

COLORADO



LOCAL 321

NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION

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

1833 WEST ELK PLACE - DENVER, COLORADO 80211

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~ ~ FOR YOUR INFORMATION ~ ~

September 08, 2006

Cost-of-Living Adjustment of \$812 Effective on September 2, 2006

The final guaranteed cost-of-living adjustment to be paid to all mail handlers under the 2000 National Agreement has been released. This COLA has been set at \$812, based on changes in the National Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) for the period running from January 2006 through July 2006. This COLA is being added to wages effective September 2, 2006, and will be reflected in paychecks on September 22, 2006. The COLA of \$812 represents an increase of 39 cents per hour, and is the largest COLA adjustment paid to mail handlers since 1980.

Our current National Agreement expires on November 20, 2006. Cost of living adjustments highlight an important wage-benefit negotiated by your Union. In our upcoming negotiations, the USPS will do everything possible to eliminate or reduce COLA entitlements. The Postal Service will focus on "controlling" wages, COLA and health care costs. New pay charts are available at www.local321.org; they will also be available upon request at each facility Union office.

Making the Ergonomic Risk Reduction Process Work

Anyone that has been involved in ERRP (Ergonomic Risk Reduction Process) knows the program can be *demanding*. ERRP is intended to be a partnership between the NPMHU, APWU, USPS & OSHA to address ergonomic related workplace hazards. Statistics show the program has reduced workplace injuries. ERRP is the result of a well-intended National Memorandum; however recent unilateral policy changes in Denver have nearly ended mail handler participation in Colorado.

I am pleased to report that we have worked through many of these issues. In the short-term, the NPMHU will continue to be a participant in the P&DC ERRP. In conjunction with the Denver Metro Area Local of the APWU and the Colorado Mail Handlers, we have secured changes in policy.

Management has agreed to once again hold ALL CORE meetings monthly, and management has agreed to permit 3189 changes of schedule when necessary and requested. ERRP participation is voluntary; no one is required, expected or even permitted to attend ERRP meetings on their own time. If the CORE meeting is outside of your

normal bid-schedule, you may attend by way of a change in schedule.

Air Mail Center Issues

It is becoming increasingly clear that the future of our Air Mail Center is very bleak. At one time we had 108 mail handlers at Denver's AMC; today we have about 45. United Airlines was a major carrier in Denver, at their peak they carried 58% of Denver's *commercial*-carried mail. On June 1, 2006, United, Southwest and Delta declined contract extensions with the USPS and they no longer fly mail in Denver. The loss of United's air service and the shifting of this volume to UPS and FedEx has reduced AMC mail volume and work.

Management is now displacing most of our T-2 AMC mail handlers to the GMF on a semi-permanent basis. We have challenged this displacement, but we are in a lose-lose situation. The cease and desist remedy will likely force excessing. For now, all T-2 mail is staged and sits until T-3 arrives. Management has stated that the facility will eventually be completely occupied by subcontracted workers from THS Matheson, but no date has been provided. It is only a matter of time before craft employees are out of the AMC. In the meantime we will do what we can to protect the remaining mail handlers, and we will ensure that management's course of action is within the bounds of our contract. Additional information will be posted as it becomes available.

AFSM Update

As of today, 6 of Denver's 7 AFSMs have been retrofitted and now have AI and AHS. The remaining machine is expected to be completed by mid-September. The final transition of mail handlers into these positions should be completed by September 30, 2006. MPA (035) flat prep bid holders have or will soon be afforded the option to follow this 035 work to the GMF per Article 12.3B7b effective 9/16/06. We have also negotiated the posting of 18 new AFSM/035 bid positions every 28 days until all jobs are properly staffed with mail handler bidders.

The true value of this jurisdictional victory is clear. Management was forced to hire 96 career mail handlers to accommodate the Denver P&DC's AI & AHS enhancements. This staggered hiring began on April 29, 2006; the final 13 mail handlers started September 2, 2006. P&DC Branch President Cindy Hoehl-Rinker conducted every single orientation and (so far) secured NPMHU

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membership for 82 of 83 new mail handlers. Sister Rinker's success is staggering and much appreciated.

I am pleased to report that the Colorado Springs mail handlers will also benefit from the AFSM jurisdictional award. Both Colorado Springs AFSMs are scheduled to receive the AI retrofit: deployment is scheduled for October 21 and November 4 of 2006. Unfortunately all remaining AHS kits are spoken for; it looks like COS will only get AI. Without AHS, there will be significant debate over the jurisdictional assignment of sweeping and containerization duties. As of now, management has every intention of continuing their practice of utilizing clerks to perform these duties in Colorado Springs. The good news, we should pick up 15-20 new AFSM/035 positions in Colorado Springs. We are posturing for an equal number of new career mail handlers, and management is pressing for casual flexibility during this AI transition. This debate over what constitutes proper use of a casual will go on forever. We will continue to challenge their use while fighting for new and necessary positions.

1) Continuing fair wages increases for all Mail Handlers. The NPMHU continues to seek fair wage increases, meaning wage increases that improve the standard of living for each and every Mail Handler who works for the Postal Service. Mail Handlers have played an important role in the success of the Postal Service, including its financial success, and Mail Handlers – who are working harder, and working smarter, than ever before – expect and deserve to share in that success.

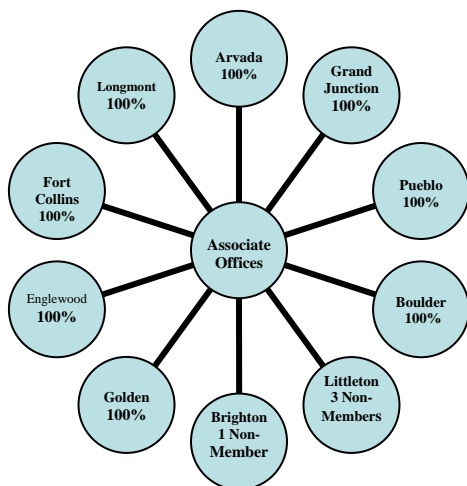
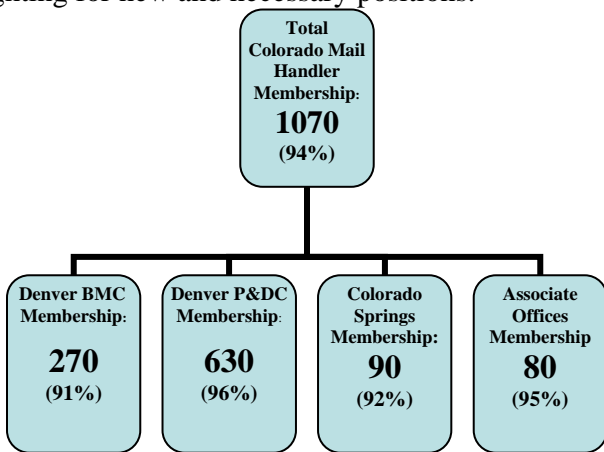
2) Maintaining benefits earned by Mail Handlers, and improving them when possible. The Postal Service must continue to maintain a career workforce with appropriate benefits providing for the health and retirement security of its employees. Although health insurance costs are rising throughout the nation, the USPS should do whatever is necessary to maintain benefits levels and rates.

3) Ensuring job security for all Mail Handlers. This means job security not only against layoffs, but also against subcontracting and automation of the Mail Handler craft.

During his remarks, President Hegarty emphasized that the best possible outcome of negotiations is to reach an agreement on a negotiated contract, as a review of the bargaining history clearly shows. He went on to say that he was optimistic that the NPMHU and the USPS could come to an agreement, if both sides made and accepted reasonable proposals.

The parties have worked well together to deal with a host of issues related to the contract, from resolving and reducing the backlog of pending grievances; to protecting Mail Handlers and other postal employees from anthrax terrorism and other biohazards; to reducing workplace injuries through extensive ergonomic training programs.

The NPMHU will be producing periodic bulletin board postings to keep the membership informed regarding the status of this year's contract negotiations. These 2006 Contract Updates will be posted on the Mail Handler bulletin board in each facility.



National Negotiations Underway

Source: NPMHU August Update www.npmhu.org

Bargaining between the National Postal Mail Handlers Union and the U.S. Postal Service began on August 21, 2006. The Postal Service is simultaneously bargaining new contracts with the APWU, the NRLCA, and the NALC for the first time in postal history.

In President Hegarty's opening statement, he highlighted the Union's three main goals during this year's round of bargaining.

Make Your Voice Heard: Register and Vote

- The deadline to register for the general election is October 10, 2006.
- General Election absentee ballots must be requested by October 27, 2006.
- General Election Day is November 7, 2006

English and Spanish voter registration forms can be downloaded at www.local321.org. Please take the time to register and vote. Voice your opinion.

In Unity, *Mike*

Michael J Hora
President,
NPMHU Local 321