

THE AMERICAN Postal Worker

September/October 2024

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION:

27th Biennial National Convention in Detroit, MI Displays

OUR UNION VALUES



The APWU National Executive Board Endorses
Vice President Kamala Harris for the Next
President of the United States.
Read more on page 5.



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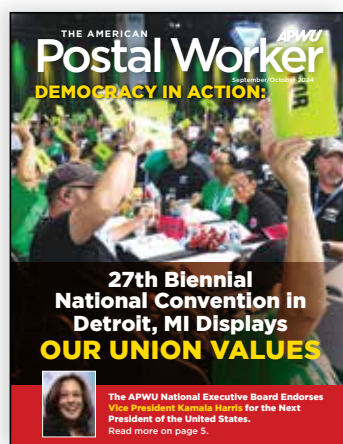
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The quiz winners from the July/August 2024 edition of *The American Postal Worker* were:

Wendy Dunkin, Saint Louis Gateway Area Local (MO)

Tina Pawlick, Fort Wayne IN Area Local

Tim Hamley Sr., William H. Burrus Cleveland Area Local (OH)



ABOUT THE COVER:

Delegates of the APWU's 27th Biennial National Convention were energized, mobilized, and organized to get to work in Detroit, MI this July. Illustrating our democracy in action, members participated in spirited debates and voted on resolutions that determined the priorities of our union work for the next two years, including current negotiations for a union contract.

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The American Postal Worker

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

www.apwu.org

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

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PRODUCED BY THE APWU COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

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Design and Layout



The State of the APWU Is Energized, Mobilized, Ready to Organize!

PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN

I was proud to give the keynote “State of the Union” speech, excerpted below, at the just-completed APWU national convention.

“Our times are both dangerous and promising. On one hand there is rising bigotry, deepening attacks on workers’ rights, women’s rights, civil rights, and democratic rights. The current threat of fascist dictatorship, and with it the crushing of the labor movement, is very real, as witnessed by the despicable coup attempt of January 6th.

But while we have much work ahead of us, workers are on the march. Support for unions is at its highest point in decades. We have witnessed significant union organizing successes, and many workers are ready and willing to withhold their labor to get what they deserve as the workers who create all wealth.

Since our last convention, postal workers have benefited from the implementation of the strong union contract ratified with a 94 percent vote in early 2022. With our strong Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs), we have weathered this period of high inflation, aptly called ‘greedflation,’ as corporate profits soar while life is harder on working people. COLA gains under our current contract amount to a phenomenal \$5,325 a year for full-time career workers and \$2.67 per hour for part-time flexible employees (PTFs). And once converted, Postal Support Employees (PSEs) pick up the COLA in the career pay scale. We have secured the conversion of over 25,000 PSEs since our last convention, adding to the stunning total of 131,000 union-won conversions since 2014!

With the current contract due to expire on September 20th, we just opened negotiations for a new main collective bargaining agreement. I’m sure you agree with our general goals: protect the many gains of the past, including our incredible career ‘no-layoff’ protection, the 50-mile limit on excessing, and our full COLAs. Then enhance our solid foundation to include good annual wage increases, continuing to bridge the gaps between the divisive wage tiers, and striving for an all-career workforce, and of course much more.

Our inspiring kick-off rally with labor and community allies underscores we are not alone. Our “Building Union Power” organizing campaign yielded over 8,700 new members as we opened negotiations – a powerful message to management.

There is no doubt that we are being challenged by the doubled-edged sword of management’s “network modernization” plan. As union leaders, we should never replace facts with wishful thinking. Last year First-Class letter mail, the main revenue driver for the USPS, fell to 46 billion pieces, from a peak of 103 billion in 2001. But due to ecommerce, [package volumes] are rising, representing the main opportunity for more revenue, job protection, and growth.

Yet, there are clearly parts of the ‘modernization’ plan that the APWU absolutely opposes. The moving of locally-generated mail destined for the local service area to be processed hundreds of miles away and eliminating afternoon truck runs – both result in mail delays. APWU activists have done a commendable job sounding the alarms and demanding that no matter who we are or where we live, the people deserve “first-class” service.

Over many decades, [we] have faced a hostile management culture that has proven difficult to fix. In 2023, we moved the issue of the toxic work environment front and center. We will continue to do so in negotiations and in the streets. It is long overdue that abusive managers are held accountable by upper management!

Let us ‘Energize, Organize, Mobilize’ for a better life for all postal workers...for better service to the people, to defend our public national treasure from the fangs of the Wall Street privatizers ... to defend and expand voting rights and to ensure that cherished democratic rights will not die on our watch... [and] to win ever more workers’ power. Solidarity Forever!” ■

(The full video and transcripts are available at: apwu.org)

APWU National Executive Board Endorses Kamala Harris for President



On July 23, 2024, the APWU National Executive Board (NEB) voted unanimously to endorse Vice President Kamala Harris for the next President of the United States. One day earlier, the AFL-CIO Executive Council, where the APWU is represented by President Mark Dimondstein, voted unanimously to endorse Kamala Harris for U.S. President.

These votes and endorsements came on the heels of the changed circumstances in the presidential campaign when, on July 22, 2024, President Joe Biden declared that he was no longer a candidate in the upcoming 2024 election.

The APWU NEB vote also reflects the guidance and direction of the APWU National Convention, where 2,000 delegates overwhelmingly voted to endorse the Biden-Harris ticket just days prior to Biden's withdrawal.

The Board recognizes and respects that our members have many different political affiliations and viewpoints. The Executive Board does not dictate how our members should vote.

“EITHER WE ELECT DONALD TRUMP WHO PLANS TO DESTROY THE PUBLIC POSTAL SERVICE, OUR JOBS AND UNION, OR WE ELECT KAMALA HARRIS WHO HAS PROVEN AS VICE PRESIDENT AND IN PRIOR POLITICAL OFFICE, TO SUPPORT POSTAL ISSUES AND HAS PROVIDED SOME GENUINE ADVOCACY FOR WORKERS’ RIGHTS, WOMEN’S RIGHTS, UNIONS, RESPECT FOR ALL PEOPLE, AND COMMON DECENCY.”

A Stark Choice

The NEB came to our position by examining the records and commitments of the two major-party candidates, Kamala Harris and Donald Trump. While every individual will vote their conscience, your union leadership encourages you to cast your vote for Kamala Harris. The NEB encourages our members and their families, regardless of political affiliation, to vote based on the issues that uplift and promote a better life for postal workers and all working people.

In contrast to Vice President Harris's campaign and record, former President Donald Trump's positions are hostile to workers' rights, oppose living wages, fail to fight for a clean environment, undermine veteran benefits, threaten the vital programs of Social Security and Medicare, and openly incite dangerous racial, ethnic, and religious bigotry at a time when working-class people need unity and solidarity more than ever to advance our common interests.

Before becoming Vice President, Harris served on the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, where she was a staunch defender of the public Postal Service and of postal workers' union

rights. The Biden-Harris Administration was a critical ally in passing the long-needed *Postal Service Reform Act*, which President Biden signed into law in April 2022.

“The outcome of this presidential election will have a huge impact on postal workers and the choice in this election is stark,” declared National President Mark Dimondstein. “Either we elect Donald Trump who plans to destroy the public Postal Service, our jobs and union, further undermine workers' rights, women's rights, and voting rights, and send us on a path to dictatorship, or we elect Kamala Harris who has proven as Vice President and in prior political office, to support postal issues and has provided some genuine advocacy for workers' rights, women's rights, unions, respect for all people, and common decency.”

The National APWU will continue to share with the membership issue-based assessments of the 2024 presidential and congressional candidates and encourage our members to be fully engaged in the upcoming and vitally important presidential election as we work together to expand our democratic rights and protect our jobs, our union, and the public Postal Service. ■

2024 Election Mail Procedures for Postal Employees

The Postal Service defines Election Mail as “any item mailed to or from authorized election officials that enables citizens to participate in the voting process.” Election mail includes:

- Mail-in ballots;
- Balloting materials;
- Voter registration cards;
- Mail-in ballot applications;
- Polling place notifications.

One easy way to determine if a piece of mail is Election Mail is to look for the "Official Election Mail" logo. While not every piece of Election Mail will feature this logo, most will.

Election officials may place a green container tag #191 on mail-in ballots to help identify trays and sacks of ballot mail. This tag is for ballots destined for both domestic and international addresses.

Election Mail versus Political Mail

Political Mail is different from Election Mail. The Postal Service defines Political Mail as “any material mailed for campaign purposes by a registered political candidate, campaign committee or committee of a political party, as well as any material mailed by a political action committee or organization engaging in issues advocacy or voter mobilization.”

Political Mail may have a red container tag #57 titled, “Political Campaign Mailing” to help distinguish this mail within postal facilities.

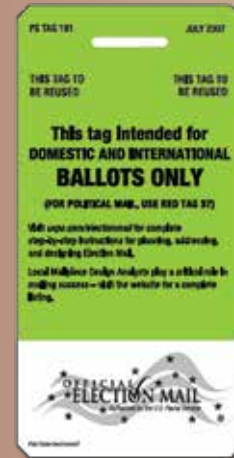
Processing Election Mail

Election Mail should be expedited through the network with timely processing. According to Post

Office policy, all delivery units and processing facilities are required to certify, on a daily basis, that their unit is clear of all Political and Election Mail committed for delivery that day.

Expedited processing and delivery of election-related mail is crucial to our democratic process. It is extremely important that ballots are identified and processed in a timely manner to ensure ballots are returned to election offices within the allotted time for the vote to be counted.

If you are unfamiliar with USPS Election Mail and Political Mail policies, please contact your supervisor. ■



Project 2025: Beware!

The “2025 Presidential Transition Project” commonly known as “Project 2025” has been in the news lately. The APWU National Convention passed a resolution exposing and opposing the “project” and political candidates who endorse it. Why should postal workers be concerned?

Q: What is Project 2025?

A: Project 2025 is a creation of the extreme right-wing Heritage Foundation and a “blueprint” for a second Trump administration beginning in January 2025, hence the name. The Heritage Foundation, created in 1973, aggressively advocates for the privatization of the public Postal Service.

Q: Who are the authors of the report?

A: One of the architects of the 2025 Project is Paul Dans, head of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) under former president Donald Trump. The Associate Director is Spencer Chretien, former presidential assistant to Trump. Over 140 associates from the Trump administration participated in creating the 922-page report.

Q: Does the “blueprint” propose assaults on worker and union rights?

A: Yes. Proposals include:

- Banning the current ability of companies to voluntarily recognize unions when there is majority interest from the workers;
- Allowing union-busting companies to engage in decertification efforts even when a contract is in place. (Currently an existing union contract bars decertification attempts);
- Banning unions for public-sector workers;
- Creating “company unions,” which was legally banned generations ago;
- Allowing minors to work in hazardous and dangerous jobs such as mining and manufacturing;
- Enabling states to circumvent federal overtime and minimum wage laws;
- Eliminating prevailing wage standards under government contracts;
- Reducing workplace health and safety provisions;
- Categorizing millions more workers as “independent contractors,” doing away with legal protections for minimum wages, overtime, safety, and rights to unionize.

Q: Does Project 2025 address veteran rights and benefits?

A: Yes, the report advocates for cutting costs at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs by having fewer health conditions that would qualify veterans for disability benefits. Additionally, 30 percent of the federal workforce is comprised of veterans and the project plans to reduce the federal workforce by over 50 percent.

Q: Where does Project 2025 stand on women’s reproductive rights?

A: The report calls for the elimination of health insurance coverage for emergency contraception and calls into question other methods of contraception. It also calls for the resurrection of the obscure *Comstock Act of 1873* to criminalize FDA-approved abortion care from being delivered via mail to save the life of the mother and those women who seek such treatment.

Q: Are there proposals that are detrimental to children?

A: Absolutely. The report calls for an end to funding Head Start preschool programs and reducing financial support for school meals. It calls for undermining public education by replacing it with a voucher system for private schools, which is a form of privatization. The report promotes the elimination of the Department of Education and “Title I” funding that assists in bridging educational gaps in low-income communities, which would slash 180,000 teaching positions.

Q: Some have called the project a roadmap to an authoritarian regime. What are these concerns?

A: The plan’s proposals would shift more power to the Executive Branch and president by replacing tens of thousands of nonpolitical civil servants throughout government agencies with direct political appointments made by the president and only loyal to the president. In addition, the Department of Justice would lose any independence from the Executive Branch and would be directly controlled by the president.

Q: What impact would the proposals have, if enacted, on the environment and climate change?

A: At an urgent time of climate change and global warming, largely caused by fossil fuels, Project 2025 calls for eliminating federal restrictions on fossil fuel drilling on public lands, curtailing federal investments in renewable energy technologies, and easing environmental-permitting restrictions and procedures for new fossil fuel projects, such as power plants.

For these and many other reasons, the APWU and the entire AFL-CIO urges union members, families, and friends to vote against any candidates running in support of Project 2025. ■

APWU 27th Biennial ENERGIZE, ORGA

Biennial Convention Meets to Set Union Priorities,

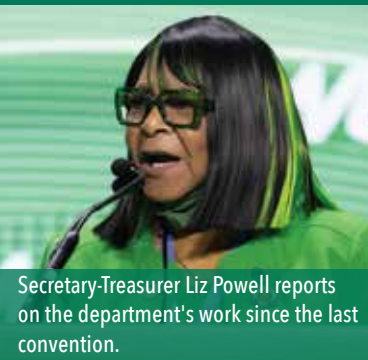
More than two thousand APWU members gathered in Detroit, MI July 15-18, 2024, for the union's 27th Biennial National Convention. The convention is the union's highest decision-making authority, placing it at the heart of our union democracy. APWU local and state unions elect delegates and determine their priorities to bring to the national convention. At the Biennial National Convention, delegates vote on these resolutions to determine the priorities of our union work for the next two years. The theme of the week was "Energize, Organize, and Mobilize!" reflecting the backdrop of a resurgent labor movement and a growing global threat to democracy.

Detroit District Area Local President Keith Combs opened the 27th Biennial National Convention with a welcome to APWU delegates from across the country. Delegates adopted a motion to dedicate the convention in honor of former Central Region Coordinator Leo F. Persails, who passed away on April 3, 2024.

Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth "Liz" Powell provided delegates with a report on her work managing the union's finances, the National Convention, the administration of national officer elections, advice and support for local union constitutional and financial issues, union staff, member dues, and more. Secretary-Treasurer Powell also took time to highlight how we are ready to "Energize, Mobilize, and Organize" today and for the future. APWU President Mark Dimondstein then gave his "State of the Union" address, outlining our accomplishments and the challenges that we will face together as a union. "The weather will be stormy at times," he said. "But we have the good and sturdy ship called the APWU built with many hands over generations of struggle."



APWU President Mark Dimondstein outlines the accomplishments and challenges of the union in the "State of the Union" address.



Secretary-Treasurer Liz Powell reports on the department's work since the last convention.



Detroit District Area Local President Keith Combs welcomes delegates and opens the National Convention.

Craft Divisions, Support Services Get to Work at Pre-Convention Conferences

As delegates arrived in Detroit, the Clerk, Maintenance, Motor Vehicle Service, and Support Services Divisions held their respective conferences to determine their priorities the weekend before Convention began.

At the Clerk Division General Session, Director Lamont Brooks presented current national and jurisdictional disputes, stressed the need to return clerk work to the craft, and discussed the importance of protecting and expanding work in the craft. Following the Clerk Division Officer Reports, the membership discussed and debated 47 resolutions presented by the craft Resolution Committee.

At the Maintenance Division General Session, Director Idowu Balogun provided remarks before delivering his officer report. Maintenance national officers also discussed the updated General Services Administration (GSA) per diem allowance, pending national disputes, a Step 4 settlement, and Maintenance Craft pilot programs. Delegates discussed and debated a total of 24 resolutions.

Motor Vehicle Service (MVS) Division Director Michael Foster led the MVS General Session. Delegates partici-



Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy and Industrial Relations Director Charlie Cash take turns chairing the National Convention.

National Convention NIZE, MOBILIZE!

Energize Delegates for Hard Work Ahead

pated in Article 32 Sub-contracting and Article 39 Basic Training sessions, as well as a course titled “Conversions, Residuals and Maximizations.”

Director Foster spoke about past victories obtained by the craft in the outgoing union contract, ongoing Step 4 disputes, updates on the Postal Vehicle Operator (PVO) pilot program, and the historic 110 award from arbitrator Das, which retained PVS work for APWU-represented employees. Delegates discussed resolution proposals addressing driver safety, job training, security, and seniority.

The Support Services Division General Session, led by Director Arrion Brown, began with updates about Information Technology and Accounting Services (IT/ AS) and 10 Roads Express contract negotiations. Director Brown held a “Taking Action to Protect Our Union” workshop, which discussed the differences between an organizing union and a service union, and how to build worker power through organized actions, and a training on the grievance procedure.

APWU Craft and Support Services Division Directors give their General Session Officer Reports. From Top L-R: Maintenance Division Director Idowu Balogun, Motor Vehicle Service Division Director Michael Foster, Support Services Division Director Arrion Brown, and Clerk Division Director Lamont Brooks.



Retirees Prepare for Legislative Battles

Focusing on issues of relevance to retirees and active members alike, the Retirees Department General Ses-



Retirees Director Nancy Olumekor speaks to the delegates at the Retiree Conference.

sion, led by Director Nancy Olumekor, included presentations about the 2024 Election and voting rights, Medicare Integration, pending legislation, such as the *Social Security Fairness Act* and *The Federal Retiree Fairness Act*, Medicare Advantage Plans, and the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025.

Retiree Conference attendees were lauded by various speakers for their many contributions to the union, especially for laying the groundwork for the formation of the APWU.

APWU young members gather for a breakfast hosted by the Young Members' Committee.



APWU Young Members: Confidence Is the Key to the APWU's Future!

Over 80 of the union's young members (age 35 and under) and national officers attended a breakfast hosted by the Young Members Committee (YMC) for fellowship and to discuss what can be done to serve young members' needs. Leaders of the YMC shared a program that included an ice breaker and a program about labor history through the eyes of young members.

The meeting was planned by the YMC Chairs. The committee invited delegates under the age of 35 and executive officers to attend the meeting of young union activists.

Courtney Agee wrapped up the breakfast with a special presentation thanking Secretary-Treasurer Liz Powell for her work to build and grow the YMC. →



Shawn Fain to APWU: ‘You Are the Hope of the Working Class’

Shawn Fain, president of the United Auto Workers (UAW), addressed the convention by expressing solidarity with postal workers on behalf of over 1 million UAW members. Despite constant challenges to workers’ rights and freedoms, Fain is confident that the working class can win. “There is only one answer to the threat we face as a nation. That answer is solidarity,” he said. “Remember that you are the best America has to offer. And that you are the hope of the working class.”



Union leaders from across industries offer support and solidarity in Detroit. From top row L-R: United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain, National Association of Letter Carriers President Brian Renfroe, AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, Canadian Union of Postal Workers President Jan Simpson, and Association of Flight Attendants-CWA President Sara Nelson.



Sara Nelson: ‘Building our Unions Is How We Set the Agenda!’

Representing more than 55,000 members, Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA) President Sara Nelson took to the stage on the first day of convention. She brought down the house with an impassioned speech about the importance of solidarity in the face of corporate greed and union busting. Nelson reminded delegates that the path to change is clear – it’s through building a strong union.

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler: ‘APWU Is a Force in the Labor Movement’

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler addressed delegates on the first day of the convention, highlighting the state of the labor movement, the current political landscape, and worker solidarity. She reflected on the historic postal strike that led to the formation of the APWU. “You’ve proven you can take on extraordinary challenges,” she began. President Shuler praised postal workers’ perseverance throughout the pandemic, processing election mail,

reform battles, heat waves, and harassment. “Your work binds this country together.”

Messages of Solidarity from NALC President Brian Renfroe, NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson

National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) President Brian Renfroe thanked APWU officers, delegates, and members for the work that postal workers do to strengthen the union and the Postal Service. Speaking about current APWU contract negotiations, Renfroe offered a message to APWU members on behalf of 285,000 NALC members, stating “We stand with you, we fight with you, and we will do what we’ve always done – we will win with you!”

NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson provided words of solidarity. “We know that civil rights and worker rights are the same fight to ensure that all Americans are treated with dignity and respect and are paid a fair wage,”

Support and Solidarity

said President Johnson. “So, as you continue this convention, I wish you much success. But after the convention, I look to join you on the battlefield to fight for the rights of workers, to fight for our democracy, and to ensure that equal protection under the law is afforded to all.”

Rep. Rashida Tlaib: ‘Protecting Working-Class Families, Institutions Is Important to Our Community!’

House Representative Rashida Tlaib (D-MI-12) addressed the delegation on July 16. Tlaib reaffirmed her commitment to the progressive causes that APWU supports. In addition to Medicare for All, public postal banking, and pro-union legislation like the *Protecting the Right to Organize* (PRO) Act, she doubled down on her support for a vibrant public Postal Service. “I’ll always stand with postal workers; I’ll always stand with working people.”

Congressman Bennie Thompson, Attorney General Keith Ellison Stand with Postal Workers

Congressman Bennie Thompson, the Chairman of the January 6 Committee, spoke to delegates about the many threats to democracy in the wake of the 2021 attack on the Nation’s Capitol. He remains committed to the fight to ensure that no other attacks like that ever happen again. He encouraged members to continue to stay organized to protect our jobs and hailed postal workers for their hard work processing and delivering election mail safely and securely to voters in the 2020 election. “The greatest equalizer is the right to vote,” said Rep. Thompson.

Keith Ellison, Minnesota Attorney General, spoke about the ongoing threats to democracy, our jobs, and fighting for the future that we deserve. Ellison touched on the recent rise in the U.S. of public support for unions. With two-thirds believing unions help the overall economy, he proclaimed, “America loves unions, and they love you.” He challenged delegates to continue their political activism and stand in solidarity with organized labor. He

Key Updates from the 27th Biennial National Convention

APWU policies and priorities are set by delegates at our biennial national conventions in the form of resolutions that are discussed and debated by the body. Below are some of the resolutions the delegates adopted at the 27th Biennial National Convention.

- Endorse the Biden-Harris ticket for president. (This vote was taken prior to Biden's withdrawal from the 2024 Presidential Race).
- Call for a ceasefire in Gaza and demand an end to military aid to Israel until that is achieved.
- Create a Southern Region Maintenance NBA position and add a new Assistant Director (C) to the Clerk Division.
- Translate the APWU Collective Bargaining Agreement and JCIM into Spanish.
- Oppose Project 2025.
- A resolution calling for leadership to run ads with the message "Dump DeJoy" was soundly defeated on the basis that it would not be productive for national negotiations.

remarked, “For a future we can believe in, we’ve got to get to work.”

Canadian Postal Union Leader Jan Simpson Addresses Delegates

Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) President Jan Simpson joined postal workers on July 17 via video to share a message reaffirming that international solidarity is just as important as solidarity within our union. Simpson acknowledged the similarities between the fights Canadian postal workers are facing and our fights, and that when one union succeeds, we all succeed. “We recognize that your struggle is our struggle, and we draw inspiration from you.” →

APWU allies in government address delegates and remain committed to sticking with postal workers and a public Postal Service.
L-R: Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, House Representative Rashida Tlaib, and House Representative Bennie Thompson.



Finance Committee:

The Finance Committee, chaired by Richard Haefner of the Rochester Local, gave the first report and shared the APWU's financial activity over the past two years. Most notable was that the total number of APWU-represented employees within the Postal Service increased by 1.86 percent since the last convention.



Labor-Management Committee:

Resolutions from the Labor-Management Committee, co-chaired by Tucson Area Local President Mike Moriconi and Wilmington DE/Malcolm T. Smith Area Local President Trina Wynn, impact all crafts and provide the negotiating team additional direction in current and future contract negotiations. Among the adopted resolutions were several dealing with preventing managers in small offices from performing bargaining unit work and work assigned to Part-Time Flexible and Postal Support Employees. Resolutions affecting income included administration of overtime, workhour guarantees, night shift differential, and weekend premiums. Resolution 36, adopted by the delegates, was one of several resolutions that called for the elimination of the two-tier pay scale, reiterating our demand for an all-career workforce.

Donating sick leave, paid maternity leave, increasing the accrual of annual leave, and annual leave carryover were some of the resolutions adopted that are applicable to Article 10 of the National Agreement.

Resolutions to hold management more accountable for complying with grievance settlements were also adopted, while other resolutions focused on stewards' time for processing members' grievances.

Legislative/Political Committee:

The Legislative/Political Committee, co-chaired by Omaha Area Local Clerk Craft Director David Rose and Young Members' Committee member Rictarsha Westmoreland of the Baltimore Francis "Stu" Filbey Area Local, made several important decisions ahead of the 2024 election season. Resolutions in support of women's rights, voting rights, equitable retirement pay, public education, and suicide prevention were adopted. Several other resolutions would strengthen the Postal Service through legislation and by increasing union voices on the Postal Board of Governors and the Postal Regulatory Commission.

Constitution Committee:

The APWU Constitution Committee, co-chaired by Denver Metro Area Local President Laviena Vargas, and

Members of the Detroit District Area Local applaud local president Keith Combs after welcoming delegates to the convention's host state of Michigan.



Committees Report to Delegates

Detroit District Area Local President Keith Combs, presented its report to the delegates. Of note, delegates adopted resolutions creating an additional Assistant Clerk Craft Director and Southern Region Maintenance Craft National Business Agent (NBA). These positions will be filled by appointment until the next election taking place in 2025. Delegates also accepted a commitment from the national leadership to study the feasibility of remote work for NBAs before the next union election.

Delegates turned down resolutions proposing to add the position of a NBA Director and require the National Executive Board (NEB) to meet once per month.

National Executive Board Committee:

National Executive Board resolutions affect how the NEB conducts the business of the union. Delegates adopted a resolution allowing NBAs to provide input on the selection of arbitrators in their respective regions. In addition, issues about language justice, such as translating the APWU website, Collective Bargaining Agreement and Joint Contract Interpretation Manual (JCIM) into Spanish were brought forth and supported by the body.

Formal Resolutions Committee:

Formal resolutions consider issues that affect the whole of the union, the wider labor movement, or political is-

sues that other resolution committees may not properly address. Delegates voted to call for a full ceasefire in Gaza, oppose Project 2025, and repeal so-called "right-to-work" legislation.

The resolutions process was finalized with reports from the Clerk, Maintenance, Motor Vehicle Service, Support Services Division, and Organization committees reporting to the body. Based on the fact that craft conferences debated and voted on resolutions specific to each craft, the convention generally accepted those resolutions "in toto" with a few exceptions, allowing for lively debates on the floor and providing an example of the democratic process for first-time delegates. →

Puerto Rico Area Local President Gabriel Medina chairs the Formal Resolutions Committee.



APWU delegates vote overwhelmingly in favor of a resolution.



Postal Workers Rally in Motor City: Demand Dignity, Good Wages, All-Career Workforce!

Delegates took time from convention business to rally outside of the Convention Center for a strong new contract and draw attention to our main issues. APWU leaders, supporters, and other union activists joined in to say, “We’ve got your back!” On their way out of the convention hall, delegates grabbed rally signs that said “Union Proud, Say It Loud!” and “All Career Workforce!”.

Postal workers demanded dignity at work and good wages that allow them to support their families. In addition, they demanded an all-career workforce, which would allow postal workers to do the same job together as equals and have access to the same benefits and rights that let career employees provide for their families and plan for the future. The APWU's demands echoed those of other industries; it's time to put an end to divisive two-tier pay scales!

APWU members, local political leaders, and allies from labor unions like UNITE HERE and the UAW all spoke in support of APWU members’ fight for a good contract and to end the divisive two-tier wage scale. The rally, emceed by Secretary-Treasurer Liz Powell, opened and closed with inspiring songs and dances from Lynn Marie Smith, the original Detroit Diva.

Energized, and ready to mobilize and organize, delegates were ready to take on the fight to win a strong new contract!



Former Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence received her honorary APWU lifetime membership award during the POWER Caucus - unanimously approved by delegates in 2022.

POWER Awards Outstanding Women of the APWU

The Post Office Women for Equal Rights (POWER) Caucus, hosted by Research and Education Director Joyce B. Robinson, was held July 15. After an inspiring keynote speech by former Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence, the following awards were given at the POWER conference:

- *Elizabeth “Liz” Powell Executive Award:* Anna Smith, Organizing Director
- *Joyce B. Robinson Leadership Award:* Nancy E. Olumekor, Retirees Director
- *Nilda Chock Pioneer Award:* Gloria Rice, Fort Worth Area Local Retiree Chapter
- *POWER Coordinator Award:* Sherry McKnight, Baltimore Francis “Stu Filbey” Area Local.



UNITE HERE Secretary-Treasurer Nia Winston addresses the APWU rally.



Detroit Diva Lynn Marie Smith and APWU Secretary-Treasurer Liz Powell fire up attendees at the rally for a “Good Contract, Now!”



Charlie Cash, Industrial Relations Director and Chief Spokesperson during negotiations gets the crowd fired up for a strong, new contract.



Amazon worker Vernel Williams shares the story of his fight for fair pay, respect, and a union.

Amazon Workers Bravely Organize With the APWU

The APWU Constitution calls for members to always seek to organize the unorganized. Now, thanks to the organizing efforts of the APWU, among others, we are seeing Amazon workers stand up and say – “I’m ready to form a union.” Amazon workers organizing to join the APWU shared at the convention their powerful story of their fight for fair pay, respect, and a union at Amazon warehouses.

Vernel Williams, an Amazon worker at a delivery station in Bellingham, MA, took the stage to rousing applause. Williams shared that this fight is not just about today. “We keep going because together, we are stronger. It’s about generations of workers who deserve a better life. It’s about a better world that our children and grandchildren will live in – one where they can thrive.”

Another Amazon worker, Marc Tourangeau, followed Williams, sharing the struggles that he and his coworkers at a fulfillment center in Detroit, MI are facing. He pointed out that everyone has their own reason to fight for a union, but several issues are universal – including better pay. “Some of my coworkers work 50, even 60 hours a week. They have to work two or even three jobs. Some still need to file for government assistance to make ends meet.”

Both workers shared their experiences with the disgusting union-busting tactics that management engages in at their worksites. Among the tricks they use to turn workers against each other is using intimidating security checks to target workers handing out flyers and holding “captive audience meetings”, where they force workers to listen to propaganda about how bad the union is and why they should not organize.

At the end of their speeches, delegates overwhelmingly approved a motion to “pass the basket” and collect money to compensate workers for the lost wages they are missing for coming to the convention.

Delegates raised a little over \$12,000, which was then matched by APWU. To show a little extra support, the APWU rounded up to make it an even \$25,000 donation. ■



Attendees sneak in a quick photo at COPA Night.

Members Kick in for COPA at the Sneaker Ball

On the evening of July 17, the APWU Committee on Political Action (COPA) held a “COPA Night” party that was hosted by Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard and “kicked” off by the APWU Divas. Members who contributed \$200 or more to COPA since July 2022 wore their most unique, colorful, and blingy sneakers to celebrate their achievements. President Dimondstein, Secretary-Treasurer Powell, and Director Beard presented awards to the three highest COPA contributors during the 2022-2024 COPA cycle.

A special 2024 COPA Leadership Award was presented to the New York Metro Area Postal Union as the local whose members contributed the most COPA funds. *The Legislative Department would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all the members who served as COPA Captains at this year's National Convention in Detroit.*



APWU members actively participate in a successful Bulk Mail Center Conference.

Before the Convention began, the Bulk Mail Center Conference took place on Thursday, July 11. Secretary-Treasurer’s trainings also took place over the weekend. Delegates started the week off informed and ready to go!

“I would like to recognize the tremendous work of our Secretary-Treasurer Liz Powell and her staff working behind the scenes on preparatory work to make this convention a success,” said President Mark Dimondstein.



2024 Elections – It's Time to Get Out the Vote!

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

Elections and protecting the Vote-by-Mail ballots should be our top priority. To do that, the Postmaster General needs to bring Advanced Facer Cancellation System (AFCS) 200s and Delivery Barcode Sorter (DBCS) equipment back to plants where management had them removed. To protect our ballots, the processing plants need to cancel, process, deliver, and re-deliver ballots within their Sectional Center Facility area to make sure election officials receive ballots on time and are counted! We cannot afford to have ballots processed hundreds of miles away, which has caused many of the delays in the delivery of primary ballots and First-Class mail. A perfect example is in Medford, OR, where the Postal Service improperly removed processing equipment just before the primary election. Because Oregon is a Vote-by-Mail state, all the ballots for southern counties went 285 miles away to Portland for processing. Late ballots were not counted.

The public is waiting for us to return to the 2012 Service Standards so that we promptly process and deliver mail. At our recent National Convention, delegates overwhelmingly voted to mandate that we do everything we can to bring those standards back! We need everyone to get involved to protect our democracy.

We have just two months to mobilize voters to elect candidates that support postal issues and those that protect the future of our families, jobs, communities, and our planet. Making sure we vote by mail is not enough! We must protect the mail-in ballot. We need to make sure people register and vote by mail early. For the areas where it is too late to register by mail, we need to advocate that people should vote in person on election day, and to make sure voters know where candidates stand on the issues in local and state level elections as well. We cannot distribute campaign material on postal premises, we cannot campaign on the clock. We can inform members about reputable fact-check websites, such as *Fact-check.org*, so they can do their own research about the pros and cons of a candidate. During this election season, federal employees like us postal workers should be aware of the *Hatch Act*. It is a federal law that regulates how federal employees take part in partisan political activity. It is important to understand what you can and cannot do

before taking partisan actions in the workplace. Learn more about the *Hatch Act*, and what it means for you at apwu.org/hatch-act-election.

It is important for people to decide who will help protect us, our families, and our jobs, and who will protect the environment we live in. Your voting decision should value human dignity. We cannot silence our moral witness, and people of faith have an opportunity to build the foundation of a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural democratic society that appreciates how all people are interconnected, building a society that provides for everyone's well-being. Democracy and solidarity, not dictatorship. We have to give a damn about working people, equal

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MAKING SURE WE VOTE BY MAIL IS NOT
ENOUGH! WE MUST PROTECT THE MAIL-
IN BALLOT. WE NEED TO MAKE SURE
PEOPLE REGISTER AND VOTE BY
MAIL EARLY.**

access to healthcare, and a place where workers are protected. We have the power to overcome division and provide equitable justice, whether you're rich, poor, or working poor, our future belongs to everyone.

Nobody likes to be told who to vote for, and many people don't have all the facts about the candidates, and don't realize that their vote does matter. Ask your local president if you can help union members register to vote if they haven't registered yet or may have been taken off the rolls and don't know they are ineligible. Let's show up for each other, help everyone get their ballot counted, and vote their conscience so that everyone in this country thrives. ■



APWU 27th Biennial Convention ‘Union Proud, Say It Loud!’

SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

Delegates at the 27th Biennial National Convention left Detroit having contributed to a successful and productive convention. The energy began with delegates attending the Pre-Convention workshops. Convention committees and division conferences gathered to review, discuss, and vote on resolutions. Over 2,000 delegates from across the country came together to debate and vote on resolutions submitted prior to and during the Convention. Constitutional resolutions adopted by the delegates will amend the current APWU Constitution and Bylaws, and will be available for members with the added language identified in bolded text. It is important to note that changes made to language in the National Constitution may also impact language in local and state constitutions. This could create situations where local and state constitutions are in conflict with the National Constitution. The Convention concluded with delegates ready to organize, mobilize and to advocate for “A Strong Union, A Strong Future.” The work of the union does not end after the convention. It is even more important that our members stay informed, stay united, and when called to action, mobilize to make our voices heard including wearing our union gear.

APWU Scholarship Winners!

The 2024 scholarship committee met and reviewed all applications received by the extended June 30 deadline. The committee verified the criteria and documents outlined in the applications, with primary emphasis on the knowledge and understanding of unions displayed in the essay. The committee received 132 applications and awarded 10 recipients the E.C Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship. Five recipients received the Vocational Scholarship, and one recipient received the Best Essay Scholarship. All applicants were required to submit a 350 to 500-word essay on one of three topics provided in the scholarship application. The recipient of the 2024 Best Essay Award wrote in his essay the following excerpts:

“Unions are essential for job security, needed-base assistance, and higher wages. I’ve had the privilege to witness this firsthand, through the APWU, how this union has greatly enhanced my father’s career experience.

I have learned that when workers band together, they are unstoppable.”

The 2025 scholarship brochure and application can be obtained at apwu.org/scholarship-programs.

Congratulations to all the 2024 scholarship winners and best wishes as they pursue their career goals.

**THE WORK OF THE UNION DOES NOT
END AFTER THE CONVENTION.**

Secretary-Treasurer’s Training

The Secretary-Treasurer Department provides virtual training on a continuous basis. Local or state officers who were unable to attend any of the in-person Secretary-Treasurer’s workshops can schedule virtual trainings by emailing Annette August-Taylor, Executive Assistant to the Secretary-Treasurer at: aaugust@apwu.org. The following virtual presentations are available for local and state officers:

- Fiduciary Responsibility
- Secretary-Treasurer’s-Dues Check Off (DCO)
- Election Committee
- Trustee Training.

It is the responsibility of all elected officials to ensure that their local or state affiliate remains in compliance with all legal requirements to alleviate penalties and fines that may result from noncompliance. This also includes ensuring their local or state maintains 100 percent bond coverage and obtains the required workers’ compensation insurance. Knowledge is the key to maintaining financial stability and accountability.

November 5, Your Vote Matters! As postal workers, job security is important, maintaining democracy is important, and voting for candidates that are going to ensure we keep our fundamental freedoms is important. So, Get Out the Vote! ■



Negotiations Update, Renewed Demand for Better Staffing

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR CHARLIE CASH

It has been an extremely busy summer for the APWU. Contract negotiations, our National Convention, and the never-ending daily work of representing the membership.

We are in the final stretch of contract negotiations. I can report that progress is slow at best. Soon, the APWU and the Postal Service will be “locking down” to engage in nearly around-the-clock negotiations. The entire APWU negotiating team will be involved in direct negotiations and key staff will be attending in support roles. I am hopeful that we can make progress, and a voluntary agreement can be reached.

I was honored to be amongst APWU unionists at the National Convention, where there was great debate and discussion on the Labor-Management resolutions that direct the negotiating team. The message was clear. Many of the resolutions are already things we are working on in negotiations, and I can assure you that your negotiators are working on many of the items raised at convention.

I want to share an experience that I had recently, which disturbed me not only as a union officer but as a postal customer. I needed to mail items to my home in Orchard Park, NY. It was a Saturday morning in Washington, DC and I pulled up the USPS mobile app to find the nearest Post Office to mail my parcel. I drove to the closest one and walked to the door, but the door was locked! Hanging on the door was a sign saying that it was closed due to “no staff.” There were six other people trying to get in. All of them had walked there with their parcels to mail. I looked up the next office and drove there. What did I find? The exact same thing! It was not until the third Post Office I tried that I found one open. The Sales and Service Associate in that office was pleasant, efficient, and did a great job. I noticed she was the only one at the counter, so I asked if others were there. She told me no. She continued that normally the opening clerk comes in to do the box mail (this office does not have carriers) and to open the window. But the opening clerk was on vacation, so the kind woman I spoke with said she had worked 12-14 hours a day over the last week to keep the office open.

Now, my point is not to blame the folks who were unable to work at the other offices—my point is to make sure

we put the blame where it lies—on postal management. Management has the authority to hire more people. Management can treat us well enough to want to come to work. Management can ensure that when they hire new employees they do what’s needed to do to retain the employees. Things like treating them with dignity and respect, scheduling them appropriately, and training them well. Surveys and report after report show that just these three things would help the Postal Service retain employees and keep them wanting to come to work.

I WANT TO SHARE AN EXPERIENCE THAT I HAD RECENTLY, WHICH DISTURBED ME NOT ONLY AS A UNION OFFICER BUT AS A POSTAL CUSTOMER. I DROVE TO THE CLOSEST ONE AND WALKED TO THE DOOR, BUT THE DOOR WAS LOCKED! HANGING ON THE DOOR WAS A SIGN SAYING THAT IT WAS CLOSED DUE TO “NO STAFF.” THERE WERE SIX OTHER PEOPLE TRYING TO GET IN.

This is a subject we are discussing in negotiations, but we need all of you to help! Report your short staffing. Let your union leaders know when offices are closed due to short staffing. Share your concerns with the public! We have a website where the public can go to report and share their concerns about staffing at their Post Office. It is betterpostoffice.org. And don’t forget that you can download tools and materials for personal and local use at apwu.org/staffing to support the APWU “Better Staffing, Better Service” campaign.

The best job security that we can have is a Post Office that works for the people, is properly staffed, and delivers prompt, reliable, and efficient service!

Solidarity! ■



Sleep and Rest Can Help You Avoid Getting Injured

Not getting enough sleep can lead to on-the-job injuries for postal workers. No matter the work you do, getting enough sleep helps prevent injuries, especially given the physically demanding nature of our work. Here are tips to help you avoid getting injured due to lack of sleep:

Maintain a Regular Sleep Schedule

Going to bed and waking up at the same time every day, even on your weekends, helps to regulate your body's internal clock. As postal workers, we are no strangers to evening and night work. No matter your tour of duty, trying to maintain the same sleep schedule can help.

Try to Create a Restful Environment

Ensure your bedroom is dark, quiet, and cool. If your tour requires you to sleep during the day, using blackout curtains and white noise machines can help create an environment that is conducive for sleep.

Stimulants and Screen Time

Many of us love a good cup of coffee or other caffeinated drinks, but having caffeinated drinks or using nicotine products in the hours before your normal sleeping time can interfere with your sleep. Studies have also shown that the blue light emitted by our electronic screens could disrupt sleep cycles. It is recommended to avoid screen time at least one hour prior to going to bed.

Take Your Breaks!

Taking breaks at work is important. Not only are you entitled to your breaks, but your body needs rest to help you stay alert and avoid injuries. The law also requires the Postal Service to offer you a lunch break when you work more than six hours. Take your lunch so that you can eat properly and rest during your workday!

Nutrition and Hydration

Eating a balanced diet with adequate nutrients can help support your overall health and keep your energy levels up. Avoiding heavy meals before your sleeping time can also help you sleep better. It is also important to drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration which can lead to fatigue.



Exercise Can Help Improve Your Sleep Quality

Engaging in regular exercise can help improve your sleep quality. Set a goal to try to get 30 minutes of exercise a day. It is suggested to avoid vigorous exercise close to your sleep, as it can make it harder to fall asleep.

Relaxation Techniques Can Help Lead to Better Sleep

Practicing relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or meditation can help you fall asleep faster and increase your sleep quality and elevate stress.

Awareness of Health and Stress Issues is an Important Factor

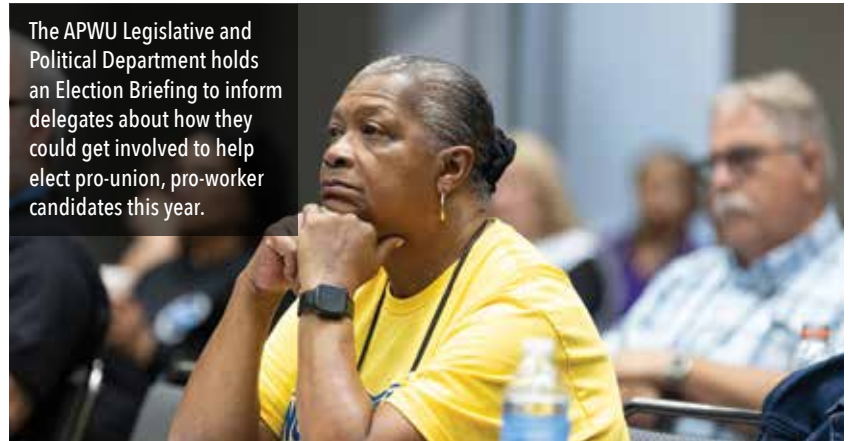
It is important to be aware of any health conditions that could prevent a good period of sleep. Do not be afraid to consult your healthcare provider if you are having trouble sleeping. Health professionals can provide advice, set up treatment plans, and prescribe sleep aids if necessary for your situation.

If you can implement some or all of these strategies, you can improve your sleep quality and be better rested. No one wants to get hurt at work. Proper sleep and rest are just two ways to help you go home each day uninjured. ■

MEMBERS



The days are long, but action packed! Keeping up with which resolution is on the floor is important during debates!



The APWU Legislative and Political Department holds an Election Briefing to inform delegates about how they could get involved to help elect pro-union, pro-worker candidates this year.



The APWU Chorus, composed of delegates attending convention, serenades attendees with labor songs to get the day started!



Members ask questions about the best ways to get pro-union candidates elected during the Election Briefing.



The youngest attendee at the convention is ready to fight for workers' rights!



The Greater Kansas City Metro Area Local is ready to get down to business.



APWU members are activists - and we're ready to get into "good trouble" if the need arises!



Delegates brush up on resolutions before debates begin so they are prepared to take action!



Delegates attend the Bulk Mail Center Conference before the convention.



Delegates pick up badges that will give them access to the convention floor.

IN ACTION



Ohio delegates pay rapt attention to debate, ready to make an informed decision when it's time to vote.



APWU delegates take time away from Convention business to rally for a good contract!



Delegates come from near and far to have their state's voices heard on the convention floor.



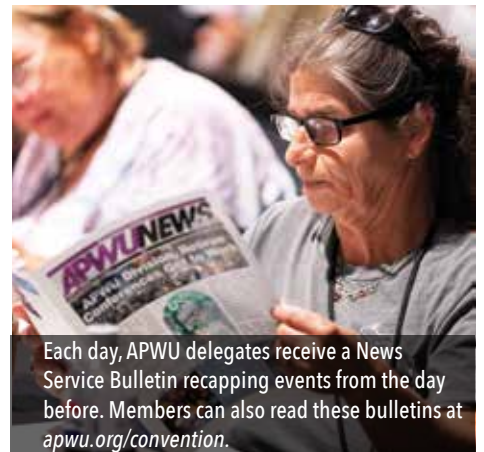
The POWER Caucus hosts an evening event to recognize the powerful women who made our union the inclusive place it is today.



Can you hear us? We're "Union Proud, Say it Loud!"



Delegates from the Philadelphia BMC Local are energized, organized and ready to mobilize!



Each day, APWU delegates receive a News Service Bulletin recapping events from the day before. Members can also read these bulletins at apwu.org/convention.

Clerk Division Conference Offers Guidance, Applauds Work of Others



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

On Saturday, July 13, 2024, the Clerk Division held a well-attended conference for delegates of the Clerk Division to discuss issues vital to the craft. After honoring those national officers and local members who passed away during the previous year, the conference began its work. All three headquarters Clerk Division officers delivered reports of their duties and actions since the past craft conference. In addition to the officers' reports, a current list of national-level disputes related to the craft was distributed to the delegates. We disseminated information to all attendees regarding the current disputes on Regional Instruction (RI)-399, which determines craft jurisdiction between the clerk and mail handler crafts. And to further assist locals and states, we circulated a flow chart that contains the proper procedures for Local Dispute Resolution Committees (LDRCs) to follow when meeting with Mail Handler and Postal Service representatives pertaining to RI-399 issues.

During the conference, we recognized local and state representatives throughout the country for their commitment and hard work representing APWU members. We also praised the work of the craft's National Business Agents (NBAs) in successfully arbitrating cases and conducting reviews of other cases pending arbitration, settling many of these grievances prior to them reaching arbitration. The delegates displayed their appreciation of the NBAs by giving them a standing ovation.

Two Constitutional Amendments at National Convention Enhance Clerk Division

During the APWU's 27th Biennial National Convention, delegates approved changes to the union's Constitution and Bylaws that will directly affect the Clerk Division's representation. On Wednesday, July 17, delegates debated proposed Constitutional Amendments that included the succession for the Clerk Division Director in the event of illness, death, or resignation. Assistant Director (A) will now assume the position of Clerk Division Director if the Director relinquishes office. Passed by a considerable margin, the amendment now places the Clerk Division on equal footing with all other APWU divisions when a director steps down.

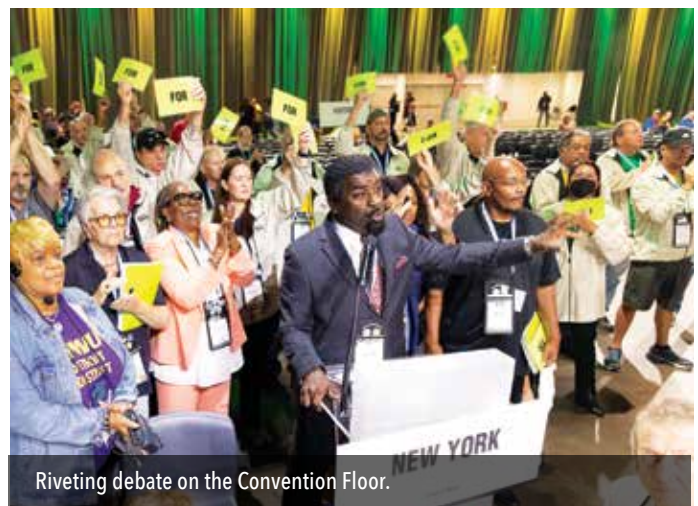
The second Constitutional Amendment that passed returns the Assistant Director (C) position to the craft. Several

years ago, the third assistant director position had been eliminated. However, thanks in large part to the solidarity of the NBAs who stood together on the convention floor, many of whom spoke in favor of recreating the position and urged passage, delegates ratified the amendment overwhelmingly. The Clerk Division Director now has 60 days to appoint a new Assistant Director (C) to assume office.

When asked to comment on the amendments, Director Brooks explained, "The succession amendment simply places our craft on par with all other crafts in the APWU. In terms of reestablishing the third assistant director position, this will allow the Clerk Division to better serve the APWU membership in our craft and support the National Business Agents when they need us." ■



APWU Clerk Division leadership recognizes the hard work of the Clerk Craft National Business Agents during the Clerk Division General Session.



Riveting debate on the Convention Floor.

Successful Convention, Maintenance Craft Conference



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

We successfully completed the 2024 APWU Maintenance Craft Conference held in Detroit, MI. We attended the Maintenance Council meetings on Thursday, July 11 before the Maintenance Craft Conference, held Saturday, July 13, 2024. The National Business Agents (NBAs) held Maintenance Regional Breakouts on Sunday, and Maintenance Division Workshops (Preserving Maintenance Jobs and Article 12 in Maintenance) were held on Friday. Several guest speakers addressed members at the craft conference before meaningful, lively debate about Maintenance Craft issues took place among the body. We ended the Maintenance Conference in solidarity, ready for the National Convention, which began on July 15.

Assistant Maintenance Division Director (A) Terry Martinez welcomed delegates to the session, and introduced the Division leadership, including Director Idowu Balogun, Assistant Director (B) Jason Treier, and NBAs John Gearhard, Jeffrey S. Beaton, Louis M. Kingsley Jr., Curtis Walker, Carlos Paz, Craig Fisher, Dave Sarnacki, Hector Baez, and Kenneth Lester.

National Executive Council Address Members

Director Balogun introduced APWU National President Mark Dimondstein, who attended the session with Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy, Secretary-Treasurer Liz Powell, Industrial Relations Director Charlie Cash, Central Region Coordinator Amy Puhalski, Northeast Region Coordinator Tiffany Foster, Eastern Region Coordinator AJ Jones, Western Region Coordinator Omar Gonzalez, and Legislative & Political Director Judy Beard. President Dimondstein spoke about the ongoing national contract negotiations and the importance of union solidarity. He concluded by recognizing the leadership and hard work of myself and all Maintenance Division representatives in the current issues facing APWU Maintenance Craft employees.

Maintenance Division Officer Report

Director Balogun discussed the current priorities of the Maintenance Division. The number one priority is finalizing a settlement on the national Part-Time Regular (PTR) Cap dispute, which we hope is near. Other notable issues and disputes the officers are working on include:

- Employees receiving incorrect pay and step increases due to pending qualification promotions, the Small Delivery Unit Sorter (SDUS) Clerk Maintenance

Operator dispute, Promotion Cancellation, Maintenance Management Orders (MMOs), and APWU concerns regarding the Shared Community Toolbox initiative.

- MS-47 Handbook revisions (including e4776 Eagle Clean implementation and Self-Laundering MMO), FMO changes, Mail Processing Equipment Relocation Teams, and the In-Service National Questions & Answers.
- New national level disputes regarding the revised MS-47 Handbook and FMO changes that will affect field maintenance and MSC staffing in every District.

Maintenance officers also discussed pending national level subcontracting cases, Article 19 notifications, and contract negotiations.

2024 "Florence Summergrad" Bulk Mail Center Conference

The Bulk Mail Center (BMC) Conference convened on July 11, 2024, at the Huntington Place Convention Center. Twenty of the 21 BMCs were present at the conference, and over 84 delegates were in attendance. Director Balogun made a motion to name the conference after Ms. Florence "Flo" Summergrad, which the body unanimously adopted. Nine agenda items were submitted; one Maintenance Craft, five Clerk Craft, and three MVS Craft, all of which were addressed by their Division Directors. The conference concluded and we informed all delegates that the next BMC Conference would be scheduled in Los Angeles, CA, as requested.

New Southern Region National Business Agent

The highlight of the National Convention for the Maintenance Craft was the Constitutional Resolution to create an additional Southern Region National Business Agent, increasing the number of NBAs from two to three. The resolution was discussed among the delegates, and ultimately adopted.

Director Balogun's Concluding Remarks

Thank you for attending, it was a great conference with over 400 people in attendance from the Maintenance Division. We were also glad to have an almost 30 percent increase in new attendees. It was a very successful deliberation. We are currently involved in national contract negotiations and actively discussing maintenance proposals with our counterparts at the Maintenance Table. I am very proud and energized that the future of the Maintenance Division looks so bright! ■

When We Fight, We Win!



Director Michael Foster and Assistant Director Garrett Langley

Over 2,000 APWU members and representatives from across the country participated in the highest authority of the union during the 27th Biennial National Convention held in Detroit, MI in July. Prior to the convention, several hundred Motor Vehicle Service (MVS) Craft officers and members participated in the 46th MVS Directors' Conference, also held in Detroit.

The MVS Council, comprised of the Directors and National Business Agents (NBAs), provided reports and conducted training both at the conference and the MVS pre-convention workshops. The trainings included:

- Effective Grievance Writing
- Maximization Reports and Holdowns
- Article 39.2.A.11 Filling Residual Vacancies
- PVS and VMF Subcontracting
- Article 39 Back to Basics
- Local Memorandums of Understandings
- Department of Transportation Commercial Drivers Licenses Procedures
- DOT Self Certification
- Last Chance Agreements

Delegates were fully engaged and participated in all phases of the training.

MVS General Session

MVS Director Foster continued the tradition of ringing the Liberty Bell to start the General Session and welcomed delegates to his birthplace, Detroit, and home local, the Detroit District Area Local.

Members were updated on the status of the Das 110 Supplemental Award and how the USPS has control over the award. No funds have been paid to employees, released to the union, or retained by the union. We are still in discussions to insource permanent Highway Contract Route (HCR) work to the craft prior to identifying the employees included in the remedy. The grievance procedure fell under the duties and responsibilities of the Director, according to the APWU Constitution.

President Dimondstein, Executive Vice President Szeredy, and Secretary-Treasurer Powell gave reports on the convention proceedings, the state of the union, and the importance of the 2024 Presidential Elections. Indus-

trial Relations Director Cash update delegates on contract negotiations, which began on June 25.

The craft has gone through many challenges since 2009 with the Amended Work Rules Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the conversion of Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) operations in Columbus, OH. Then the Postal Service attempted to contract out all PVS operations in California in 2012. Subsequent to that attempt, the Postal Service gave notice that they were considering contracting out the entire PVS operations in all 162 sites. Despite these illogical attempts to contract out their transportation, the APWU has challenged them in national level arbitrations and federal courts. The craft still remains viable, with a growth rate during this period of approximately 37 percent due to arbitration decisions such as the arbitrator Das 110 Award, the Brent 600 Award, and the newly created Postal Vehicle Operator (PVO) Pilots.

Also discussed were the recent Step 4 Disputes filed on Relief Supervisors performing craft work, supervisors performing Schedule Examiner Vehicle Run duties by creating PS 4533's in VITALS and other programs, non-compliance with the arbitrator's award in the Denver Network Distribution Center (NDC) case, and the creation of the Dispatch Coordinator position, which shifted work from other MVS Craft duty assignments and other crafts.

Assistant Director Langley reported on the Vehicle Fleet changes and training courses for the Next Generation Delivery Vehicles, the safety equipment needs for the battery electric vehicles, and the training facility at the National Center for Employee Development. He also reported on driver training aspects for the PVOs and the need for additional Driver Safety Instructors certified on the Trainer Provider Registry with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration continue the development of our operators to become MVOs and TTOs.

Eighteen resolutions were discussed, acted on, or referred to the Convention and adopted "in toto".

The MVS NBAs Pittman, Amey, Shaw, White, Krueger, and Parker reported on their regional activities and arbitration awards.

The MVS Craft, after passionate debate, adjourned with a renewed direction and purpose for negotiations and the challenges of the future.

"When We Fight, We Win!" ■

After a Successful Convention, the Support Services Division Continues Negotiations



Director Arrion Brown

We recently completed the APWU's 27th Biennial National Convention in Detroit, MI. The convention was a productive gathering of union spirit and solidarity that will allow us to energize, mobilize, and organize the APWU and the labor movement. Our National Convention is the highest-ranking authority of our union, and the decisions made by our convention delegates will guide our future and define our union's identity.

The APWU is, has been, and always will be, a union that fights for better conditions for postal workers and all working people. From the 1970 postal strike, when our forebearers' work stoppage against poor wages and working conditions resulted in a victory that created our union, until modern times when the APWU demanded that the Postal Service prioritize election mail during the pandemic to ensure that we preserve our democracy, the APWU has always stood for what is right and just. The delegates of our convention used these powerful examples of union strength from our history as a guide to make resolution decisions for our future.

YOUR CONTRACT CAMPAIGN ACTIONS, IN CONCERT WITH THE NEGOTIATIONS, WILL SHOW POSTAL MANAGEMENT THAT OUR UNION NEGOTIATORS TRULY EXPRESS THE WILL OF THE WORKERS.

Although the Convention was held in July, the process for locals and state affiliates to submit resolutions for consideration began much earlier. The resolutions are submitted to National for review by a screening committee. The screening committee consists of APWU members appointed by the APWU President. They decide which committee the submitted resolutions will be referred to for consideration.

The additional committees are Labor-Management, Constitution, Formal, Health and Safety, Clerk Division, Maintenance Division, Motor Vehicle Division, Support Services Division and Legislative. Each of these commit-

tees' members are selected from the membership. The committees' job is to review each resolution from the screening committee and make a recommendation to the convention delegates to either adopt, reject, or refer the resolution.

The convention delegates are decided by each local and state APWU affiliate. The delegates vote on the resolutions after the respective committee presentation, and delegates have an opportunity to speak on the resolution from a microphone in favor of or against resolutions. Delegates may also make changes called amendments to the resolution if the convention delegates vote in favor of amending the resolution. The resolutions can cause spirited and passionate debate prior to the final vote, but once the vote is complete, a decision has been made and we move to the next resolution. The APWU Convention is one of the finest examples of union democracy in the labor movement. We should all be proud that we have a process for our voices to be heard by our delegate representatives.

Now that the convention has concluded, the National Negotiating Committee will continue contract negotiations for the main collective bargaining agreement (CBA) that covers the majority of APWU members. The membership will play a key role in determining how much strength we have at the bargaining table. Your contract campaign actions, in concert with the negotiations, will show postal management that our union negotiators truly express the will of the workers. Contract campaigns are influential at the bargaining table and are great ways to build union solidarity among members.

In addition to negotiating the main contract, the Support Services Division is also currently negotiating several supplemental agreements for private-sector bargaining units. We will also begin to negotiate for the second Human Resources Shared Service Center (HRSSC) Contract on Aug. 29 in Greensboro, NC. As with all contract negotiations, the members have and will be a key force in achieving our goals to improve wages, benefits, and working conditions. The communication between the bargaining unit and the negotiators drives our bargaining goals, while the actions our members take gives us the leverage to make our goals achievable. ■



Omar Gonzalez, Western Regional Coordinator

‘Stay In Your Lane, APWU’?

“Just stick to the contract!” “Focus only on work floor issues!” “Stay out of politics!” bellow some disgruntles. But our union doesn’t exist in a vacuum.

Your elected officers, pursuant to varied articles of the APWU constitution, are required to participate in the forces and events that affect all of us, including economic, political, and social justice.

Article 2 obligates us to engage in legislative, political, civic welfare, and other activities that further the joint interests of all 200,000 members fighting to improve economic and social conditions. Article 2, Sec. 9 also calls us to assist labor and other organizations in the world.

Deciding the Issues We Care About

Per Article 13, in between conventions of elected delegates, the National Executive Board (NEB), also elected by you, is the highest-ranking governing body.

The issues the APWU gets involved with are determined by the National Convention, the NEB, and the National Constitution.

So, directly or indirectly, it is you that decides the issues our union is involved in.

Our constitution’s preamble declares all members of labor have the right to economic, political, and social justice, and to hold our heads high respecting ourselves as individuals regardless of race, religion, and political affiliation etc.

Article 2, Sec. 1 directs us to secure better working conditions and a better standard of living for all of you and your families. Article 2, Section 9(a) obligates us to work with the AFL-CIO, which is the federation of national and international labor unions that represents more than 12.5 million workers.

Why do we work with the AFL-CIO? Our relationship goes back to 1897. The AFL recognized the tyranny that postal workers faced and supported our forefathers in their fight to win a union. And the rest, as they say, is history.

What Labor Wants?

The AFL-CIO and APWU want better pay and benefits for workers, an end to racism, inequality, and oppression. We want corporate accountability, especially since corporate greed feeds inflation.

We support women’s rights and want all workers to enjoy health benefits, including reproductive rights.

Postal workers live in a global economy, bound in the fate of working people worldwide with shared humanity. We support immigration reform, placing people before profits!

Supporting infrastructure efforts produces good paying jobs in trades that boosts others who then boost us in our struggles.

Critical issues such as criminal justice reform, quality education, Social Security, tax and trade policies affect you directly or indirectly.

Politics and Postal Affairs

Not one dime of your union dues goes to a political campaign. Our Committee on Political Action (COPA) fund receives voluntary donations to give to candidates that support postal workers’ interests, regardless of party affiliation.

Legislation restricts full involvement in political affairs, yet we support, wherever the law provides, candidates who best serve you and labor’s interests. Our members in all parties under APWU’s Bill of Rights have the right to support a candidate of their choice.

Let’s Knee the PMG

Deriders of the Postmaster General (PMG) want to use his disastrous 10-year plan, poor services, and workplace disruptions to undercut the union’s current negotiations process, which convention delegates overwhelmingly rejected.

Our acrimonious relation with PMGs goes back to 1900 when PMG Cortelyou wrote that postal officials, not officers or members of organizations, present the Post Office’s needs. We fought PMG Burleson’s 1915 wage and staffing cuts. In 1973, PMG Klassen cut 33,000 workers, yet we negotiated a contract in 1975. Many remember our “Wanted!” posters for PMG Donahoe in 2014.

If this PMG fails to recognize our work value in current negotiations, we’ll fight him tooth and nail, and prevail!

Stay In Our Lane?

Coordinators Foster, Jones, Yared, Puhalski, and I recognize on the highway of reality that if we stay in just one lane, we will crash. *The APWU isn’t about to crash!* ■



Judy Beard, Director

The 2024 Elections: It's Time to Mobilize

You have probably heard that democracy is on the ballot this November in the 2024 elections. Many of you may wonder what exactly this means. Put simply, the outcomes of the upcoming elections will determine the future of our nation, our jobs, and our lives. We will have choices to make up and down the ballot. Are we looking to expand rights and freedoms for all Americans, or place limitations? Are we looking to unite through truth and honesty, or divide through lies and deceit? Are we looking to go forward into a future marked by progress and hope, or one marked by hatred and despair, where the top one percent get richer, leaving the rest of us behind? These are the questions we must ask ourselves as we go to mark our ballots this election season.

It is absolutely critical that we vote not only in the presidential election at the top of the ticket, but all the way down the ballot. Governors, state legislatures, city councils, school boards, local judges, police chiefs, and more all shape the policies that govern your life. Some states and localities have various ballot initiatives and referenda to vote on, which allow you to have a direct say in policy. Decisions at the state and local level can affect you and your family's lives just as much as federal elections. So, remember to vote on these ballot measures and in these elections as well!

IT IS ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL THAT WE VOTE NOT ONLY IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AT THE TOP OF THE TICKET, BUT ALL THE WAY DOWN THE BALLOT. GOVERNORS, STATE LEGISLATURES, CITY COUNCILS, SCHOOL BOARDS, LOCAL JUDGES, POLICE CHIEFS, AND MORE ALL SHAPE THE POLICIES THAT GOVERN YOUR LIFE.

Remember that your vote is your voice. These elections will be decided, in large part, by the nearly half of eligible voters who do not exercise their most fundamental right in our democracy. This right was not given to us, it was fought for and won through years of struggle. That is why we must all encourage our family, friends, and community to mobilize around building a better future this November. In order to do this, we need to educate everyone about what's at stake and how to make our voices heard. Here is a checklist to ensure nothing is missed when making your plan to vote:

MAKE A PLAN TO VOTE

- ☒ Check your voter registration status
- ☒ Determine your method of voting: early, absentee, by-mail, in-person
- ☒ Locate your polling place
- ☒ Get a ride to the polls
- ☒ Schedule a time to vote
- ☒ Check potential ID requirements
- ☒ Check who is on your ballot
- ☒ Volunteer to be a poll worker

Please visit our website at apwu.org/2024-elections to hear from your fellow APWU members on the importance of voting and checking your voter registration status. On that page you will also find links to help you make your plan to vote, find your current representatives, and much more. If you have any questions about how to make your plan to vote this November, please feel free to contact the Legislative and Political Department by email at legislative@apwu.org or phone at 202-842-4211. We are a resource to help every single APWU member, as well as their family and friends, exercise their hard-fought right to vote this November! ■

ORGANIZATION

Join Our Fight as We Continue to Organize for a Stronger Union



Anna Smith, Director

Having a conversation with a nonmember coworker can be downright intimidating. Because of this intimidation, some find it frightening and daunting to ask them to stand with us. We have fought for the precious right to organize a union in our workplace. The fact is these nonmembers are working against our best interests. Some are loud and confrontational with anti-union rhetoric. They let everyone know just why they are not a member. While we are all paying attention and realizing the harm done by the boisterous one, the silent nonmember is as destructive, if not more.

They are silently working against everything we fight to achieve. The nonmember might try to say, "It's not personal, I just *[insert excuse here]*." Do not drink the Kool-Aid; let them know it is absolutely personal! Every nonmember stands against our fight for a livable wage, health care for our families, and the benefits we enjoy.

There isn't a neutral line. Don't assume every coworker is a member. Workers in facilities where 100 percent of the workers are union members know that they are, and quite frankly, management knows this too. If your office is not 100 percent organized, now is a great time to remind the nonmembers they are working in a union environment, with pay and benefits that are only achieved by being union. There is no harm in asking your coworker next to you if they stand with you as a union member. You will either share common ground from that point forward or know that they are working against you. There is, however, injury in not inquiring.

Each year, at every level, leaders continue to put more effort into organizing. While some continue to push to be at the top in their category, there are some new additions to the list. During APWU National Conventions, there are some friendly challenges between locals to see who can improve the most. Awards are given to locals at the top of the game come National Convention time, and leading up to the convention it is always exciting to see the friendly, but serious, challenges between locals. This year was unique, as we were in the midst of an all-out organizing drive. However, due to production time, awards had to be completed before the conclusion of the drive. I would be remiss if I did not point out that every local on this list increased their organizing percentage by the conclusion of the drive. Congratulations and thank you for all your hard work!

TOP 3 LOCALS IN EACH CATEGORY

Representing 2000+ Employees

Boston Metro Area Local, MA	94.5 percent
480-481 Area Local, MI	92.7 percent
Detroit District Area Local, MI	91.3 percent

Representing 1000-1999 Employees

Miami Area Local, FL	92.3 percent
Minneapolis Area Local, MN	92 percent
Queens Area Local, NY	91.8 percent

Representing 500-999 Employees

Philadelphia BMC Local, PA	97 percent
Trenton Metropolitan Area Local, NJ	96.8 percent
Portland Area Local, ME	96.7 percent

Representing 250-499 Employees

Des Moines BMC Local, IA	96.5 percent
Southern New York Area Local, NY	95 percent
Fox Valley Local, IL	94.2 percent

Representing 100-249 Employees

Southern Oregon Area Local, OR	94 percent
San Mateo PDC Local, CA	93.3 percent
Lake County Area Local, IL	93 percent

Representing 50-99 Employees

Arlington Local, TX	94.6 percent
Wilmington Local 145, NC	94.1 percent
Red Bank Local, NJ	94 percent

Representing 25-49 Employees, All 100 percent

Jasper Local, AL; Racine Local, WI; Bellevue Local, WA; and Farmington Local, MI.

Representing 1-24 Employees, All 100 percent

Elizabeth City Local, NC; Mt Pleasant Local, IA; La Grange Local, GA; Cuyahoga Falls Local, OH; Kinston Local, NC; Greenwood Local, SC; Dunes Area Local, IN; Ketchikan Local, AK; Slidell Local, LA; Findlay Local, OH; Carson City Local, NV; Wahiawa Local, HI; Gloucester Area Local, MA; and Kent Local, OH. ■



Joyce B. Robinson, Director

The Importance of Labor Unions

Today, many workers are joining or want to join labor unions. But many employers fight workers' efforts to organize a union in their workplaces by intimidating, harassing, or threatening them. Workers reap substantial benefits from unionization. Unions raise the wages of their members by 10 to 15 percent. Among full-time wage and salary workers, union members had median weekly earnings of \$1,263 in 2023, while nonunion workers had median usual weekly earnings of \$1,090. Unions also improve fringe benefits and workplace procedures, such as retirement plans, workplace grievance policies, and predictable scheduling. These workplace improvements contribute substantially to middle-class financial stability and workers' well-being.

Selected Characteristics of Union Members

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2023, the unionization rate for women was 6.6 million (9.5 percent). For men it was 7.8 million (10.5 percent). Among the ethnicity groups, Black workers continued to have a higher union membership rate, (11.8 percent) than white workers (9.8 percent), Asian workers (7.8 percent), and Latino workers (9.0 percent). By age, workers ages 45 to 54 had the highest union membership rate, at (12.6 percent). Younger workers, ages 16 to 24, had the lowest union membership rate, at (4.4 percent). The union membership rate for full-time workers (10.9 percent) was more than double that for part-time workers (5.2 percent).

THE DIVERSE DEMOGRAPHICS OF MODERN UNION MEMBERSHIP MEAN THAT THE BENEFITS OF ANY POLICY THAT STRENGTHENS TODAY'S UNIONS WOULD BE FELT ACROSS THE POPULATION.

Union Membership by State

In 2023, 31 states and the District of Columbia had union membership rates below the U.S. average (10.0 percent),

while 19 states had rates above it. Eleven states had union membership rates below 5.0 percent. South Carolina had the lowest rate (2.3 percent). The next lowest rates were in North Carolina and South Dakota (2.7 percent and 3.6 percent, respectively). Two states had union membership rates over 20.0 percent: Hawaii (24.1 percent) and New York (20.6 percent).

Health Care for Unionized Workers

In a study by the National Library of Medicine, union workers are more likely to have health insurance coverage, are more likely to have a regular care provider, and have a lower share of out-of-pocket costs than non-union workers. Union workers are approximately 10 percent more likely to have health insurance coverage, 6.8 percent more likely to have a regular care provider, visit office-based providers 31 percent more often than non-union workers, and have an out-of-pocket expenditure share approximately 11 percentage points lower than non-union workers.

Unions Importance to the Economy

On Aug. 28, 2023, the U.S. Treasury Department issued a Fact Sheet on the role that labor unions play in the American economy, stating:

"Unions help create a fairer economy by benefiting all demographic groups. By encouraging egalitarian wage practices, unions serve to reduce race and gender wage gaps. The diverse demographics of modern union membership mean that the benefits of any policy that strengthens today's unions would be felt across the population. In addition to supporting the middle class, unions contribute to economic growth and resilience."

In closing, unions have made life better for all working people by helping to pass laws ending child labor, establishing the eight-hour workday, protecting workers' safety and health, and helping to create a Social Security network, unemployment insurance, and establish the minimum wage. ■

Sources: U.S. Department of Labor; Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Union Members in 2023*, U.S. Department of Treasury Fact Sheet, August 28, 2023, and National Library of Medicine.

HOME FRONT

Historic Meeting Confirms White House Partnership with Union Veterans Council, Collective Commitment to Veteran Care and Employment



The AFL-CIO's Union Veterans Council (UVC) made history on July 9, 2024, by leading a large-scale delegation of union veteran workers to the White House. This historical event highlighted the critical role of union veterans in projects such as the bipartisan *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*, made possible by the Biden administration's pro-worker and pro-labor policies. The APWU's very own National Veterans, Guard, and Reservist Information Specialist (VGRIS) Robert "Bob" La Foe, represented the APWU veterans' membership at this historical White House Meeting.

Throughout the meeting, attendees had the opportunity to hear from multiple veterans' organizations and agencies, while also engaging in direct dialogue with senior White House staff, including the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Denis McDonough, who admitted the VA healthcare system is seriously damaged and a work in progress to repair. He is humbly seeking the help of the UVC and other American veterans' organizations in finding the solutions needed to correct the damage. These interactions demonstrated that the Biden-Harris administration is dedicated to addressing the needs and concerns of union veterans. More meetings were promised soon.

Join us, it's easy: unionveterans.org ■



Robert La Foe at the White House.



Denis McDonough addresses veterans during the visit.



Images from Bob La Foe's visit to the White House.



Daleo Freeman, Director

Reflections from the 27th Biennial National Convention

Defined Progress

The APWU Constitution and Bylaws mandates the Human Relations Department's role in fostering equal opportunity, community service, and supporting our members in various capacities. We stand on the shoulders of excellent leaders who championed our causes. Their legacy propels us forward as we continue to uphold these principles. The Pre-Convention Workshops and the National Convention were a major success, as delegates from across the country descended upon Detroit to attend over a week's worth of great training and spirited debates about all sorts of issues from the protection of our constitutional rights to the continued solidarity for all in the labor movement. It was an honor to participate and witness a momentous event that will shape and mold the future of our union for years to come. Thanks to everyone that attended. We hope that everyone has returned to their respective area that much more energized, mobilized, and organized than ever before.

Staying In Motion

In the spirit of progress, the Human Relations Department remains committed to staying in motion. Communication is key as we work to address members' needs across the nation. We're expanding our reach with a network of local and state Human Relations representatives, ensuring that support is accessible wherever it's needed. By leveraging resources and knowledge, we empower our members and strengthen our collective resolve.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated Regional Resource Assistants (RRAs) for their unwavering commitment and tireless efforts in completing training programs related to the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) and on-the-job injuries. Their expertise and dedication equip them with the knowledge and tools needed to provide invaluable support to locals nationwide, ensuring proper advice and effective assistance to workers within the APWU family. Through formal training and certification processes provided by the Department of Labor (DOL), our RRAs stand ready to deliver comprehensive training and guidance on these critical issues. We are immensely

grateful for their invaluable contributions to our union's mission and vision. For a listing of our current RRAs please visit, apwu.org/regional-resource-assistants.

Coalitions Are Key

Another key to our success lies in building and fortifying coalitions. By uniting with diverse interest groups, we amplify our impact and advocate for meaningful change. Please visit, apwu.org/coalitions to learn more about our coalitions.

Furthermore, the Human Relations Department has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to advocating for human rights by attending monthly meetings and partnering with the Civil, Human and Women's Rights Director (CHWR Director) at the AFL-CIO and affiliate union directors focusing on civil and human rights. These meetings serve as a platform for discussing and advancing crucial issues related to human rights, ensuring that our union remains at the forefront of advocacy efforts. Through collaboration and dialogue, we continue to amplify our collective voice in support of equality, justice, and dignity for all.

We extend our deepest gratitude to Robert La Foe, our dedicated Veteran Guard and Reserve Information Specialist (VGRIS), for his unwavering advocacy and steadfast support of veteran benefits and awareness within our union. Robert's tireless efforts ensure that our veteran members receive the recognition, support, and benefits they rightfully deserve for their service to our country. His commitment to raising awareness and championing the rights of veterans embodies the spirit of solidarity and inclusivity within the APWU family. We are profoundly grateful for Robert's leadership and dedication to serving those who have served us all. Please join our veteran coalition efforts by logging into your Member Profile and adding your veteran designation and the branch you served to stay connected to important veteran news and benefits.

Together, we address common concerns and demonstrate the integral role of the labor movement in everyday life. Through collaboration, we harness the strength of solidarity and advance our shared goals. ■

Time Is Running Out!



Nancy Olumekor, Director

Postal Service Health Benefits Program Medicare Part B Special Enrollment Period

As a result of the *Postal Service Reform Act* of 2022, a Medicare Part B Special Enrollment Period (SEP) began on **April 1, 2024**, and ends **Sept. 30, 2024**. This SEP gives USPS annuitants and their covered family members who are entitled to Medicare Part A, but are not currently enrolled in Medicare Part B, a one-time opportunity to enroll in Medicare Part B without incurring the Late Enroll Penalty (LEP).

Eligible annuitants and their covered family members should have received a special mailing from the USPS that includes an *Eligibility Notice for Medicare Part B SEP*, an *Application for Enrollment in Medicare Part B*, and a special Business Reply Envelope to return the required forms to a special PO Box. Enrollment in Medicare Part B during this SEP is optional. If you enroll in Medicare during this SEP, your Medicare Part B coverage effective date will be Jan. 1, 2025.

MEDICARE PART B SPECIAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD (SEP) ENDS SEPT. 30, 2024. IF YOU DID NOT RECEIVE THE SEP PACKET IN THE MAIL AND YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE ELIGIBLE TO ENROLL, CALL THE USPS AT 1-833-712-7742.

If you are enrolled in Medicare Part B as of Jan. 1, 2025, you and any Medicare-eligible family members covered by your Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) enrollment must remain enrolled in Part B to remain eligible for PSHB coverage.

Medicare Part B has a monthly income-based premium for all who enroll. The 2024 Medicare Part B premium is \$174.90 per eligible family member, based on an income of less than or equal to \$103,000 filing single tax return (\$206,000 joint filing).

If you enroll in Medicare Part B, you will need to pay monthly Medicare Part B premiums. The premiums are usually taken out of your monthly Social Security or

Office of Personnel Management annuity payment. If you do not receive any of these payments, Medicare will send you a quarterly bill for your Medicare Part B premiums. Go to [medicare.gov/basics/costs](https://www.medicare.gov/basics/costs) for more information on Medicare Part B premiums. Certain Medicare Part B enrollees will pay higher premiums based on higher income.

If you did not receive the SEP packet in the mail and you believe you are eligible to enroll in Medicare Part B during this SEP; or you have questions about Medicare Part B or the PSHB program, call the **Postal Service** at **1-833-712-7742** or send an email to retirementbenefits@usps.gov.

Requests to Terminate Part B Coverage

If you enroll in Part B during this SEP and later decide that you do not want or need the Medicare Part B coverage, you can request a termination from the Social Security Administration prior to the effective date, Jan. 1, 2025.

If your termination request is made before Jan. 1, 2025, you will not owe any Part B premiums and you will maintain your eligibility for PSHB coverage. If your request is made after Jan. 1, 2025, you will no longer be eligible for the PSHB Program unless a Medicare Part B exception applies. You will also be responsible for any Part B and PSHB premiums due through the month of termination. If you have questions regarding termination of Part B or if you would like to terminate your Part B enrollment, call **Social Security** at 1-800-772-1213. TTY users call **1-800-325-0778**.

Election Matters

APWU Family - our way of life, our families, our communities, our health, and our future are under attack. As union and community activists, as people of goodwill who have worked long and hard to build this country, we must do everything within our powers to make sure our families, our neighbors, our friends, and our coworkers participate in Vote-by-Mail or vote in person in November 2024 to make sure that Kamala Harris is elected President of the United States. We can't just stop with Kamala; we must also elect officials up and down the ballot who will support our issues! ■



Sarah Jane Rodriguez, Director

Stroke Prevention: Know The Risk Factors

The UnitedHealthcare network is the provider for the APWU Health Plan. Below are some tips shared in its Let's Move newsletter to help you stay informed and empowered about your health care.

Know the Risk Factors

Stroke is the fifth-leading cause of death and the leading cause of disability in America. Knowing the risk factors you can control may help prevent stroke from happening to you or a loved one. Help reduce your risk of stroke by having regular checkups and following treatment plans such as taking prescription medications as prescribed, getting regular physical activity, and following a healthy diet. You may not be able to control all of your risk factors, so try to stay focused on the ones you may have some control over.

F.A.S.T. Warning Signs²

By seeking immediate treatment, stroke patients may have higher survival rates and lower disability rates.

Making the call to 911 allows first responders to begin treatment before the patient arrives at the hospital. Use the letters in F.A.S.T. to help identify a stroke.

F = Face Drooping

Typically noticeable on one side of the face with visible drooping or numbness. A person's smile appears uneven.

A = Arm Weakness

When the arms are lifted overhead, one arm drifts downward due to weakness or numbness.

S = Speech Difficulty

Speech is slurred or nonsensical.

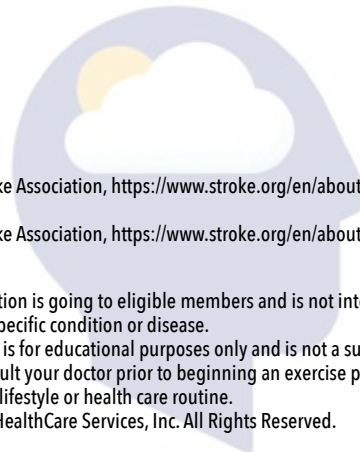
T = Time to call 911

A stroke is an emergency. Every minute counts to get the best care, making it important to note the time when symptoms are first noticed or experienced. ■

Risk Factors You May Control and Treat Include:

- High blood pressure;
- Smoking;
- Physical inactivity;
- Diabetes;
- Diet;
- Obesity;
- High blood cholesterol;
- Carotid artery disease;
- Peripheral artery disease;
- Atrial fibrillation;
- Other coronary disease (heart failure, heart valve disease, congenital heart defects, or enlarged heart);
- Sickle cell disease.

Other risk factors you may not control include: age, family history, race, gender, prior stroke, transient ischemic attack (TIA) or heart attack.¹



¹ American Stroke Association, <https://www.stroke.org/en/about-stroke/stroke-risk-factors>

² American Stroke Association, <https://www.stroke.org/en/about-stroke/stroke-symptoms>

This communication is going to eligible members and is not intended to imply the recipient has a specific condition or disease. This information is for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for the advice of a doctor. Consult your doctor prior to beginning an exercise program or making changes to your lifestyle or health care routine.

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Missouri Auto Workers Reach Tentative Agreement After Three-Day Strike for Safer Working Conditions, Better Pay

Nearly 460 members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) union walked off the job at the Lear seating assembly plant on July 22 in Wentzville, MO, citing unreconciled issues during contract negotiations relating to safety and health, pay, health insurance, and retirement benefits for workers.



Labor Tribune

The company provides seats for several makes of cars manufactured at the nearby General Motors factory, but the repetitive nature of the work has led to chronic injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome, and injuries to workers' elbows, backs, and spines are common. On the third day of the strike, the UAW announced they agreed to a tentative agreement. "These companies have been raking in record profits for years, and now it's time for the American workers to stand up, organize, and get what is owed to them," said UAW Local 282 President Bill Hugeback.

UNI Global Amazon Alliance Demands Heat Safety Protections for Workers

Following a report titled, "Heat at Work: Implications for Safety and Health," published by the International Labour Organization (ILO), which highlights the increasing risks of heat stress on workers around the world, the UNI Global Union Amazon Alliance released a comprehensive set of demands that aims to ensure safe working conditions for the Amazon workers it represents in the more than 20 countries. The report reveals that in 2020, more than 4,200 workers died due to heatwaves, and 231 million worked in extreme heat worldwide, exposing a whopping 66 percent increase from 2000. As climate change intensifies, employers have increasingly exposed workers to extreme weather conditions in their workplaces.

"This is a human rights issue, a workers' rights issue, and an economic issue, and middle-income economies are bearing the biggest brunt," said ILO's Team Lead for Occupational Safety and Health Manal Azzi. "We need year-round heat action plans and legislation to protect workers, and stronger global collaboration among experts to harmonize heat stress assessments and interventions at work."



India Ambulance Workers Strike for Backpay, Benefits, Improved Working Conditions

Nearly 6,000 ambulance workers in the Bihar region of India have gone on strike, as the State Government has been slow to implement provisions secured in a 2023 collective agreement related to wages and benefits. Workers filed multiple grievances for issues that include not receiving salaries for months since March, working more than 12-hour shifts, and not receiving provisions for social security benefits or other essential facilities. UNI Global Union affiliate, BRCKS, is at the forefront of the industrial action in Bihar. "If the government does not intervene soon, a state-wide strike across all 38 districts could occur, for which the state government and PDPL will be held responsible," said BRCKS President Chandra Prakash Singh. ■

French Coalition, Labor Unions Defeat Le Pen's Far-Right Party



In July, a left-wing alliance backed by the support of labor unions called the New Popular Front (NFP), led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon's France Unbowed party, used their coalition to win the majority of seats in snap parliamentary elections in France, defeating Marine Le Pen's extremist far-right party. French President Emmanuel Macron called for the elections after the surprise defeat of his Renaissance party by the far-right National Rally party June's European Union Parliamentary Elections.

Fearing the worst, hundreds of centrist candidates pulled out of the race for the greater good to avoid splitting the anti-Le Pen vote. After the NFP gained a majority of seats in Parliament, Mélenchon, addressed supporters, saying "[We] wrested a result that everyone said was impossible in a wonderful leap of civic spirit ... The people have avoided the worst." Now in the majority, the NFP led by Mélenchon, seeks to implement its worker-friendly agenda, which includes revoking Macron's controversial pension reforms, increasing the minimum wage, implementing a wealth tax, and addressing the climate crisis. The alliances' three main parties and union leaders, who ultimately turned the tide against Le Pen's fascist party, have urged Macron to listen to the will of the people and allow them to form a new government. ■



Video Game Actors On Strike for Artificial Intelligence Protections

Video game actors represented by the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) authorized a strike on July 26 against the video game companies signed to the Interactive Media Agreement, which covers the acting work in various video games and digital media. The video game performers held their first strike picket on August 1, outside WB Games, Inc in Burbank, CA. Video game companies have so far refused to implement protections against the use artificial intelligence (AI), and technology that could potentially replace or replicate the likenesses and voices of SAG-AFTRA-represented workers in the video game development process. "We're not going to consent to a contract that allows companies to abuse A.I. to the detriment of our members. Enough is enough," said Fran Drescher, SAG-AFTRA president, in the strike announcement. "When these companies get serious about offering an agreement our members can live – and work – with, we will be here, ready to negotiate." ■

Video Game Workers Level-Up, Form Unions

Workers at Bethesda Games Studios voted to become the first video game developers under Microsoft to fully unionize with the Communications Workers of America (CWA). On July 19, the CWA announced that more than 240 developers, artists, engineers, programmers, and designers have formed a "wall-to-wall" union at Bethesda games. The following week, around 500 workers at Microsoft-owned Blizzard Entertainment, who work on the popular "World of Warcraft" video game, became new members of the CWA. More than 300 workers voted in favor of unionization, and only 18 against. The workers, largely based in California and Massachusetts, organized for better wages, transparency around promotions, remote work, and layoff protections. The new unit consists of designers, engineers, producers, artists, quality assurance testers, and other game developers. Additionally, more than 60 Austin-based Quality Assurance workers at Blizzard Entertainment, the studio behind the Diablo and Hearthstone, have also successfully unionized with the CWA. Microsoft has vowed to voluntarily recognize the memberships of all their unionized studios.

2024 APWU SCHOLARSHIP

The APWU proudly presents the winners of three scholarship programs: The E.C. Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship, Vocational Scholarship, and Best Essay Award for 2024!

When the five predecessor craft unions merged to form the APWU in 1971, the new union decided to maintain an academic scholarship program, created in 1969 by the United Federation of Postal Clerks (UFPC), as a tribute to UFPC president E.C. "Roy" Hallbeck. Here are winners as reported by the Secretary-Treasurer Department.

HALLBECK WINNERS

Daniel Brown,
Grandson of **Deanna Patrick** of the Wyoming
Postal Workers Union



Melat Werdoffa,
Daughter of **Mekennon Werdoffa** of the Las Vegas
Area Local



Sarah Will, Daughter
of **Lori Will** of the
Baltimore "Stu Filbey"
Area Local



Colin Williams, Son
of **Hope Williams** of
the Johnstown Local

Anthony Swift, Son
of **Robert Swift II** of
the Louisville Local



Bryanna Stine,
Daughter of **Theresa Stewart** of the Western
Michigan Area Local



Kona Chamberlin,
Son of **Richard Chamberlin** of the
Manchester Area Local



Joana Gjini, Daughter
of **Mirela Profka** of
the Boston Metro Area
Local

Amaya Moore,
Daughter of **Jennifer Moore** of the Greater
Greensboro SCF Area Local



David Brisc, Son of
Florica Brisc of the
Dothan Area Local



WINNERS

The APWU Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship program provides financial assistance to children of APWU union members. It awards \$2,000 per year for four consecutive years of college to one male and one female high school student from each of the five postal regions.

The APWU Vocational Scholarship was established by the National Executive Board to help students interested in programs of study leading to trade, technical, industrial, or vocational occupations. Five recipients, one from each of the five postal regions, will receive up to \$3,000 to be used for up to three years of study in a specific trade, technical, industrial, or vocational school.

The Best Essay winner receives an additional one-time award of \$2,000. This year's Best Essay winner is Ethan Deang, of the Tampa Area Florida local.

The scholarships are funded by donations, and the APWU is extremely grateful for contributions by union members. To contribute, please send a check or a money order to: APWU Scholarship Fund, 1300 L Street NW, Washington DC 20005. Your tax-deductible donation may specify "Hallbeck," "Vocational," or "Best Essay." ■



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Are You Interested in Applying for a Scholarship in 2025?

The deadline to apply is May 31, 2025. Eligible applicants are encouraged to submit materials well before the May 31 deadline. For more information, visit: apwu.org/scholarship-programs.

VOCATIONAL WINNERS



Mikayla Reed,
Daughter of **Jamie Dobson** of the Bangor Area Local



Adam Piotrowski, Son of **Dariusz Piotrowski** of the Greater Hicksville Mid-Island Local



Ariel Loveless,
Daughter of **Stacey Loveless** of the Columbus Local

BEST ESSAY WINNER



Ethan Deang, Son of **Ferdinand Deang** of the Tampa Area Local

Michael Sundo, Son of **Paul Sundo** of the Pittsburgh Metro Area Local

Madeline Hammock, Daughter of **Thomas Hammock** of the Alabama Area Local

THE TIME IS NOW!



The APWU Staffing Task Force Committee, made up of various local and state leaders, is ramping up its "Better Staffing, Better Service" campaign. Postal workers are at the forefront of the country's oldest and most trusted public service. However, years of management cost cutting and short staffing has undermined

Engage with Your Community to Demand 'Better Staffing, Better Service'

our ability to carry out our mission to the public. It undermines service, increases workplace stress, and drives business and revenue away from the Postal Service.

This is a fight that the APWU must lead. If we all get involved and energized to organize and mobilize, it's a fight we can win!

Every union member, from every craft, has a stake in a strong and vibrant Postal Service. We can all get involved. Be prepared to mobilize! Below are some strategies to use as we ramp up our campaign.

- **Petitions**
Go to betterpostoffice.org to find a petition with our demands. Talk to coworkers and members of the community and urge them to sign it as well.
- **Informational pickets**
Talk to your coworkers and allies, make signs or banners, and hit the streets!
- **Media work**
Write op-eds, hold a press conference, or invite the media to your picket. Sharing our story is an important way to win allies and increase leverage.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE CAMPAIGN AND RESOURCES, VISIT APWU.ORG/STAFFING.

APWU LEADERSHIP Institute

The Leadership Institute is an intensive three-week educational program, held one week at a time over a three-month period. The program focuses on topics ranging from organizing, bargaining, and representation, to legislation, community alliances, and building the APWU and union movements. The Institute helps strengthen and enhance the leadership skills of local and state leaders, and union activists across the country. The president's office at APWU National organizes and oversees the Institute. Many national officers participate and present to its attendees. The APWU national headquarters will cover all the costs, including lost compensation, of the participants.

The Institute is open to all full dues-paying APWU members in good standing with demonstrated involvement in the union. Each three-week session will consist of a diverse group of approximately 30 APWU members from

Applications for the APWU Leadership Institute Class Two Open Until September 13, 2024

all five regions and all crafts. Participants are chosen by an impartial selection process. Although the Institute's Class Two is limited to 30 participants, there will be opportunities to participate in future Leadership Institutes.

Find application materials and more information at apwu.org/institute. ■

Course Schedule

Week One	January 6 - 10, 2025
Week Two	February 24 - 28, 2025
Week Three	May 13 - 17, 2025



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.

"I just returned home from the national Convention. I want to thank the Lincoln Local for sending me there as a delegate representing our retiree's chapter. This was new as it was voted on at the 2022 convention to allow each retiree chapter to have one delegate on the floor with voice and vote. Again, thank you for allowing me to attend."

– Terry C. Danek
Retiree President, Lincoln, NE Local
Linkin Postal News

"A union isn't a fee for service kind of thing, though many feel that way. Being a member of a union is more like having a gym membership. You can pay your monthly dues, but if you never step foot in the gym, you never [see the results]. In order to thrive we need to share our ideas and the best place to do that is during our membership meetings, picnics, parties and gatherings, and by also participating in the grievance procedure and standing up for our rights!"

– Michael Fincher
President, Toledo Ohio Area Local APWU #170
The Black Swamp Outrider

"This is a critical time, and we need everyone on deck to represent and support our national officers during the contract negotiation. Every day show your support by wearing your union gear. Continue to talk to your coworkers about the importance of coming to work and ensuring the public is getting their mail promptly. It's up to us, the American Postal Workers, to ensure the mail processing machine keeps running like it should."

– James K. Parker, Jr.
Vice President, Raleigh Cosmo Local 1078
The Rank and Filer

"When you think of the Union, you think of grievances and stewards fighting against Management. That is only the tip of the iceberg. No one cares about the future of the USPS like we do, and we are the Union. The APWU was the leading advocate of the 2022 *Postal Service Reform Act* (PSRA) (H.R. 3076).

The PSRA removed the pre-funding mandate for retirees, mandated six-days a week delivery, and changed retiree health care. These changes were essential for the USPS to survive and are only a few. We are the reason the USPS has a future."

– Eric Chornoby
Editor and Young Members' Committee Chairperson
The 430-431 Communicator

"I am excited to say our Local, the Detroit District Area Local, was recently a part of the National APWU Organizing Drive that was super successful. The locals around the country surpassed a goal of signing up at least 5,000 nonmembers. Over 8,700 nonmembers were signed up. It is great that so many nonmembers across the country agreed to join the APWU. The Detroit District was just awarded a plaque from the National Organization Director Anna Smith. We received the award for being third among locals who have 1,900-2,000 members. We are extremely excited to have 92 [percent] of our local organized. We appreciate our members, and we understand it is our numbers that give us our strength. It is our union that has been fighting for our rights, jobs and working conditions. Without the APWU, we would not have a living wage. I appreciate the American Postal Workers Union because our struggle continues, but our fight has never been stronger."

– Keith Combs
President, Detroit District Area Local
The Detroit Postal Worker

APWU Retirees:

**Important
information
about your
health
insurance
plan.**

**SPECIAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD FOR
MEDICARE PART B RUNS THROUGH
SEPT. 30, 2024.**

As a result of the *Postal Service Reform Act of 2022*, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in conjunction with the USPS have implemented a new **Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program** as required under the new law, including a Medicare Part B Special Enrollment Period for USPS annuitants and their eligible family members. **The special enrollment period runs through Sept. 30, 2024.**

Who is eligible to apply?

If you and your eligible family members were entitled to Medicare Part A as of Jan. 1, 2024, you may be entitled to apply for Medicare Part B during the Special Enrollment Period without paying a late enrollment penalty.

Do you have any questions or concerns about the PSHB program?

Please contact the USPS:

**Dial 1-833-712-7742 or email
retirementbenefits@usps.gov.**

