



by
Michael
Mize

PRESIDENT

Convention Questions

I have had several questions and seen many social media posts concerning Conventions and why the Unions have cancelled them. I have seen concerns about the Presidents Conference still going on so why not the Convention at State and National.

I will do my best to address those questions and attempt to bring an understanding to why the events have been cancelled. I will speak about National Convention as well as the Michigan Convention but to be clear I have no internal knowledge of exactly why National cancelled only an understanding of how things work.

The MPWU had a contract with a hotel in Kalamazoo for our Convention in 2021. We were closing in on the dates that required us to either move forward with a Convention or make the decision to cancel. If the MPWU were to continue forward with the scheduled event we would have several guarantees that must be met in the Contract. These guarantees include meeting rooms and hotel rooms for the event. These guarantees if not met are a large financial responsibility for the MPWU. This could be tens of thousands of dollars.

Knowing this and having the responsibility that we as Officers have to the MPWU membership to spend their money wisely we made the decision in Michigan to have a ZOOM meeting and discuss the Convention. The meeting included information and input from the Local Presidents concerning their

expected participation in the State Convention if we were to move forward with it. It was made very clear that most Locals would likely only send a couple

Convention schedule. We have a Contract for 2022 in Grand Rapids and then in Kalamazoo for 2023. We have stated that the MPWU could try some district

that a decision had to be made. They must review the situation and make hard decision about what to do. I would also love to get together as a group and believe we need to do so as soon as possible. But would people come? Could the minimums be met? If we failed, what could it cost? If the cost at the State level is tens of thousands, imagine the cost at National for failing to meet the requirements. Could be millions? What about the risk of 2,000 Union leaders in the same room?

The Presidents Conference while made up of Local Presidents is not directly associated with the APWU. They did some research and came to a different conclusion for that body than the decision we came to. They obviously, with the difference in timing

continued on page 4

The concerns that we all have about moving forward with events or not revolve around safety more than anything. Can we keep our APWU family safe?

delegates if they were to send any. Some Locals were clear that they did not intend on sending anyone to a Convention this year. The MPWU then took a vote concerning the cancellation of the event. The decision was to cancel and ask the hotel to book us in 2023.

The decision was not made lightly. We discussed the possible issues of cost, the concerns of having an event and spreading the virus to many Union Officers while our numbers are dwindling in the first place. We discussed the desire to have an event. The damage that could occur from moving forward was a risk that we felt should not be taken. Imagine holding the event and ending with a couple positive COVID cases, imagine the list of Union Officials all on a 14-day quarantine. Again, a risk that was not worth taking per the Board decision.

I should add this decision is one that I completely agreed with. We as leaders have an obligation to the membership. This obligation includes keeping everyone safe as well as spending the money wisely. Once things are back to a more normal, we will resume the

training if Locals want to have it. I hope this explains the State Convention for everyone.

Now for the National Convention. They have the same Contract requirements and issues to deal with, just a much larger scale. I expect that National had a similar Contract date



AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka Dead At 72

Richard Trumka, 72, had served as president of the AFL-CIO represented more than 12.5 million workers, for more than a decade and was called a "dear friend" by President Joe Biden.

He died of what was believed to be a heart attack, a source familiar with the matter said. It was unclear when exactly it occurred, though it's believed to be either Wednesday evening or Thursday morning.

"He was a relentless champion of workers' rights, workplace safety, worker-centered trade, democracy and so much more," AFL-CIO Communications Director Tim Schlittner said in a statement.

Trumka came to power at a time of great transition for organized labor. Much of his tenure was spent trying to stop declines in membership and balancing the often-disparate interests that exist under the AFL-CIO umbrella.

Trumka's untimely death raises questions about the future direction of the federation, which represents dozens of affiliated unions and has a major voice in politics at the federal, state and local levels.

Under his leadership, the federation has also focused its resources on fighting for the repeal of the so-called "Cadillac tax" on expensive health care plans, raising the federal minimum wage to \$15, and advocating for legislation to broadly expand collective bargaining rights.

"For Rich, it was always about doing right by working people – fighting for and protecting their wages, their safety, their pensions, and their ability to build a good, decent, honorable middle-class life. It was about workers improving their own lives and building worker power together," Biden said in his statement. "There is no doubt that Rich Trumka helped build unions all across America."

His passing is a great loss for organized labor across this nation.

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RETIREE PRESIDENT



by
Paul
Browning

Good News! Bad News?

Latest projections for a cost-of-living increase (COLA) for Civil Service annuities and Social Security is about 6%. This amounts to almost as much as the last five years' worth of COLAs retirees received. You can look at this two ways – either a Legislated thank goodness amount of more money to cover your bills or as a sign of alarming inflation. I prefer the former view. While I am certainly not John Kenneth Galbraith, Inflation has been around almost forever in my lifetime-just a fact of life.

When I was still working as the Post Office, the axiom I used to tell my coworkers was simply look at the price of gas. If it went up, then a decent COLA would be guaranteed under the Collective Bargaining Agreement. I say the same thing for retirees covered under CSRS and FERS. Of course, other factors are involved like mortgage rates, food and drug prices, worker productivity, etc. But as I remarked in my first paragraph, I'm no economist.

Speaking of the price of gas, it's a topic that everybody seems to be hollering about. Many Social Media posters blame it on President Biden as if he could control it. The last Chief Executive that I remember taking control of gas prices was the late Hugo Chavez, President

of Venezuela, who had his government nationalize the oil companies. That didn't work out too well. I also remember when I bought a new Jeep Patriot vehicle with good mileage per gallon in 2011 – President Bush's administration – because gas cost over \$4 a gallon. So please, enough about Biden and gas prices.

In previous issues of the *Michigan Messenger* I wrote about former President Trump's every year budget proposals to reduce COLA payments to retirees. Thankfully, none of these were passed by Congress. But make no mistake, they were given serious consideration and supported by many lawmakers. While so-called "culture issues" may grab the headlines, in reality they are more about morality than anything else. And as someone once said, "You can't legislate morality" or culture for that matter. (See alcohol and marijuana prohibition for starters) You can dictate it but that's not how a democracy works.



Paul is writing his article from an undisclosed location in northern Michigan.

As retirees were made promises when we retired, it is up to us to elect representatives who keep those promises. Vigilance is ever required as we've seen private and even public entities renege on signed agreements to provide for retirees.

Now more about those legislated lawfully required promises – Medicare Integration has once again reared its ugly head for postal retirees. If you're retired from USPS and never signed up for Medicare, there's all kinds of wheeling dealing tradeoffs to force retirees into Medicare in return for Federal cash relief for USPS and forgiveness of the much talked about ridiculous requirement of the Postal Service having to prepay retiree health care costs 75 years into the future that started in 2011. That prepay burden is responsible for billions (over 90%) of the USPS debt.

One discussed proposal in Congress with the Postal Unions is establishing a separate Federal

Employee Health Plan for Postal employees and retirees only. There's some rationale about more older and younger payees in USPS versus the rest of the Federal workforce although I personally failed to grab the significance there. Premiums POSSIBLY going down for postal people was also mentioned but it all seemed like conjecture to me. It's all supposed to save USPS money with the alleged savings handed down to retirees. My simple understanding was the bigger the pool of members in any insurance plan, the more costs were spread out. Reducing the total insurance premium payees to only postal workers certainly seems contrary to that almost universally accepted premise. Car insurance and Homeowners insurance companies are always trying to enlist as many members as possible.

It was former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Tip O'Neil who said "People get the leadership they deserve". So, if you don't like the way things are going or could possibly go regarding your retirement, get informed from a reliable source (not some social media website you never heard of no matter how grand their name may sound) and vote accordingly for the leadership of your choice.

It's your retirement to keep or lose. One way or another, you better get involved.

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The Michigan Postal Workers Union proudly represents the Members at Large within the Great State of Michigan. The following locals have also affiliated with the MPWU for training, education and information sharing between their members, stewards and officers of their own local and others throughout the state and nation:

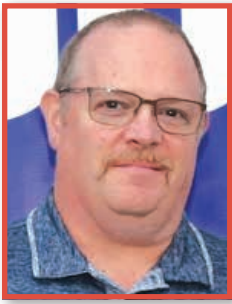
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Detroit District	Roger City
Farmington	Sault Ste Marie
Flint	Southwest MI
480-481	Stevensville
486-487	Traverse City
498-499	Troy Local
Gaylord	Western MI
Great Lakes Area	
Mail Haulers	

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by
**John
Greathouse**

EDITOR

Covid Numbers Going Up

Covid-19

Well things in the country were looking good but there is a troubling trend going on and folks need to start paying attention.

Numbers are going up for new infected people, like 170% in the last week and by the time you read this, I think it will be much higher.

The USPS has issued a new guideline for masks and did so without any meetings or even talking to the APWU prior to dropping the mask mandate.

How this will play out is concerning but I would be willing to venture the guess that everyone will be required to have a mask on while inside of a PO.

Getting The Job

While many of you have gotten vaccinated, there are many that have not and while I am concerned by this, what is more surprising is talk by President Biden that he may require all federal employees to be vaccinated! The VA has already done that and I think more are to follow.

Now you might argue that the USPS is separate from the fed, while that is true, we are not at the same time. OPM handles our retirement as we are federal employees so . . . Draw your own conclusions in this matter.

If it comes down to it, be smart and contact your steward and explore

your options before you spout off "I am not getting a shot or wearing a mask again" as management could charge you with "failure to follow" and then we have an uphill fight. So stay smart and just ask for a steward

should these events come to light.

Below is a copy of the letter from the APWU related to the changes to the mask requirement.

Stay safe and enjoy the rest of your summer, In Solidarity.


Summertime Fun

I hope everyone has had the opportunity to get away, even for a couple of days to enjoy summer with your friends or family.

The photo with this is one that I shot while in Colorado Springs in July at the Garden of the Gods. That place is fantastic and I highly recommend going if you can.

So stay safe, get some needed rest and relaxation and enjoy the rest of your summer!





American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

1300 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005

July 26, 2021

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Dear Union Family,

We hope this message finds you well and healthy as postal workers continue to face the challenges and stress of frontline essential workers during this tragic and deadly pandemic.

The Postal Service unilaterally changed the COVID face covering policy on July 16, 2021. The APWU leadership, including the National Executive Board, was not in agreement with this policy change. The APWU believes that a face mask requirement is still necessary as it is too early to relax the policy and the vaccination rate among residents of the United States is not at levels needed to stop mask wearing. Unfortunately, our concerns are proving to be true.

The *Delta Variant* of COVID-19 is extremely contagious and dangerous, especially amongst the unvaccinated. The *Delta Variant* causes 83% of all COVID-19 cases.¹ Today, it is being reported that the rolling 14-day average of new cases has increased by 170% since just last week.² Of the current cases, multiple media outlets are reporting staggering statistics. Deaths due to COVID-19 have surged by 48% over the past week as well.³ Of all COVID-19 related deaths, unvaccinated people account for 99.5% of them and the unvaccinated also make up 97% of all COVID-19 related hospitalizations.⁴ Quarantines in the USPS have increased by 29.5% in the last month.

The scientific data shows us that four things substantially reduce the spread of COVID-19 and prevent one from contracting this disease: wearing a face covering, social distancing, regular hand washing, and getting one of the COVID-19 vaccinations.

Based on this, the APWU is encouraging all Postal Employees to continue practicing the things that can protect one from contracting and spreading this disease. Wash your hands regularly, continue to social distance whenever

¹ Delta variant now accounts for 83 percent of new Covid cases (nbcnews.com); Delta variant: Is it serious? Is it more contagious? - Deseret News

² Covid in the U.S.: Latest Map and Case Count - The New York Times (nytimes.com)

³ As delta variant spreads, CDC is pressured to revise mask guidance (bangordailynews.com)

⁴ As delta variant spreads, CDC is pressured to revise mask guidance (bangordailynews.com); COVID-19 cases spike nationwide as Delta variant spreads (nypost.com)

possible, and wear a face covering. The APWU will continue to encourage face covering wearing in all facilities where Postal Employees work. This is not the time to relax and become complacent.

While the APWU has insured that the USPS does not institute a mandatory vaccine policy, we do encourage all eligible people to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. The science and statistics show that people who are vaccinated have a much lower risk of contracting the disease, spreading the disease, being hospitalized or dying from COVID-19. While vaccinated people can still contract COVID-19 in limited circumstances (known as "breakthrough" cases), the number of these cases are significantly less, the course of the disease is much milder, and the death rate amongst the vaccinated is extremely low.

The COVID-19 pandemic is far from over. While all of us are suffering from some level of "COVID Fatigue" now is not the time to relax the precautions one can take to prevent contracting and spreading COVID-19.

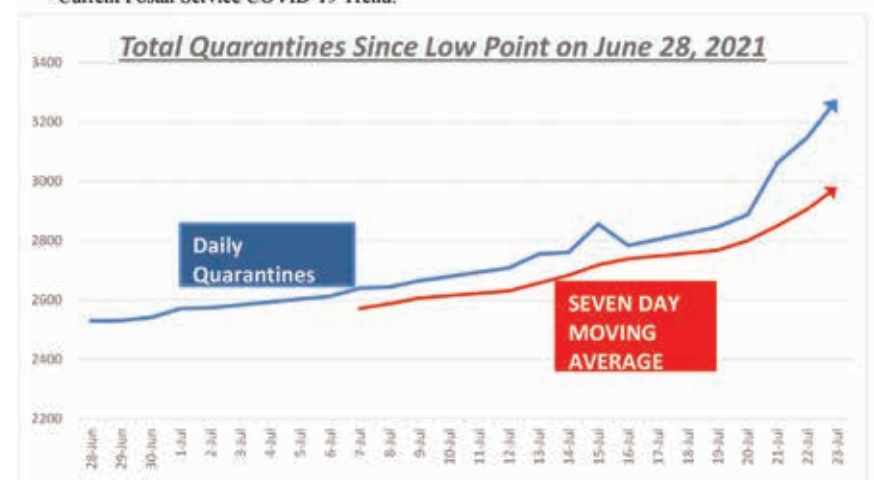
The APWU's first priority is your health and safety. The APWU will always demand that the Postal Service provide a safe and healthy work environment and encourage employees to do what is necessary to help keep themselves safe and healthy.

In Solidarity,


Mark Diamondstein
President


Vance Zimmerman
Director, Industrial Relations

Current Postal Service COVID-19 Trend:



VETERANS' DIRECTOR



by
John P.
Smeekens

Veterans' Report

Honor Flights Are Back

Honor Flight Network, which sends veterans to tour war memorials in Washington, D.C., will restart flights in August after a 16-month suspension during the coronavirus pandemic. Flights will resume Aug. 16, said Carol Harlow, communications officer for the Honor Flight Network. "We have been monitoring closely the (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) guidelines and also the District of Columbia guidelines," Harlow said. "We wouldn't do this if we weren't confident, we could do it safely." The Honor Flight Network has 125 chapters that help send veterans in their communities to Washington to see the memorials for their wars. Representatives from the hubs met virtually June 12 and decided to restart the flights in August.

Woman Veterans' Needed

The Veterans Affairs Million Veteran Program has reached almost 1 million veterans, but it needs more women. The project, launched in 2011, is one of the world's largest research efforts on genetics and health. More than 840,000 veterans have participated, forming a massive database that's the backbone of 65 scientific studies already and at least 30 more pending. But only about 75,000 of those participants thus far are women, a small fraction of the more than 2 million women veterans in the United States today. Program officials for the last few months have been working to boost that number in the hopes of providing new medical breakthroughs to aid not just women veterans, but all Americans.

Veterans' Listen Up

Please read, forward and encourage all Veterans to register and inquire if they feel they may have had exposure to these hazards or served

during a period where they deployed to any parts of the world where they could have been affected. Ensure that Veterans you serve or work with, register on the registry and inform their physician, either VA or private, about their concerns. Attached is also the power point about this information. It is imperative that Veterans, the community, and family members are **knowledgeable** about this. Go to the following web site to check it out!!!

<https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry/#page/home>

Download The VA Welcome Kit

Yeah I know it's a long one but it holds some GREAT VETERANS' information!!!

https://www.va.gov/welcome-kit/?utm_source=footer&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=VetResources

VA Veterans & Foreclosure

The Department of Veterans Affairs is offering a new COVID-19 Refund Modification option to assist Veterans who require a significant reduction in their monthly mortgage payments because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In some cases, Veterans can receive a 20% payment reduction — in others, the reduction can be even larger. This new option is part of the of Biden-Harris administration's expanded, government-wide effort to help homeowners retain their homes as they weather the economic challenges resulting from the ongoing pandemic.

Under the COVID-19 Refund Modification, VA can purchase a Veteran's past due payments and amounts of unpaid principal, depending on how much assistance is necessary, subject to certain limits. Loan servicers also modify the loan. These efforts help ensure that the Veteran can afford future mortgage payments.

"The COVID-19 Refund Modification provides Veterans a lasting and

affordable solution to keeping their homes and avoiding foreclosure," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "As our country recovers and rebuilds from the economic devastation brought on by the pandemic, VA and the Biden-Harris administration continue to make every effort to help Veterans keep a roof over their head as they get back on their feet." Like with VA's



COVID-19 partial claim option, the Veteran's deferred indebtedness from a COVID-19 Refund Modification will be established as a junior lien. The junior lien will not accrue interest; will not require monthly payments; and will only become due when the property is sold, the guaranteed loan is paid off, or the guaranteed loan is refinanced.

Veterans can get a COVID-related forbearance through Sept. 30, 2021. To learn more about this new option visit VA's Home Loan Program or call 877-827-3702.

VA And The Union!!!

The Department of Veterans Affairs is taking steps to reestablish its relationship with bargaining unit employees effective July 20. At VA the employees, including bargaining unit employees, built a department that provides unmatched care, benefits, and services to the brave men and

women who served in our nation's armed forces. "More than 79% of VA's workforce are bargaining unit employees, and we are working to cultivate strong, lasting relationships with the unions that represent the population of the department's union workers, so as to ensure world class service to Veterans," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough.

The following steps are being taken:

Re-establishing the National Partnership Council: Before it was disbanded in 2017, the NPC was a forum for open communication between labor leaders and VA leadership. Reestablishing it will provide a critical space for our leaders to build lasting relationships with our union partners, discuss employee concerns and make collaborative decisions.

Restoring official time for Title 38 employees: As of today, our doctors, nurses, physician assistants and other Title 38 employees can once again use work hours to conduct union business and advocate on behalf of coworkers.

Continuing to deliver on President Biden's promise to protect the federal workforce: On just his second day in office, President Biden issued an Executive Order to empower and protect career civil servants. We are working tirelessly with our unions to fully implement that order across VA.

Addressing many pending grievances and civil suits filed by AFGE, NAGE, NFFE and NNU: We worked with our unions to address their concerns in a number of pending disputes, allowing VA and our unions to refocus ahead to our future on what matters most — protecting our workers and serving our Vets.

A unionized VA workforce results in a strong overall VA labor operation.

Convention Questions

continued from page 1

received a more favorable response to moving forward with a meeting. I am also certain that they were concerned with the same issues and made the decision they felt best at the time. To be perfectly clear the difference in a couple weeks on having to make that decision could make all the difference in the world.

The concerns that we all have about moving forward with events or not revolve around safety more than anything. Can we keep our APWU family safe? We would like to think or believe that as Officers all delegates would be vaccinated. Unfortunately, we can't assume that would be the case. The fact is we had a positive COVID case at the NPC that resulted

in quarantines for others. Thankfully, I know of no serious illness.

I can't stress enough how important it is to be vaccinated. Don't risk the safety of yourself and your family. We have lost to many Brothers and Sisters to this virus already.

What I would ask of those that are questioning these decisions is to look a little deeper. Think about everything above, think about the things the Officers making these decisions must consider. What I found once I started thinking it through is the decision is a tough one, but not that hard to make. The decision is made by those that you elected to office to make these very tough decisions.

Please stay safe and healthy, in Unity.





by
Patrick
Chornoby

AREA 2 DIRECTOR

Getting Through These Difficult Times!

Greetings Brothers and Sisters.

Right now, in real time, we are facing extremely stressful situations on our jobs as we prepare ourselves for another wave of COVID with the Delta variant, and our newest concern, the Delta 'PLUS'. At times, I wonder how much more postal employees can take while on the job with all that is going on. At most offices, we are facing staffing issues, and after months and months of complaining, we are not getting any relief. On top of management's inability to hire anyone, the post office increasingly seems to prove, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that they cannot manage their own offices properly. As a whole, managements own actions prove to us every day they do not know how to do their jobs. And we workers are caught right smack in the middle of their mess. We also realize that our Contract expires on September 20th, and the USPS is broke, operating in the 'red'.

What else could happen that can make things even worse you may ask? Well, recently the federal government has been tossing around the idea of requiring federal employees to get vaccinated against COVID. For the record, I get non-stop calls from members and questions on the workroom floor all the time, on both sides of the debate. Those who are refusing to get vaccinated, and those who support the idea of every employee getting vaccinated to help the world eradicate the virus. Our Union, Stewards and Members are once again stuck right in the middle of this mess. Postal employees want guidance and answers to these situations, and no one seems to have any answers. For employees, it seems, at times, as if 'every-man-is-out-for-himself', when it should be 'we-are-all-in-this-together', for we are the UNION.

As usual, this time will prove to be another time in our history, where we workers must take the situation into our own hands if we want to experience any type of relief. Since management has shown time and time again that they will not step up to the plate, it is time for us to. In order for each of us to get through these most difficult times, we need to start with ourselves. We need to be calmer and more understanding when dealing with each other. We're all dealing with this COVID, but have no idea what each of us individually are living through in our own personal lives. Every day when we report to work, we need to take a deep breath, start our day out calmly, in other words, leave our problems at the door. We need to be more tolerant,



and understanding of each other. When dealing with co-workers, we need to be more patient. We need to give postal employees that little bit of 'extra slack' when they are on the job. We need to tolerate aggressive behaviour with a little more leniency and compassion than under normal circumstances.

All of us are going through this together, and we must realize this. There is no question that management likes to keep stirring the pot, even if it doesn't need stirring. So, we cannot count on them to help us make it through our workdays. WE HAVE TO DO IT OURSELVES. Remember, if your co-worker takes a few extra minutes on their break, or they spend a little more time in the rest room than normal, or they report to their assignments late, or even call-in and force you to work overtime, let's cut them a little slack. In turn, let's hope they do the same for you. We will get through this together. Our history has shown us that we can. Last, always remember you have 1-800-EAP-4-YOU. If you, or your family members might need someone to talk to, or help cope with the additional stress, or just to make it through their day, EAP is there for you. Stay safe my friends.

AREA 4 DIRECTOR

COVID Is Still Affecting Us

by Sandy Rancour,
Area 4 Director

We are more than half way through the year with fall season quickly approaching. We all know that means more parcels increasing with school coming soon. I do believe it has been a rough summer for some offices with the covid virus still affecting some of the employees in the small offices and everyone working short staffed. Please remember we only receive 1 paycheck for doing 1 job. Not the job of 2 or 3, this is how we get burned out and then our bodies say enough is enough. If we don't take care of ourselves by pacing our work day and getting enough rest, our body will do it for us.

Take those breaks accordingly throughout your work day, that is why we have them. Your union worked hard to get breaks for workers, don't hold them and try to squeeze in later. Holding your break defeats the purpose of what it is intended for, to rest!!! Management loves for employees to hold their breaks so they can keep working on those packages. We

are entitled to them and deserve the breaks. If you are getting harassed to hold your break to just finish up that last pallet, please ask for a steward.

I also feel our vacations are much needed breaks both physically and

mentally from all the hours and hard work we put into our jobs. Take care of yourself my friends, we only live once and time is too short not to do the things that make us happy and healthy!

In unity.



Michigan Messenger

Deadline for

Newsletter Submissions

October 2nd

AREA 10 DIRECTOR

Accountable Items, Clerk Hours & APWU 2020 Election Investigation At Traverse City

by Vince Nichols,
Area 10 Director

The Traverse City Area Local #531 report on Election 2020, a whistleblower complaint that mail was being back-dated at the Barlow Branch in Traverse City, Michigan is below. It raised issues on Covid policy (please remember this report took place in the height of the pandemic), accountability, and security procedures in places at USPS offices;

APWU Local #531 Investigation & Report

For: Election Integrity - Whistleblower
Location: Traverse City Barlow
(Branch) Installation

Included: Security/Covid observance of regulations & Procedures.

Included: Traverse City Main PO identical check on the Security/Covid Regulations & Procedures.

There were major issues and accusations made by a whistleblower on the Barlow facility and Management at that facility. The primary issue was the backdating of ballots during the November National election. Several local, state, and national law enforcement agencies were brought in, including the FBI, US Inspection Service, OIG, police, and others to investigate potential election fraud and to protect employees from emotional voters and threats. As of January, we are still receiving threats and fallout from this accusation. The Management official accused was placed in another Postal location after being taken out of the Barlow facility under cover by the FBI. This Supervisor continued to receive threats for months, and only until late July returned to duty at the Barlow Branch.

The Union's official investigation and

security/safety inspection took place the day after most of these law enforcement agencies arrived at Barlow.

OFFICIAL APWU LOCAL 531 Report:

November 6, 2020

@appx. 8:15am

MPO facility

202 S. Union, Traverse City MI

**Security-Accountable Items

2 round daters left unsecured overnight (remember the whistleblower accused Management of back-dating of ballots/envelopes)

accused Management of back-dating of ballots/envelopes IN THIS FACILITY)

**Security-Facility

1 outside entrance door (dock door 3) left open unlocked for unauthorized entrance ALL NIGHT LONG UNSECURED. (This in a facility that employee(s) have been receiving death threats and was just visited by several agencies of law enforcement, and some still investigating!)

1 unauthorized non-postal employee entered and found/observed on the restricted "EMPLOYEES ONLY" USPS facility work room floor.

security and protection for employees and the sanctity of mail and voter ballot integrity was apparent. Alarming was that restricted access to a facility and to the security of accountable items of which was not diligently performed, even in the wake of a NATIONAL/Local Investigation by law enforcement, on Local Management and employees. The APWU also does not condone any actions and improper procedures in place that do not follow USPS regulations and procedures.

As an update to this issue and to make current. In July the city carrier employee, and self-proclaimed whistleblower, was fired from the USPS.

In concerns from the APWU, we continue to see Postal regulations not being followed. Accountable items are not being properly handled in many offices. Vehicle keys, arrow keys, gas cards, and all signature mail accountable

items, etc . . . are not being logged in and out or handled according to Postal regulations. There are many examples of this activity. Carriers are not getting cleared. The accountable or registry cage is not being secured, or locked, or restricted access being adhered to. Some offices I visited had their accountable cage open to all employees, and another in which the roll around carts containing the accountable items left on the workroom floor all day. Logs and documents are not being maintained. Management in some instances I've seen, wants the weekend clerk to be on call, go home off the clock, and then carriers will call or text when they're done, so the clerk can come back to the post office, clear them and take care of accountable items. These issues are surmounting to many lost clerk hours in many offices, as well as inviting fraud, or the potential for illegal activity. Please make your APWU representative aware of any problems with the accountable items, and any accountability issues in your office. This is your work, please protect it.

The Union found it reprehensible, in the lack of Building security, and protection to postal employees. The lack of security and protection for employees and the sanctity of mail and voter ballot integrity was apparent.

**Security-Facility

1 outside entrance door left open unlocked for unauthorized entrance

2 unauthorized non-postal employees entered and found/observed on the restricted "EMPLOYEES ONLY" USPS facility workroom floor

**COVID 19

35 employees observed on workroom floor.

4 employees wearing a face mask/shield

Barlow Facility

1756 Barlow Street, Traverse City MI

@appx. 9:30am

**Security-Accountable Items

2 round daters left unsecured overnight (remember the whistleblower

**COVID 19

15 employees observed on workroom floor.

1 employee observed wearing a face mask/shield.

**Ballots/Election mail

Ballots/Election mail appeared to be identified but not properly.

The facility did not appear to properly label the USPS equipment by regulations with the proper USPS labels. Instead hand written labels were being made and placed on equipment.

Noted documented proof of this was seen on the whistleblower video, unfortunately for all Americans and law enforcement to see. I picked it up immediately upon viewing. It appears a very bad representation of the USPS by all employees at the USPS Barlow facility who did not follow USPS regulations and enabled this procedure to go forward.

In final thought on APWU Local 531 Inspection/investigation:

The Union found it reprehensible, in the lack of Building security, and protection to postal employees. The lack of



Affiliate Website Directory

American Postal Workers Union	www.apwu.org
APWU National Postal Press Assn	www.apqupostalpress.org
APWU Auxiliary	www.apwuauxiliary.org
APWU Health Plan	www.apwuhp.com
APW Accident Benefit Association.....	www.apw-aba.org
Postal Employees Relief Fund	www.postalrelief.org
AFL-CIO	www.aflcio.org
Union Label	www.unionlabel.org
Union Plus	www.unionplus.org
Labor Start	www.laborstart.org
Economic Policy Institute.....	www.opl.org
APWU Voluntary Benefits Plan	www.voluntarybenefitsplan.com



Biden's Picks On USPS Board Push Back On 'Dangerous Risks' In Plan To Slow Down Mail

The Postal Service's inspector general, its regulator and members of Congress are sounding alarms over the agency's plans to increase mail prices and slow the delivery of nearly 40% of first-class mail.

But the most recent, and significant, round of criticism is coming from within USPS itself.

Two of President Joe Biden's picks to serve on the USPS Board of Governors, in the first public meeting of their tenures, pushed back strongly on USPS plans to slow first-class mail and about a third of first-class packages — small, lightweight parcels that include prescription drugs and small electronics.

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, speaking at Friday's meeting, acknowledged that the 10-year reform plan, which includes these slower service standards, introduces some "uncomfortable changes" and draws scrutiny from the public. But USPS, he said, can't continue with the status quo, adding that "what we have done in the past has not worked."

"The majority of the roar is to stop what we are doing. Study more, increase service, keep prices low, cut employee benefits and host other single-interest issues disguised as solutions, which they are not. The best days of this thinking, and what it has to offer, has come and gone, and has created a Postal Service that I joined 14 months ago, one whose existence as we know it is threatened," DeJoy said.

But drawing on other recent criticism of the 10-year plan, former Deputy Postmaster General Ron Stroman, one of Biden's three appointees to the board, said the plan to slow down delivery for first-class mail and packages was "strategically ill-conceived, creates dangerous risks that are not justified by the relatively low financial return, and doesn't meet our responsibility as an essential part of America's critical infrastructure."

Stroman said the plan would disproportionately impact seniors, low-households and small businesses that are some of the agency's most loyal customers. Meanwhile, he expressed concerns that the plan would have a significant regional impact on Florida, Texas, Maine, California and central regions of the country.

"There's no compelling financial reason to make this change. The relatively minor savings associated with changing service standards even if achieved will have no significant impact on the Postal Service's financial future," Stroman said.

Other reviews of the 10-year plan are more nuanced. Former American Postal Workers Union General Counsel Anton Hajjar, another of Biden's appointees to the board, said "there is a whole lot to like" in the 10-year plan, including converting more USPS employees to

career status, and investments in a new fleet of delivery vehicles and equipment at processing plants.

"The current management attitude stands in stark contrast to what I experienced in my decades of interacting with postal management. The attitude then was to shrink the organization until doomsday arrived," Hajjar said.

By contrast, Hajjar said he believes DeJoy is fully committed to the 10-year plan and "intends to seize every opportunity to grow the Postal Service's business."

However, Hajjar expressed concerns with public pushback on the proposed service changes, especially given the Postal Regulatory Commission's strong reservations with the plan in its recent advisory opinion.

"It seems to me that the Postal Service proposal sort of squeaked through the regulatory process . . . I ask why this change needs to be implemented now. Why not wait until management implements the impressively innovative changes in the [Deliver for America] plan, and see what can be achieved?" Hajjar said.

Board Chairman Ron Bloom, in his opening remarks, acknowledged there would be dissent among board members over these management issues.

"While we do not and will not always agree on the important issues that the Postal Service faces, I know that each of us has the best interest of the Postal Service and the American people at heart," Bloom said.

Amid these disagreements, the Postal Service intends to move forward with these proposed changes. In a final rule posted Friday afternoon, USPS announced its new service standard for first-class mail and

periodicals will take effect Oct. 1.

USPS said it "largely agrees" with the recommendations the PRC issued in its non-binding advisory opinion, but disagreed with how the commission evaluated the agency's evidence and claims during the proceedings.

The commission warned that the plan, as written, would not result in "much improvement, if any" to USPS's current financial condition, and wouldn't immediately result in the agency reaching its on-time delivery goals, calling its 95% on-time delivery target for mail "aspirational."

USPS said it will set up "interim targets" for on-time delivery as it implements the plan.

"The Postal Service has not claimed that it will achieve the 95% service performance target set forth in the Delivering for America plan instantaneously with the service standard change; rather, the implementation of this change is a necessary step towards ultimately achieving that target, in conjunction with other elements in the plan," the agency wrote.

USPS received more than 136,000 public comments over the proposed rule, though the agency notes many of the comments raised concerns outside the scope of the proposal, such as concerns over privatizing USPS, the removal of sorting machines and collection boxes, as well as "the tenure of the current Postmaster General."

"While almost all commenters express some form of opposition to the changes, they do not offer clear alternative proposals or revisions," the agency wrote.

USPS spokesman Dave Parteneheimer said a majority of first-class mail will adhere to current service stan-

dards, and that the agency will deliver 70% of first-class mail within one to three days.

"The service standard changes are part of our balanced and comprehensive Delivering for America Strategic Plan, and will improve service reliability and predictability for customers and enhance the efficiency of the Postal Service network," Parteneheimer said. "The service standard changes that we have determined to implement are a necessary step towards achieving our goal of consistently meeting 95% service performance."

Despite these contentious issues, USPS still faces long-standing financial challenges. USPS ended the third quarter of FY 2021 with a \$3 billion net loss, despite an \$845 million increase in revenue. That's worse than the \$2.2 billion loss it reported for the same period last year.

USPS Chief Financial Officer Joe Corbett said shipping and package volume dropped more than 14% compared to last year's third quarter, signaling that a pandemic surge for package deliveries is slowing. For some context, however, package volumes still remain higher than pre-pandemic levels.

"While we don't expect package volume to go back to the level where it was before the pandemic began, we believe it will continue to be elevated into the future," Corbett said.

USPS Chief Technology Officer Scott Bombaugh said the agency delivered 87.6% of first-class mail on time in the third quarter, compared to 90.2% on time for the same period last year. USPS delivered first-class mail in an average of 2.4 days this quarter, compared to 2.3 days for the same period last year.

SAVE THE DATES
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VIRTUAL 36TH ANNUAL OPEN SEASON SEMINAR 2021

OCTOBER 20 - 22

OCTOBER 20	OCTOBER 21	OCTOBER 22
Opening Session & Classes	Classes	Classes & Closing Session
11am - 5pm EST	11am - 5pm EST	11am - 5pm EST

General Registration Fee: \$50

APWU Members Deserve A Good Contract That Rewards Your Sacrifices

by Vance Zimmerman, National APWU Industrial Relations Director

On September 20, 2021, the current collective bargaining agreement expires. The APWU contract is one of the largest collective bargaining agreements for workers in America today. In fact, it is the largest collective bargaining agreement that is being negotiated in the United States this year. Over the last 50 years the APWU contract has helped millions of hard-working Americans and their families of all races, colors, and genders become and stay part of the working class. Over the decades APWU members have proudly served the American people and kept the People's Post Office functioning through their tireless service. This is especially true today.

These negotiations come at a time after you proved how vital you are to the American people. You were declared essential employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. You tirelessly served the public moving

the mail. But it was not just you; it was your families as well, who knew each day you went to work there was the possibility you would return home

cine, paychecks, Social Security payments, gifts, cards, letters, and even stimulus payments made their way to the American people. All of

employees hauled mail and kept vehicles running, and the employees who worked in customer care centers took phone calls. In the face of an unprecedented national election, you accepted the call and worked long hours, days on end without time off, all while showing commitment to the oath you took as postal employees. With your work in the 2020 election, the country saw one of the highest turnouts in its history. More eligible voters cast their votes than ever before due to the hard work of APWU members. We truly saved democracy.

Entering into these negotiations, your Core Negotiating Committee – consisting of President Mark Dimondstein,

Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy, Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth Powell, MVS Craft Director Michael Foster, Clerk Craft Director Lamont Brooks, Maintenance Craft Director Idowu Balogun, Support Services Director Steve Brooks and myself – believe it is time for you to be rewarded for all your hard work, dedication, and sacrifices. That is why in my Opening Day remarks, I looked Postmaster General Louis DeJoy in the eye and told him he needed to negotiate a good contract for the American Heroes who are part of the APWU.

Your negotiating team has been working hard researching and developing our negotiating plans and proposals for submission. We have met with the Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee on more than one occasion. The Core Committee has met multiple times and has ongoing weekly meetings to discuss negotiations as they progress. The first proposals were exchanged with the Postal Service on June 24, 2021. We also agreed to a series of "main table" meetings with the USPS and scheduled them at least weekly through September. Your Craft Officers have also begun to meet with their USPS counterparts on a regular basis.

Beginning September 6, 2021, the APWU and USPS teams will be "locking down" in a hotel for around-the-clock negotiations up to the expiration of the contract. Our goal is to reach an agreement prior to the expiration date. We will continue to update you as the negotiations go on. You can rest assured all your officers, our legal team, and APWU staff members involved in negotiations are dedicated to getting you a good contract. Solidarity!



after exposed and/or contracting COVID-19. In fact, thousands of you did contract COVID-19 and sadly, we lost nearly 200 postal employees to this disease.

However, even knowing the risk, you showed up to work and moved the mail, ensuring vital goods, medi-

cine, paychecks, Social Security payments, gifts, cards, letters, and even stimulus payments made their way to the American people. All of

LIVING WITH ASTHMA: HOW TO KEEP YOUR ASTHMA UNDER CONTROL

If you have asthma, exposure to certain triggers can cause a flare-up or an attack. Avoiding your triggers and making an asthma action plan can help you prevent an attack before it happens.

What is asthma?

Asthma causes inflammation in the airways of the lungs. Exposure to certain triggers can cause the airways to swell and the muscles to tighten, resulting in a flare-up or an attack. Symptoms of an asthma attack include wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath, and tightness in the chest.

How to avoid the ER if you have asthma.

A severe asthma attack can send you to the emergency room, especially if

your medicine isn't working properly or you're away from home without your inhaler. Getting your asthma under control—and making an asthma action plan—can help prevent visits to the ER.

Talk to your doctor about creating a plan for managing your asthma. Your plan may include medications to prevent symptoms and detailed instructions on what to do when you're having a flare-up.

1. Follow your plan. When you have an asthma action plan, you'll always know what to do in case of a flare-up. Include any daily requirements in your plan (such as taking medicine before you exercise), and work with your doctor to adjust your plan as needed.

2. Take your medicine. Maintenance medications can help prevent asthma flare-ups—and make them less severe—so be sure to take your medicine as prescribed.

3. Don't leave home without your inhaler. Always carry your quick-relief medicine, whether you're at work, at the grocery store, traveling, or just out for a walk.

4. Learn the signs of a flare-up. Early warning signs of a flare-up may include shortness of breath, sudden fatigue, irregular breathing, or trouble sleeping. Know what to do if you notice signs of a flare-up.

Learn more: <https://www.aaaai.org/conditions-and-treatments/library/asthma-library/asthma-triggers-and-management>

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