steps to build a case against closures and consolidations of Post Offices, Stations, and Branches. Discusses public involvement at town hall meetings to build community action, solidarity, and support. **(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)**

Labor Law Fundamentals (A Union Leader's Duty of Fair Representation): Reviews the *National Labor Relations Act*, with a focus on the rights of APWU members, the Duty of Fair Representation, and how to identify unfair labor practices. **(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)**

Large Office Issues (Function 1): Covers current issues in large mail processing facilities. Topics include RI-399 jurisdictions, crossing craft violations, machine safety and staffing, and general expeditor and lead clerk duties. **(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)**

Leadership Development: Helps newly elected union leaders understand the responsibilities, challenges, and qualities of leadership. Gives tips on how to run a union meeting; goal setting; effective listening skills; coalition building; handling difficult people; resolving conflict, and stress reduction. **Participants must attend this workshop the entire day and cannot select another workshop. (10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.)**

Workshop



Joyce B. Robinson, Director

Legal Issues and Union Communications: Reviews editorial policies, union regulations, libel, copyright, and federal election laws that apply to hardcopy and electronic forms of communication. **(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)**

Maintenance Article 12 Excessing Guide: Addresses how to challenge Maintenance Article 12 Excessing Notifications. Instructions on understanding Article 12.5.C.4 and 12.5.C.5, which outlines reassignment within and outside of the installation, and the applicable RFIs. **(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)**

Motor Vehicle Service Division (MVS) Issues: An update on MVS issues and information on the Articles 39, 32, and other articles of the CBA that apply to the motor vehicle craft. ***Participants must attend this workshop the entire day and cannot select another workshop.*** **(10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.)**

Organizing and Maintaining Retiree Chapters: Gives information on starting a new chapter; rebooting your current chapter; maximizing membership attendance; increasing volunteer participation; taking on leadership roles in the chapter and community, and supporting the APWU's legislative agenda. **(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)**

Preserving Maintenance Jobs: Focuses on the Postal Service reverting maintenance jobs, and the failure to fill vacant duty assignments. Provides a comprehensive look at fighting job reversions, what information to request, and the proper remedy needed to resolve the grievance. Discusses the subcontracting of custodial MOU guidelines and the Two-hour Memo. **(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)**

Promoting COPA at the Local/State Levels: Provides instructions to representatives on effective strategies to help promote and solicit voluntary contributions for COPA to help APWU fight for pro-postal and pro-worker policies in Congress. Explores different fundraising opportunities, and best practices for receiving and reporting COPA donations. ***COPA Captains and those interested in becoming a COPA Captain are welcome and encouraged to attend.*** **(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)**

Protecting Clerk Work in Smaller Offices: An overview of issues such as crossing crafts, maximization, supervisors performing bargaining-unit work, lead clerk

duties, "lobby sweeps/lobby director," and Function 4 staffing. **(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)**

PSEs Issues: Training on enforcing and protecting contractual rights of Clerk Craft PSEs, exceeding the use of non-career employees, increasing the career workforce, and seniority issues. **(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)**

Retirement Planning: Provides information for Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) employees and Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) employees on annuity calculations, best date to retire, benefit choices, important records to keep, and tips on successfully completing the application. **(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)**

Social Justice & Racial Equality: Explains the definitions of Social Justice and Racial Equality. Examines: Individual Racism vs. Systemic Racism, discusses ways to achieve equity in our communities and our union, and provides an understanding of the labor movement's role in the pursuit of social and economic justice for working people. **(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)**

Stand Up for Safe Jobs: Outlines the role of local safety committees and the importance of encouraging employees to report safety violations on the job. Provides instructions on completing PS Form 1767 (Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice), and seeking assistance from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). **(10 a.m.-1 p.m.)**

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Overview: Covers every aspect of TSP including the benefits of savings, Traditional vs Roth Contributions, Investments, Loans, and Post-Separation Withdrawals. **(2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)**

Workers Compensation Guidance for Members Injured at Work: Focuses on filing a claim through OWCP, enforcement and employer compliance to facilitate claim processing, and handling employer violations. Discusses what to do if your claim is approved or denied, you have a traumatic injury, a COVID claim, or an occupational disease or injury. ***Participants must attend this workshop the entire day and cannot select another workshop.*** **(10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.)**

If you have problems registering online, please email workshopregistration@apwu.org with your name, a cell phone number, and a brief description of your problem. ■

What's Really Happening to Veterans VA Healthcare?



In the previous edition of Home Front, we encouraged our APWU veteran family to contact their local congressional leaders at (202) 224-3121 and tell them to keep privately-contracted healthcare providers away:

“Hands Off Our Veterans Healthcare.” In this edition of Home Front,

we will highlight a few of the numerous negative healthcare laws of the Trump-era VA *Mission Act*, that was passed by Congress, and signed into law on June 6, 2018, by former President Donald Trump. We will also attempt to explain the rapidly backwards moving direction that VA Healthcare has taken under the *Mission Act*, while supposedly improving the top-quality VA Healthcare services that our APWU veterans, retired APWU veterans, and our APWU family members of veterans receive.

The VA's 21st century electronic technology utilizes private healthcare contract providers to implement VA Healthcare programs and systems. It's called the *Veterans Healthcare Eligibility Reform Act of 1996* (H.R. 3118) from the Clinton-era 104th Congress. It has been a huge, over 20-year, failure to our American veterans seeking VA Healthcare. This congressional decision has sent VA medical and mental health treatment backwards at a rapid pace. And *The Mission Act* is in the final processing stage of replacing thousands of highly trained regular VA Federal Government Healthcare employees, with private contract healthcare providers - or we can call it, the privatizing of VA Healthcare.

The Trump-era *Mission Act* is still the current law for VA Healthcare. It clearly states the following: “**The VA will need to make changes in several key areas, including streamlining and improving Community Care, establishing a new Urgent Care Benefit, strengthening VA's Workforce.**”

So, let us ask ourselves today, as veterans, how has this six-year streamlining improved veterans' healthcare or strengthened the VA workforce? The correct answer is it hasn't. There are more than 20 million living American

military veterans. Included in this figure are thousands of our APWU veteran family. If the *Mission Act* has improved the quality of healthcare services that our veterans receive, why are there only approximately eight million veterans currently enrolled in VA Healthcare? And why have only approximately 600,000 of those enrolled veterans used the Community Care provisions of the *Mission Act*? Probably because it's been a huge failure and a financial disaster to thousands of veterans who have used this private health provider Community Care system, instead of actually going to the nearest VA medical facility in their local area.

**THIS CONGRESSIONAL DECISION HAS
SENT VA MEDICAL AND
MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT
BACKWARDS AT A RAPID PACE.**

Warning to all APWU Veterans: If you are enrolled in VA Healthcare, but choose to go to a private Community Healthcare provider or you go to a private hospital for emergency care (the *Mission Act* calls it Community Care or Urgent Care), there is a strong possibility, with the current understaffed VA Healthcare system that the APWU veteran will be billed by the private contractor because the VA will not pay your bill. To make matters worse, private VA authorized healthcare providers can garnish your Federal Government wages if the veteran refuses to pay the Community Care bill within 60 days.

Yep, it's the law brought to you by the Trump-era Mission Act that Postal Service checks, Office of Personnel Management (OPM) retirement checks, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) refund checks, and Social Security checks can all be garnished by the Mission Act collection agency.

Finally, we have political, and congressional leaders in America plotting to destroy our American democracy in 2024. If they are successful, VA Healthcare will be destroyed as well.

Our goal is to keep our APWU veterans informed and updated on Veterans Benefits information. ■



Daleo Freeman, Director

In Unity: Civil Rights and the Labor Movement

Historically, the intertwining narratives of the civil rights movement and the labor movement stand as powerful testaments to the resilience of the human spirit and the pursuit of equality. As Martin Luther King Jr. eloquently remarked, “The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress.” This article delves into the profound connection between these two movements, exploring the shared struggles, triumphs, and the enduring legacy they have left for generations to come.

The mid-20th century marked a pivotal moment in American history when the echoes of justice reverberated through the nation. The civil rights movement, led by courageous individuals, sought to dismantle the oppressive shackles of racial segregation and discrimination in the country. Simultaneously the labor movement championed the rights of workers, demanding fair wages, reasonable working hours, and an end to exploitative labor practices.

King’s vision extended beyond racial equality to the economic plight. He also recognized the symbiotic relationship between civil rights and labor rights. In a speech delivered to the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) in 1961, he declared, “The duality of interests of labor and Negroes makes any crisis which lacerates you a crisis from which we bleed.”

The civil rights movement drew strength from the labor movement, and vice versa. Both movements found inspiration in the shared pursuit of justice, equality, and the unassailable belief that every individual deserved dignity and respect.

Martin Luther King Jr.’s words resonate as a timeless anthem, inspiring those engaged in the struggle for justice: “If you can’t fly, then run, if you can’t run, then walk, if you can’t walk, then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward.” The synergy between these movements reached a crescendo in 1963 when King delivered his iconic “*I Have a Dream*” speech during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. King painted a vivid picture of a future where justice and fairness prevailed in every aspect of society.

The struggles faced by African-Americans and all laborers intersected on numerous fronts. Discrimination in the workplace, wage disparities, and the denial of fundamental rights were challenges that both movements confronted head-on. King recognized the potency of unity, stating, “Our needs are identical with labor’s needs: decent wages, fair working conditions, livable housing, old age security, health and welfare measures, conditions in which families can grow, have education for their children, and respect in the community.”

The legacy of the civil rights and labor movement endures, casting a long shadow on the path toward progress. The legislative victories, such as the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* and the *Fair Labor Standards Act*, stand as monuments to the hard-fought battles waged by these movements. Yet, the journey is far from over.

**THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT
DREW STRENGTH FROM THE LABOR
MOVEMENT, AND VICE VERSA. BOTH
MOVEMENTS FOUND INSPIRATION IN
THE SHARED PURSUIT OF JUSTICE,
EQUALITY, AND THE UNASSAILABLE
BELIEF THAT EVERY INDIVIDUAL
DESERVED DIGNITY AND RESPECT.**

In conclusion, the harmonious convergence of the civil rights and labor movement serves as a beacon of hope and inspiration for generations to come. As we reflect on the indomitable spirit of Martin Luther King Jr. and the countless individuals who stood shoulder to shoulder in pursuit of a more just society, let us draw strength from their legacy. In the words of King, “The time is always right to do what is right.” The tapestry they wove included threads of courage, perseverance, and justice. The fight for the common good continues to shape our collective journey toward a more equitable and inclusive future. ■



Nancy Olumekor, Director

Continue Your APWU Activism, Become a Retiree Member!

APWU family, an important part of our fight to protect and secure our hard-earned benefits and to help to preserve the Postal Service includes the continued growth of the APWU Retirees Department. Retiree members are an asset to the APWU at every level, as mentors and as a support system. It is our collective efforts that will help us achieve our goals. Retiree members participate in social, political, legislative, and educational activities for the dual purposes of improving retirees' quality of life and reaching out to help those who are less fortunate. Retiree members also assist APWU local and state organizations. So, continue your APWU membership by joining the Retirees Department.

Members join the Retirees Department for numerous reasons: to stay abreast of issues related to retirees and to bring awareness to retiree issues; to help protect the rights of future retirees by supporting legislative issues important to retirees and working people; to share knowledge and experience where needed; and to work within the labor movement at the local, state, and national levels; and to protect our voice and vote by securing more rights for retirees.

Additional benefits of joining the Retirees Department include access to the Voluntary Benefit Plan programs, including a free \$5,000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance Policy, and access to the APWU Health Plan. Retirees also come together to establish APWU Retiree Chapters, which are independently chartered bodies of the APWU that are organized and democratically led by APWU retiree members.

May is Older Americans Month (OAM)

When OAM was established in 1963, only 17 million Americans living at that time had reached their 65th birthday. About a third of older Americans lived in poverty and there were few programs to meet their needs. Historically, OAM has been a time to acknowledge the contributions of past and current older persons to our country, in particular those who defended our country. Every president since John F. Kennedy has issued a formal proclamation during or before the month of May asking that the entire nation pay tribute in some way to older persons in their communities. The APWU National Executive Board (NEB) also issued similar annual proclamations.

The 2024 OAM theme, *Powered by Connection*, recognizes the profound impact that meaningful relationships and social connections have on our health and well-being. Staying connected plays a vital role in supporting independence and aging in place by combating isolation, loneliness, and other issues. Below are some ideas for how you can participate in Powered by Connection, which can be found at: acl.gov/oam.

- Share facts about the mental, physical, and emotional health benefits of social connection and how it contributes to overall well-being.
- Promote resources that help older adults engage, like community events, social clubs, and volunteer opportunities.
- Connect older adults with local services, such as transportation, that can help them overcome obstacles to achieving or maintaining meaningful relationships.
- Encourage partners to host a connection-centric event or program, focused on older adult mentors to youth, peer-to-peer support, or similar efforts.
- Challenge professional and personal networks to prioritize meaningful social connections and share the benefits.
- Inspire older adults to share what connection means to them.

Your APWU dues stop when you retire from the USPS and are no longer on their rolls. You can join the Retirees Department online at apwu.org/retiree-online-join. Retiree Department dues are just \$3.00 per month deducted from your annuity. ■

REMEMBER: Do Your Part, GOTV - Get Out the Vote 2024

Vote-by-Mail is essential in 2024. Starting with your primary elections, if you have the chance to Vote-by-Mail do so to protect the integrity of your voice. Retiree voices, senior voices will only be listened to when we VOTE.



Sarah Jane Rodriguez, Director

Stress Less for a Healthier Heart

Stress happens. You can't always prevent or avoid it, but you can change how you respond to it. Try these tips. You may feel better—and have a healthier heart, too!

Know How Stress Affects Your Body

Whether it's from everyday deadlines, the work-life balancing act, or financial struggles, stress shows up often. Your body reacts to it. Your heart rate increases, your blood vessels narrow—and especially over the long term that's not healthy! Research shows that stress can make us more likely to get heart disease and have a heart attack. The origins of heart disease begin at a young age, so the earlier in life you learn how to de-stress, the happier you and your heart will be. Ongoing stress acts on more than just your heart. It affects everything from your nervous system and hormones to your lungs and gut. You may not see the connection, and healthcare providers may not ask about your stress. So try to listen to your body while thinking about what's going on in your life.

- **Turn On Your Relaxation Response** - Did you know your body also has a relaxation response? Your breathing slows and blood pressure and heart rate decrease. The good news is you can trigger that response. Ways to do so often combine breathing deeply and focusing your attention on pleasing thoughts and images. Here are a few relaxation response techniques to try. You can do these on your own or find a teacher or class to start. They may take some practice!
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation** - This approach calls for tightening individual muscles in your body and then releasing the tension. Start by tensing and relaxing your toes, then your calves, and on up to your face. Do one muscle group at a time.
- **Meditation** - This is one of the most-studied approaches for handling stress. There are a variety of ways to do it, including through mindfulness meditation. Most meditation styles involve:
 - Being in a quiet location with as few distractions as possible

- Being physically comfortable either sitting, lying, or walking
- Focusing your attention on a specific word or set of words, an object, or your breathing
- Having an open attitude and letting distractions, including thoughts, come and go without judgment

- **Guided imagery** - This involves a series of steps that include relaxing and visualizing the details of a calm, peaceful setting, such as a garden.
- **Deep Breathing** - This is something you can do anytime, anywhere. Take in a slow, deep breath, let your stomach or chest expand, then exhale slowly. Repeat a few times.

Find Your Way to Healthy Relaxing

There's no one way to control stress. You may want to try a stress management program, do yoga, talk to a professional counselor, take an art class, or join friends for a brisk walk. Being in nature is very soothing for some people.

Finding healthy relaxation exercises is just one way to protect your heart. Combine de-stressing with other heart-healthy habits: eat nutritious foods, move your body more and exercise, get enough sleep, and develop a strong social support system.

Know When It's More Than Just Stress

If you're feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope, are using drugs or alcohol more frequently, or are having suicidal thoughts, seek professional help right away. Resources are available at: nimh.nih.gov/health/find-help or call the number on your APWU Health Plan member ID card.

How the APWU Health Plan Can Help

The APWU Health Plan offers mental health and substance use services. Please visit: apwuhp.com and click on the Members tab to learn more. ■

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

LABOR NEWS

Wells Fargo Workers Bank on Union Representation

Workers at a Wells Fargo bank branch in Albuquerque, NM voted to join Wells Fargo Workers United-CWA on Dec. 20, becoming the first major U.S. banking institution with union representation for its workers. Workers cited concerns with chronic understaffing, unfair sales pressure, and unreasonable workloads as a reason for organizing to improve their working conditions. Wells Fargo is the fourth largest bank in the U.S. with 4,000 branches and 250,000 workers. Soon after the NM victory, workers at a Daytona, FL branch voted to unionize, while workers in Wilmington, DE and Virginia Beach, VA have filed for union elections. ■



Italy's Prime Minister Pursues Postal Privatization

Giorgia Meloni, the neo-Fascist Prime Minister of Italy, who in 2018 said, "No to the privatization of Poste Italiane. It is a crown jewel that must remain in the hands of Italians," has since decided to pursue a partial privatization of the Italian postal service. The Meloni administration's campaign for the privatization of government services, which began in Nov. 2023, also includes selling government stakes in rail and energy services to foreign investors. The Poste Italiane makes significant profits from its insurance and banking services. Economists and analysts have argued that privatization would have little-to-no impact on Italy's debt, while handing over hundreds of millions of public dollars in dividends to the private sector. Nicola Di Ceglie, National Secretary for the Italian Postal Union CGIL-SLC condemned a "wicked" privatization plan stating that the union is, "against further sell-offs of a company that is increasingly important for growth and social cohesion in this country."

Labor Force Survey

On Jan. 23, 2024, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released its annual report on union density in the U.S. workforce. The report indicates that while union membership grew by almost 140,000 members in 2023, there was a slight decrease in union density because the number of non-union jobs created in 2023 outpaced organizing efforts.

The report highlights how anti-union our laws are. BLS studies have shown that 71 percent of Americans and 88 percent of young people support unions. However, their efforts to build unions are often met with union-busting campaigns, legal restrictions, and management refusal to bargain in good faith. The paltry penalties for companies that engage in union-busting are little deterrent. ■

Washington Post, Newsroom Staff Reach Agreement on New Contract

On Dec. 22, 2023, *The Washington Post* reached an agreement with its unionized newsroom staff for a new contract after more than 18 months of negotiations. The deal was reached just two weeks after almost 1,000 members of the Washington-Baltimore News Guild-CWA walked out on a one-day Unfair Labor Practice strike against the Post.

Workers Walkout at Los Angeles Times

Los Angeles Times workers staged a one-day walkout on Jan. 19 to protest planned cuts to the newsroom workforce. It was the first worker-led strike in the paper's 142-year history. The newsroom guild called for the protest after the publication's owner announced plans to lay off more than 100 journalists. The proposed layoffs would be the third round of cuts since June 2023, when the *LA Times* laid off 70 employees.



Amazon Workers Strike Across Europe

Amazon warehouse workers in several European countries took part in a series of strikes in December and January. Strikes occurred in Birmingham, UK, the Dos Hermanas plant in Spain's Seville province, and several German cities.

These actions happened just weeks after the successful Make Amazon Pay International Day of Action, organized by UNI Global Union on Black Friday - Nov. 24, 2023. Workers and allies in more than 30 countries joined the protest against Amazon's exploitive anti-worker practices on Black Friday.



Argentina General Strike

Workers in Argentina held a one-day general strike on Jan. 24 in response to a proposed law and presidential decree from the administration of newly elected president Javier Milei. Milei, a right-wing demagogue, is seeking to undo decades of hard-fought social protections, workers' rights, and the right to protest in order to implement severe austerity measures to public services and privatize many government services.



The general strike was organized by several labor unions against more than 500 undemocratic measures to implement Milei's plans. Protestors have had some success, causing limited setbacks to the president's program to roll-back workers' protections and some cuts to public services. However, the bill which contains measures to abolish protections for renters, privatize services, and criminalize protesting passed a first vote in the country's Chamber of Deputies, taking it closer to becoming law. ■

Auto Workers Union Shifts Gears Towards Non-Union Organizing Campaigns

In November 2023, the United Auto Workers (UAW) announced plans to organize workers in non-union auto plants across the country. The union has spoken publicly about campaigns at the Mercedes plant in Vance, AL and at the Hyundai plant in Montgomery, AL, where more than 30 percent of workers have authorized union-representation. Workers at more than a dozen other plants are also organizing with the UAW.

On Feb. 6, 2024 the union announced that a majority of workers have signed cards to authorize a union election at the Volkswagen (VW) flagship manufacturing plant in Chattanooga, TN.

Many previous attempts to organize outside of the "Big Three" automakers failed. In 2019, VW Chattanooga workers narrowly rejected unionization by an 833-776 vote. However, union leaders believe there is now an opportunity for a new start in the wake of record support for unions and major gains for union autoworkers following the UAW Stand Up Strike.



Pay Your Taxes, not a Big Tech Company

This year, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is rolling out a pilot program across 12 states that will allow many working class people to file their taxes quickly and easily online, for free. The new program, called **Direct File**, is the work of a multiyear effort of many *A Grand Alliance* partners, who advocated for a public option in tax preparation. Their effort, organized as the Coalition for Free and Fair Filing, estimates that Americans spend 1.7 billion hours and \$31 billion every year to file their taxes, with most of that money going to giant tech companies like Intuit, the parent company of TurboTax.

The pilot makes Direct File available to users in Arizona, California, Florida, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Nevada, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, and Wyoming.

But the possibility of an accessible and affordable public option for tax preparation isn't just about denying money to the big tech companies, it's also an effective way to ensure that people who are entitled to tax breaks and other benefits are able to receive that money. The IRS estimated that in 2021, 9 million people who qualified for various tax benefits did not receive them because they didn't file their taxes. More than 20 percent of families eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit did not claim it.

These are mostly people of very modest incomes who normally wouldn't file their taxes either because they earn too little, they can't afford the time or cost of filing, or face other barriers. A free Direct File tool would help these people access the benefits they deserve, increase trust in good government, and help alleviate poverty.

Who could argue with providing good quality public services that save millions of people money? It shouldn't surprise any regular reader of this column, but big corporate interests lobbied hard against efforts to make Direct File available to the public. The Coalition for Free and Fair Filing estimates that the tax prep industry spent over \$80 million fighting the Coalition's efforts in Congress and with the IRS. The big tax prep companies don't just want to squash the Direct File initiative, they have a multi-year effort to steer people away from other free filing options.

In fact, Intuit was recently hit with a \$141 million court settlement for intentionally steering low-income filers away from publicly available free filing options and onto their platform, which was deceptively marketed as "free" when in fact filers faced fees after completing their returns.

WHO COULD ARGUE WITH PROVIDING GOOD QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES THAT SAVE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE MONEY? IT SHOULDN'T SURPRISE ANY REGULAR READER OF THIS COLUMN, BUT BIG CORPORATE INTERESTS LOBBIED HARD AGAINST EFFORTS TO MAKE DIRECT FILE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC.

It's hard to get excited about filing taxes. As postal workers, you may wish that more people sent their taxes through the mail; more than 90 percent of all people file online. But the simple fact is that a handful of companies have been ripping off working class people for years, taking their hard-earned money for providing what should be a simple and reliable public service. While Direct File is only in its pilot stage, it's a step in the right direction for those who care about public services, our democratic rights, and fairness for working people.

To find out more from the Coalition for Free and Fair Filing, visit betterirs.org. If you live in one of the 12 states above and think you may be eligible for Direct File, you can find more information at directfile.irs.gov. ■

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



INTERVIEW

How Postal Banking Makes a Difference Around the World

The American Postal Worker recently spoke with Cornelia Berger, the Head of Post and Logistics for Uni Global Union, about the role postal banking plays in other countries.

The US had a postal banking system from 1911-1967. Many international post offices still operate postal banks. What is the global landscape of postal banking?

With more than 90 percent of posts worldwide offering financial services, postal operators provide 1.5 billion people with access to basic financial services (payments, money transfers, and savings).

These services ensure financial access for customers in remote, rural, and traditionally marginalized/underserved communities, in emerging and advanced economies alike.

How does postal banking help post offices around the world fulfill their public service mission?

In many countries, the big banks refuse financial services to all but the wealthiest (and most profitable) clients, excluding working people from many economic activities.

In contrast, postal banks typically offer inclusive services, serving the entire community.

Posts are typically well placed to provide these basic services due to their dense network of postal outlets throughout the country.

Postal banks can play an important role in economic development by carrying out a public mission in finance as

they do for postal services. The idea is simple: if more people have access to financial services, they can get economically active, creating a positive impact on the overall economy of the country.

How do postal financial services differ from commercial banking?

The post bank is often only offering a limited range of products, mostly focusing on simple accounts. These products satisfy the needs of the vast majority of the population and make them a bank for the people.

By not competing in the same market as big banks, the postal bank is under less pressure to generate big profits.

Mail volumes in the US and around the industrialized world are declining rapidly. Can postal banking contribute to the sustainability of postal services?

Between 2019 and 2021, letter-post volumes declined globally by 13.6 percent, while according to the Universal Postal Union's (UPU) most recent estimations, global postal revenues stemming from parcels and logistics have reached a tipping point where they are larger than letter-post revenues for the first time as recorded in 147 years of UPU postal statistics. With steady e-commerce growth driven by COVID-19 restrictions, global domestic parcel volumes increased by 33.6 percent between 2019 and 2021.

But the growth in courier, express, parcel (CEP) does not outweigh letter revenue decline. Postal operators need to diversify to keep the network running,

and many have found financial services to be second only to CEP strategies for new growth.

Some long-established post banks contribute massively to the overall finances of the post. In Japan, financial and insurance services account for 78 percent of the overall income of the Japan Post Group. La Poste France counted 23.4 percent of its revenue from financial services in 2022.

Do you bank with the post? If so, what's it like?

Yes, I am a customer of PostFinance in Switzerland. The postal bank, together with the cantonal banks, holds the license for universal obligation for financial services.

The products are limited but satisfy my need as [a] small customer. PostFinance has one of the best networks in the country, with affordable services available at train stations, supermarkets, and every local post office. It's the most affordable and convenient bank for workers and normal people like me.

Do you have any advice for US advocates campaigning for postal banking?

You need to get the commitment of the postal staff and the support of the population.



Cornelia Berger, Head of Post and Logistics, Uni Global Union

A post bank shouldn't be an ordinary bank, but fulfill a public mission for the people by serving their specific needs. Competing with the big players in the financial market won't be a successful strategy. Offering a limited range of services and products at an affordable price without the pressure of generating massive profits has been a successful strategy for postal banks worldwide.

At the same time the transition must be inclusive and just for the workers. It needs training and good regulation especially when it comes to sales performance, security, and surveillance. Postal banking should be a win-win for postal workers and postal customers alike. ■

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



Looking Back:

APWU Helped Usher in the End of Apartheid in South Africa

April 20, 1994 – The AFL-CIO sent an 89-member delegation to observe South Africa's first free and fair elections. The delegation included seven APWU members.

Despite violent attacks, including nearby bombings by groups seeking to disrupt the historic vote, the delegation of APWU representatives were undeterred.

The decades-long international struggle to end South African Apartheid, a system of racial subjugation that denied the Black majority basic human rights, peaked in the 1980s. In the U.S., civil rights groups, religious organizations, student groups, and labor unions advocated for legislation to impose economic sanctions on the South African regime.

In 1990, mounting international pressure and sustained economic and political action from workers within the country paid off. The South African government freed anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela, who had been a political prisoner for 27 years. Banned political parties were legalized and the dismantling of the Apartheid system began.

Dedication of the William H. Burrus Executive Board Room at APWU Headquarters

WILLIAM H. BURRUS
EXECUTIVE
BOARDROOM

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

Burrus was the first African-American president of a national union directly elected by members. In 1958, he began his postal career in Cleveland, OH where he worked as a mail clerk. He rose through the ranks of his local union and participated in the Great Postal Strike of 1970. In 1974 he was elected president of the Cleveland Area Local, and in 1980 he joined with Moe Biller to run for and win the union's highest two offices, with Biller serving as national president, and Burrus as vice president.

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

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

The dedication was made at the suggestion of Clerk Division NBA, Vince Tarducci. President Mark Dimondstein noted at Burrus's memorial service in 2018 that he is still a guiding force in the union today. "He was responsible for countless arbitration settlements and memorandums of understanding ... Local and state officers throughout the country still rely on what we affectionately call the 'Burrus Book,' a compilation of hundreds of settlements negotiated with postal management." ■



South African President Nelson Mandela (left) shakes hands with former APWU President Moe Biller (right) and former AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland (center).

: This Time in Our Labor History



Local and international election observers, including current APWU Legislative & Political Department Director Judy Beard (front row, center left) monitored polling stations during the 1994 South African elections.

In 1992, negotiations with South African President F. W. de Klerk led to a vote for a new government on April 27, 1994. As leaders of their respective political parties, Mandela and de Klerk were the two major candidates for president.

The day after arriving in South Africa, the team of U.S. labor delegates was reminded of the dangers when a bomb exploded at the airport, and a subsequent bombing two blocks from their hotel killed 16. Another bomb targeted South African union offices in Pretoria, where delegates were set to attend a meeting, but it was found and defused. Despite the dangers, the APWU observers were undeterred.

Fanning Out to Polling Places

After receiving training on the election procedures, the APWU delegates observed polling sites in Johannesburg, Kimberley, New London, Pretoria, and Vereeniging. Working with other union activists on behalf of the Independent Election Commission of South Africa, they monitored polling stations and

watched the vote counting for signs of election interference.

The observers were impressed by the patience of people who lined up at the polls and waited for 12 or more hours to vote.

The South Africans they met appreciated their acts of solidarity. "Thank you for making it your business, to have an interest in liberty and democracy in South Africa," said South African Post and Telecommunication Workers Association President, Lefty Monyokolo. "We won't forget it."



The public showed up to polling stations in droves and, in some cases, happily waited more than 12 hours to vote in their first free and fair elections.

Elected with almost 63 percent of the vote in a seven-candidate field, Mandela was sworn in as South African President on May 10, 1994, as more than a billion people watched on television. ■

Remembering The Great Postal Strike

March 17, 1970 – Fifty-four years ago, postal workers courageously began a historic strike at the United States Post Office Department, which ultimately led to improved wages and working conditions after workers endured decades of low pay, long hours, lack of benefits, and no collective bargaining rights.

More than 200,000 postal workers in over 30 states participated in the illegal strike, triggered by a below-inflation wage "increase" of 5.4 percent.

President Nixon's attempt to keep the mail moving failed as the mail ground to a halt. This forced the Postmaster General to the bargaining table, and by March 25, postal workers around the country began returning to work.

The agreement gave postal workers a retroactive six percent raise. The 1970 Postal Reorganization Act (PRA), signed into law five months later, gave workers an additional eight percent wage increase and the right to bargain collectively.

By January 1971, the newly created USPS participated in its first collective bargaining session with seven postal unions, including five that would become the foundation of the APWU on July 1, 1971. ■

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