

COLORADO



LOCAL 321

## NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION

Division of the Laborer's International Union of North America,  
AFL-CIO

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### ~~FOR YOUR INFORMATION~~

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#### **Denver Bulk Mail Center Conversion to National Distribution Center Underway**

In an effort to better utilize transportation capacities and improve transit time, the Postal Service is redesigning the entire BMC network. Management claims that this will cut operating costs while improving operational efficiency. It is in all of our best interests to work towards the common goal of making this transition successful. Our Postal future as we know it may depend on it.

The plan calls for consolidation of the processing of outgoing mail into 10 Network Distribution Centers (NDC). The remaining 11 NDCs will process local and destinating mail. The Denver BMC will be a site that will process both outgoing mail from other BMCs as well as local mail. The transition will begin next week. Employees will receive multiple service talks on all changes over the next few weeks.

One major goal of this process is to eliminate the practice of running partially empty trailers. By consolidating mail volume for processing at fewer sites, full truckloads can be sent through the new network, reducing the number of trucks used, saving fuel, hours and money. Denver's transition to a NDC is expected to be completed by November. It is possible that report times may change. The Union is meeting with management to discuss these proposals as we speak. Additional information will be posted as it becomes available.

#### **Union Notified of Possible Discontinuance of 15 Stations and Branches in District**

I recently posted this list of potential District closures noting that the USPS is conducting a discontinuance study in the following locations:

*Denver-Thornton Branch; Denver-Wellshire Station;  
Denver-Alcott Station; Denver-Stockyards Station;  
Denver-South Denver Station;  
Aurora-Fletched Station; Aurora-Altura Stations;  
Aurora- Hoffman Heights Station;  
Colorado Springs- West End Station;  
Colorado Springs- North End Station;  
Pueblo- Belmont Station;  
Boulder- Main Office Station;  
Boulder- HiMar Station;  
Ft. Collins- Old Town Station;  
Loveland-Valentine Station; and  
Westminster- Harris Park Station*

I can tell you that the Union has not yet received any official written notification of any impending closure from this list, but I must inform you of recent discussions. This will not come as a surprise to many station mail handlers; many proposals, counter-proposals and rumors have been running rampant on the work-floor for months.

To be perfectly candid, management wants all mail handler operations moved out of **Ft. Collins**,

**Brighton and Boulder** as soon as possible. They would like these city's letter and flat processing operations consolidated into the Denver P&DC, and they would like to reduce or eliminate mixed-load truck runs to these facilities.

I have been told that official written notification to involuntarily excess mail handlers from the Brighton and Ft. Collins installations is coming very soon. I remind you that management talked about moving Englewood's operations for nearly 8 months before it actually happened.

While Brighton and Ft. Collins are supposedly on the fast track for this move, notification for the Boulder move may be 90 days out.

As of now, it seems that Brighton and Boulder mail handlers will eventually be excessed to the Denver P&DC. On the other hand, if our Ft. Collins mail handlers are involuntarily transferred to the Denver P&DC, this excessing is greater than 50 miles. This triggers certain rights with some travel and moving expenses that must be paid by the employer.

Management claims they have not yet decided what they will do with the Ft. Collins mail handlers. As of now, they plan to move 2 Ft. Collins DBCS to the Denver P&DC. The remaining work is to be absorbed into the GMF on existing machines. Additional details will be posted as soon as they are available.

#### **Reductions in Denver BMC Promised**

Management has recently notified the Union of their intent to reduce PTF hours in the Denver BMC. Casuals are on the rolls, but most have not worked since the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday weekend. The Union has been advised that all BMC casuals are being removed and taken off the rolls effective July 31, 2009. Management cautioned that this is only a precursor to the next cut.

Management intends to reduce BMC part-time flexible (PTF) hours to the greatest extent possible. Please be aware that by contract, PTFs are only guaranteed 4 hours per pay period in the BMC.

Management recently met with our BMC PTFs and the Union to discuss this situation. Subsequently, the Union met with all BMC PTFs to discuss options.

There are many unknowns on the horizon. The impact of the Flat Sequencing System (FSS) machines in the Denver P&DC will require more mail handlers. In addition, and **DESPITE UNION OBJECTION**, management is claiming that the BMC transition to a NDC will reduce hours in the Denver Bulk. This remains to be seen. Management is hedging their bet by reducing hours and staff in the Denver BMC.

#### **Automated Airline Assignment (AAA) System Moved from MPA to P&DC**

After talking about the move for months, management finally got approval to move the AAA system into the Denver GMF. The system was temporarily set up on the north wall of the west-wing

expansion area of the GMF. The move occurred on July 26, 2009. The final location will be at GMF grids 5 to 8 between columns S & T.

All MPA (AAA) section mail handlers were offered and did accept incumbent transfer opportunities consistent with Article 12.3B7b. Once power is run to the new locations, the AAA will be moved to its final location inside the main GMF.

### **MPA Safety Issues Address**

The Unions met with management on July 21 to address the improper handling of events on July 6, 2009. Management agreed to the following corrective measures:

1. *Management will post the information on receiving free weather alerts for Aurora via internet and/or cell phone alert messages.*
2. *Management will make employees aware of other broadcast and internet weather alert resources.*
3. *All supervisors, 204B's and Safety Representatives are being trained on the Emergency Action and Tornado Safety plans. Training is being documented on CAR sheets.*
4. *Management will improve access to the Safety Office so that emergency equipment can be obtained easily.*
5. *Management will solicit employees to receive training and join an expanded Emergency Action Team.*
6. *Management will take corrective action to improve Supervisor communication and training.*
7. *Management will conduct Emergency Evacuation Drill.*

### **The following is the schedule for the roof repairs:**

- **Re-torque roof fasteners to tighten panels joints is complete**
- **Start elastomeric coating of roof exterior - 7/27. Finish by 8/7**
- **Start insulation removal/reinstall - 8/10. Finish by 8/28**

### **FERS Sick Leave Bill Running Out of Time**

It is starting to look like the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) inconsistency will not be changed in this legislative session. Language that would have given most federal employees retirement credit for unused sick leave was dropped from the Senate version of the Defense Authorization Act. Similar language was in the House version Tobacco Bill.

Unlike workers under the older Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) retirement program, FERS has a use-it-or-lose-it-system. It has been reported that the FERS flu costs the United States Government over 60 billion dollars annually. In a use it or lose it system, federal employees get *very sick* towards the end of their career. They simply do not leave this money on the table.

Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii) said he will try to get the FERS language restored when the Senate and House go to conference on the must-pass Defense bill. Despite financing the FERS pay-off in part through a new TSP Roth option, it seems that members of Congress are succumbing to pressures from their non-federal constituents. In light of the upcoming break on Capitol Hill, it seems unlikely that the FERS flu will be cured this session.

### **NIOSH Requesting Return Visit to GMF**

NIOSH officials are in discussion with the USPS over a return visit to the Denver P&DC. They want to broach questions relative to the psychological stresses of the job, specific to production demands, available resources, staffing, and workplace methodologies to name a few. The Union did not object to the return visit. This request is now in

management's hands. Please check the boards for additional information.

### **Stand-by Time**

Several people have asked the Union why management has started putting employees on stand-by operations. Management is using this operation to document down-time, or unproductive time as evidence that work is unavailable. This move is a precursor to management's next step. If they are putting able-bodied employees on stand-by time in a station or AO, the data could be used to support their position that staffing should be reduced or the facility should be closed. (They are doing this in Boulder)

When management places a rehab employee on stand-by, they are clearly documenting their position that work is not available. (They are doing this in the BMC and P&DC) Stand-by time is our notice that more bad news is on the horizon.

### **National Reassessment Process: Phase 2**

The Union has been notified that the CO/WY cluster is transitioning to Phase 2 of the National Reassessment Process (NRP) in August of 2009. So far, 32 mail handlers have been through the NRP interview process. All 32 were accommodated with job offers consistent with their medical limitations. Several accommodations were made with minor changes in one's hours or a change in days off. We have about 65 additional mail handlers identified for NRP interviews in the state.

This next phase of NRP will be unpleasant for many. The Union will be briefed by management in the coming days. In the advance briefing documents management writes, "*As our operations become more automated, both in the plant and in customer services, it is becoming more difficult to provide productive and necessary tasks to employees within their medical restrictions. On a daily basis, if necessary tasks within employee's identified medical restrictions are not identified, the employee will be sent home for the remainder of their scheduled workday.*"

These talking points go on to say that most employees will be instructed to report back to their assignment on the next scheduled workday. If no work can be identified, they will again be sent home. The employee will be told to file a claim for compensation through the Office of Workers Compensation Program (OWCP). Employees will be told to complete a 3971, CA7, or CA2a, with the opportunity to provide an updated CA17. If you are scheduled for an NRP interview, please let a Union official know. You should not go to this meeting without Union representation.

### **Management Has Been Known to Change Their Minds... Without Explanation**

There is a lot of information in this FYI that could change with a moments notice. Management could decide to keep mail handler in Ft. Collins, they may figure out that they need mail handlers in Valmont. They may conclude that they need to keep all the BMC PTFs in house to accomplish the transition to a NDC. I have reported the most current information available. In our current environment, you should be prepared for more changes.

In Unity, 

Michael J Hora  
President,  
NPMHU Local 321