

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~~

May 22, 2007

USPS to Hire 36 New Career Mail Handlers

Union pressure through grievance activity once again proves beneficial; management has secured approval to hire 36 new career mail handlers in Denver. Twenty-four will go to the Denver P&DC, and 12 will go to the Denver BMC. This hiring will begin very soon and will be staggered over time to keep pace with craft attrition in each facility. It is not a huge number, but it will prevent staffing from decreasing. Additional hiring requests are forthcoming.

Management must first afford these new vacancies to those with pending conversion requests. After this is accomplished, management will re-hire PTRs up to the contract limit of 6%. It seems clear that all future new-hires will be forced to funnel through the ranks of PTR before having the opportunity to convert to PTF and eventually full-time. The Union is challenging this PTR methodology in several pay locations and facilities in Denver as appropriate.

Prior to filling any residual Mail Handler Craft vacancies, management must select from requests for conversion.

If you are a PTR and you want to convert to PTF (and eventually full-time), now is the time to act. Do not delay. You should provide written notice to management that details your request to be considered for the next available conversion to PTF. This notification should be sent to:

*Char A. Ehrenshaft
Human Resources Generalist (Principal)
7500 E 53rd Place
Denver CO 80266
Office: 303/853-6082 Fax: 303/853-6950*

Retroactive Wage Payment Delayed by USPS

Despite assurances from USPS headquarters that retroactive amounts owed to Mail Handlers for wage increase covering PP25-2006 thru PP03-2007 would be paid on June 15, 2007 – the USPS has now advised the NPMHU that the retroactive adjustments will be delayed until PP14-2007 *due to conflicts with the processing scheme* at the Postal Data Center. This delay also includes payment and promotion to the new Step P.

In response, the NPMHU has filed a National-level grievance seeking payment and interest and/or other penalties by the USPS for all affected mail handlers. Additional details will be posted as this situation develops.

4/10's at the Mail Processing Annex

There are many rumors about a 4-day/10-hour workweek floating throughout Denver's (MPA) mail processing annex. The fact is that 4/10's are not contractually possible for the Mail Handler craft. We

no longer have memorandums in our National Agreement to consider or test 4/10's or any other alternative scheduling methods; article 8 dictates work-week standards. Article 8 is devoid of the necessary provisions to consider 4/10s. We have advised management that the Union cannot consider the proposal; discussions on this topic are a waste of everyone's time.

Union to Fight Centralized Discipline

As previously reported, the Union recently participated in a meeting with management to discuss their proposal to return to a centralized attendance control methodology. Management has proposed to change the current and longstanding practice whereby your immediate supervisor is accountable for all aspects of your attendance.

At this meeting we voiced vehement opposition to their proposal. It is this Local Union's opinion that management's actions would be in violation of a national arbitration decision on the topic which defers to locally established practices. Management has not made a final decision, but we fully expect centralized attendance control to initially roll out in the Denver P&DC. Additional details and guidance will be posted once management issues their final notification to the Union.

OSHA Returns to MPA, Pigeon Feces Problems Continue

By Teri Szuch-Jerram

On May 2, 2007 OSHA paid an unannounced visit to the USPS due to renewed complaints regarding pigeon feces in and around the building at the Mail Processing Annex. OSHA representatives inspected and filmed the following areas:

- 1) Bays 13-17 & 32-35
- 2) Pump room area
- 3) Break room area behind the SPBS
- 4) Forklift Battery area

OSHA recommended that additional clean up measures should be taken. In addition, netting should be installed over the roofs of the break room areas. OSHA also requested additional training for maintenance employees on proper clean up methods.

On May 9, 2007 OSHA Representatives returned to the MPA for employee interviews. Representatives from both Unions, and management were also present. OSHA will return next week for Exit-interviews and recommendations concerning this matter. As a direct result of the pigeon problem, at least one employee has filed a workers compensation claim. This is a very serious matter. The Union will not stop pressing management until the problem is rectified. The Union will post OSHA's recommendations when they are made released.

Respecting Part-Time Regulars

Management is struggling with our new part time regulars. It is imperative that we educate and train management. PTRs are not casuals. PTRs hold bids with regular days off and schedules and they should expect to normally work their bid assignment. Contrary to popular belief, PTRs are not flexible employees who can be moved unit to unit or schedule to schedule without ramifications.

Many PTRs have had their hours and days off changed several times since being hired on March 31. Others are bumped, displaced and moved operation to operation without regard to their bid assignment. Many grievances are in the system challenging everything described here. Many PTRs were told that they could not converse with the Union until their 91st day, "because the Union could not represent them for the first 90 days." Let me set the record straight.

Part time regulars are regular craft members entitled to Union representation from day one. The Union's only limitation comes when challenging one's termination during probation, and this is true with every new mail handler. Management should not be changing your hours or days off on a whim, nor should management be moving you from operation-to-operation without consideration to seniority and the negotiated pecking order. If this is occurring, you are entitled to file a grievance; you should request to speak with a Union steward.

I am not naive to the pressures of probation and management's inalienable right to terminate a new employee during their first 90 days without Union representation. But the fact is, most supervisors welcome an extra body and would not dream of taking such an extreme action as a retaliatory termination. If you are aggrieved, you have the right to file a grievance. Simply request to see a Union steward. You should be afforded an opportunity to meet with the Union within a few hours; if not, it should happen early or first thing on your next work day. If you are ever told that you are not entitled to Union representation or you cannot file a grievance, please call the Union hall at 303-455-6400. We need to know about it immediately.

AMC Closure Update

Those involved in the closing of the Denver Air Mail Center met on Thursday May 10, 2007 to discuss pending issues; the Unions also participated. The short-story is the AMC is still closing; the caveat is that it has been delayed until June or July. Management went on record stating that after closing the facility, all remaining Denver AMC mail handlers will be relocated to the MPA. Written notice is forthcoming; management committed to giving as much notice as possible, but this letter may not come for 3-6 weeks.

Management has secured funding to build a new low-cost tray sorting conveyor system in the MPA that will upgrade and replace the current conveyor system used on the AAA. The installation of these conveyors and movement of the AAA computer system to the MPA is one reason for the delayed closure. Management would prefer to move the AAA system to a new set of conveyors, and this is taking more time than expected.

There are still more questions than answers. Management is not prepared to explain how a letter or flat tray will get from the airplane to the GMF. No one can say who (if anyone) is going into the AMC, who

will sort, label, containerize, load and unload mail coming to and from the airplane and whether or not this will occur at a centralized transfer point, or if each carrier will handle their own tender and receipt points.

The NPMHU appreciates the national ramifications of subcontracting the Air Mail Center's tender and receipt duties. Subcontracting AMC work poses a huge risk to the sanctity of the mail and the national security of air transportation. On May 17, 2007 NPMHU representatives presented our concerns to our elected officials in Washington D.C. State Executive Board Member John Meding and I, along with representatives from many other Locals across the country met with Senators, Congressional leaders and their aides to discuss the consequences of subcontracting Air Mail Center tender and receiving duties. We cannot limit our opposition to the grievance and arbitration process. We are taking this fight to Capitol Hill.

Cell Phone Use

Management has promised to crack-down on cell phone use on the workroom floor. Don't fret, they are not going to search you for cell-phones at the door, but they say they are going to enforce the usage policy. We have been assured that they have no intention of interfering with cell-phone use on breaks and lunch, but you can expect stand-up talks and renewed enforcement addressing appropriate use. The use of a cell phone on the workroom floor will get the attention of your supervisor.

Management did acknowledge latitude in the policy on special case-by-case circumstances. If you have a particular short-term need for a cell phone on the work floor, please make the request thru your immediate supervisor. If you feel that you are not receiving appropriate consideration, request to see a Union steward. The Union will monitor enforcement protocols; most importantly, have employees been made aware of the rule, is the rule enforced equally, and are penalties appropriate to the infraction?

MPA Heat and Ventilation

Management's plan to move the Air Mail Center's AAA system into the MPA renewed concerns over the lack of electricity in the facility. The facility cannot currently accommodate the additional electrical demands. The Union has been informed that management will uninstall the cooling system suspended over the APPS, acknowledging that the cooling system never worked. They will move the power that ran this system to the forthcoming AAA system. Maintenance will then be installing new portable cooling packs to the APPS computer systems to prevent overheating, but what about the people. Lots of effort goes into cooling computers and sorting equipment, what about the people?

The USPS tells the Union that they have secured additional power for the MPA. This means management will be installing a new reversible ventilation system in the roof of the MPA. This system will have the reversible-capability of drawing in cool air and/or expending hot air depending on the time and temperature. Management tentatively plans to have this installed by June or July.

In Unity, *Mike*
Michael J Hora
President,
NPMHU Local 321