

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~~

September 1, 2009

## Local 321 Receives Notification From Postal Service of Intent to Excess and Reassign All Mail Handlers in Boulder, Brighton, and Fort Collins

On August 18, 2009 the Local Union received notification that management intends to relocate operations from Boulder, Brighton and Ft. Collins to the Denver P&DC. According to management, this move will result in the involuntary relocation of all mail handlers in these 3 facilities. Here is a breakdown of the proposed impact in each location. Keep in mind that this information has changed several times in the past few weeks and could change again.

### Boulder

**Effective Date: January 31, 2010**

Craft Impact: All Mail Handlers: 16 FTRs

Reassignment Impact:

Same or lower level within 35 miles.

*\*Impact Notice claims to be moving all DBCS machines to Denver P&DC.*

### Brighton

**Effective Date: December 31, 2009**

Craft Impact: All Mail Handlers:  
3 FTRs, 1 PTF

Reassignment Impact:

Same or lower level in surrounding installations  
within CO/WY District

*\*Impact Notice claims that 806 SCF Mail Handler/  
Dock Ops. Will be absorbed by Denver P&DC*

### Ft. Collins

**Effective Date: January 31, 2010**

Craft Impact: All Mail Handlers: 11 FTRs

Reassignment Impact:

Same or lower level within 35 miles.

*\*Impact Notice claims to be moving all DBCS machines to Denver P&DC.*

Management has not provided the Union with any details about the future placement of affected mail handlers. The Union is doing everything possible to reduce the number of impacted employees in each facility.

I can confirm that management is building an inventory of withheld (vacant) positions. As you are aware, no one is being hired to fill new vacancies.

Management either fills these vacancies by reposting the bid for existing mail handlers, or they withhold the vacancy (in reserve) pending future involuntary reassignments. In theory, these withheld jobs will be given to displaced employees from all crafts. This is the negotiated alternative to preventing layoffs.

Involuntary reassignment through excessing can only occur within the same or lower level. This means that station mail handlers cannot be forced to

be a clerk or letter-carrier. We believe involuntary mail handler reassignments are limited to mail handler and custodial positions.

If management actually follows through with their plans and does excess Boulder, Brighton and Ft. Collins mail handlers by involuntary reassignment, the union must challenge the actions. To successfully challenge, the Union must prove that sufficient mail handler work still remains in the affected facilities. The Union will work to satisfy our claims to work by attempting to prove that 4 consecutive hours of mail handler work remains in each impacted facility. This is the bare minimum we must prove in order to maintain mail handler(s) in the facility.

If the operations are moved, and our mail handlers are reassigned, the Union will assign representatives in each facility to periodically document the workload activities. Just because volume has dropped today, does not mean that it may not return in the future. The Union retains the right to revisit these facilities in the future to monitor and document the existing workload at that time. Additionally, grievances will be filed to challenge all excessing where we can show that 4 consecutive hours of mail handler work remains at the time of the excessing. We will argue for the return of mail handler bids and retreat rights accordingly.

## USPS Threatens Reductions in Littleton and Longmont

I wish the bad news stopped with Boulder, Brighton and Ft. Collins, but in light of the economy and dropping mail volume, this is simply not the case. Here are the proposed impact notices for Littleton and Longmont:

### Littleton

**Effective Date: December 31, 2009**

Craft Impact: 2 FTRs, 1 PTR

Reassignment Impact:

Same or lower level in surrounding installations  
within CO/WY District

*\*Impact Notice reports an 18% reduction in mail volume for same period last year.*

### Longmont

**Effective Date: December 31, 2009**

Craft Impact: 2 FTRs

Reassignment Impact:

Same or lower level in surrounding installations  
within CO/WY District

*\*Impact Notice reports a 13.55% reduction in mail volume for same period last year.*

## **Littleton and Longmont Reductions**

**Continued...**

Management has discussed with the Union their intent to eliminate all mail handler positions in Littleton's Centennial, Ken Caryl Ranch and Main Office stations. Presumably, management will excess to the needs of the section, and move the affected mail handlers to Highlands Ranch. Once this is accomplished, management initially indicated that 1 part-time regular (PTR) and 2 fulltime regular (FTR) mail handlers would be excessed and reassigned out of Littleton. Management has not told the Union where these mail handlers will be reassigned, but in all likelihood, it will be to the Denver P&DC.

Management *initially* claimed that a similar scenario was going to play out in Longmont. Management is still planning to excess to the need of the section; the single Main Office mail handler will probably be moved into Twin Peaks MPC. Once this is done, management planned to excess and involuntarily reassign 2 Longmont FTRS to same or lower level positions in other surrounding installations.

The Union has been meeting with management in an effort to reduce the number of impacted employees in Littleton and Longmont. **I am pleased to report that management has agreed to suspend current plans to excess mail handlers out of Longmont.**

I can also report that management has agreed to reduce the number to be impacted by excessing in Littleton. Details on the exact Littleton numbers will be released soon. Please remember, the staffing matrix in these stations will undoubtedly be revisited when the Flat Sequencing System (FSS) machines start coming on line.

### **Options to Consider When Facing Excessing**

The contract provides for some options when it is proposed to excess from an installation:

- *Article 12.6C5b6 says that **any senior employee in the same occupational group in the same installation may elect to be reassigned to the gaining installation and take the seniority of the senior full-time employee subject to involuntary reassignment. Such senior employees who accept Article 12.6 reassignment to the gaining installation do not have retreat rights.***

#### Contract Interpretation Manual

12.6C5b6: Under this provision, a senior employee may voluntarily elect to be reassigned to another installation in lieu of a more junior employee from the same craft subject to reassignment. This option applies when employees are excessed to positions in other installations, but not when employees are excessed to another craft within the same installation under Section 12.6C5a above. This option is available to senior employees up to the number of employees who are designated as subject to involuntary reassignment; the senior employees take the seniority of the specific junior employee that they will replace.

- *Article 12.6C5b8 says that **full-time employee(s) shall have the option of changing to part-time flexible in the same craft or occupational group in lieu of involuntary reassignment.***

#### Contract Interpretation Manual

12.6C5b8: When an employee elects to change to part-time flexible in the Mail Handler craft in lieu of involuntary reassignment, the employee is placed on the part-time flexible roll in accordance with the employee's seniority. However, all full-time employees who are involuntarily reassigned either across craft lines or to other installations would be given the opportunity to return to the craft prior to the conversion of a part-time flexible regardless of the seniority date of the employee changing to part-time. Such employee has no retreat rights to full-time. The employee would have to wait until all full-time employees who were involuntarily reassigned had been given the opportunity to return to the craft before being converted to full-time.

The Union is working to reduce the negative impact in all facilities. It is worth repeating, if management goes through with the proposed changes, the Union will go into these locations from which mail handlers were excessed and reassigned, and monitor work activity. If we can document 4 continuous hours of work, we will challenge management's actions accordingly.

### **Englewood Clerks Excessed Into Mail Handler Positions in Denver P&DC**

It is probably clear to you that the impact of these ongoing changes is not limited to the mail handler ranks. Management recently excessed and involuntarily reassigned several Englewood clerks into vacant (withheld) mail handler positions in the Denver GMF. It seems likely that more clerks (and carriers) will be involuntarily reassigned into mail handler positions in the coming future.

The biggest question relating to one's involuntary reassignment to the mail handler craft surrounds seniority, bidding rights and category status. When an employee changes from another craft to the Mail Handler craft involuntarily, the employee enters as a full-time regular, with full bidding rights. They must begin a new period of seniority. Therefore, existing PTFs will leapfrog the transferred employees upon conversion to FTR.

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

By now, everyone should be somewhat familiar with some of the changes in dispatch and separations procedures that were introduced to support the BMC transition to a Network Distribution Center (NDC).

Denver's transition to a NDC is not expected to be completed until November. It will take time to realign the feeder and downstream transportation routes. Additional information will be posted as it becomes available.

To say we are in a state of flux is the understatement of the year. There are many unknowns. Who will be moved, who will close, and who will consolidate. How many FSS machines will we get, and when? How many clerks and carrier will be excessed into the mail handler craft, and from where? How will the NDC conversion affect the craft? The Union will continue to enforce the contract, and work to minimize harmful impacts. Updates will be put out as we gain new information.

In Unity,

*Mike*

Michael J Hora  
President,  
NPMHU Local 321