

# SOLIDARITY IOWA POSTAL

Vol. 24, No. 12

For All Members of DMI Area Local APWU, IPWU, and BMC

December, 2020

## Postal Workers Have Much To Be Proud Of In Wake Of Contentious Election

by Mark Sarcone,  
Editor/Legislative Director

The outcomes in the recent general election could have been more favorable for labor but it was a success for postal workers.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a record 65 million ballots were returned by voters, processed by clerks and mail handlers, driven by MVS drivers, and delivered by carriers nationwide.

Cindy Axne, re-elected Iowa Third District Congresswoman said, "I couldn't be more proud to be someone who represents you in Washington given the great work that was done during the election!" Axne made her comments in a Zoom conference meeting in Iowa as part of the APWU's National Day of action held November 17th.

She added that the postal service, especially in our rural areas, provides a service that is unparalleled. "Postal workers are sometimes, literally, the only person someone in rural areas might see."

Long-time Black Hawk County, Iowa Auditor, Grant Veeder, had nothing but praise for all the hard work postal workers did in delivering in this historic election. "We had, by far, the biggest turnout of absentee voters by mail that we've ever had." Of the nearly 67,000 voters, he said about two-thirds were ballots that went through the mail. "We coordinated with the postal

service both at the state and local level and we got excellent cooperation."

"I saw no evidence of any ballots delayed by the post office. I am completely satisfied with the job the post office did and I'm willing to continue our relationship with them in the future," he added." Kimberly Karol, Iowa Postal Workers Union



Cindy Axne, Third District Congresswoman, addresses labor and postal leaders at a conference held on Zoom following the general election.

National Vote at Home movement and has been working with local authorities in the Waterloo, Iowa area and the Iowa State Legislature to further this movement in Iowa. Working closely with his state representative and House Speaker, Linda Upmeyer in

ballots through the mail. "Unfortunately, voting by mail has become a political issue. It's a right that we are entitled to. I am very proud of the effort of all postal employees in making vote by mail a success, this year."

Others who sang the praise of the post office were Chris Schwartz, Black Hawk County, Iowa Board member, and Mike McCarthy, with the Alliance for Retired Americans. Schwartz expressed a real need for postal banking where there's "banking deserts." McCarthy said the postal service can provide additional services, in addition to the services provided now. "My wife and I love being able to get our medicines

in the mail, especially with the COVID pandemic."

"Anytime you need me, I'm here for you. I am so grateful for the service that you bring to our Third District and

introduced and eventually enacted

Axne.

***"I saw no evidence of any ballots delayed by the post office. I am completely satisfied with the job the post office did and I'm willing to continue our relationship with them in the future, he added."***

— Grant Veeder, Black Hawk County Auditor

President, said the "pressure from the public" forced the postal service to re-deploy a sorting machine that had been removed over the summer months. "Power to the people!" said Karol.

Herb Copley, President of the Iowa State Association of Letter Carriers, said that postal workers had targets on their backs through all of this, for no reason. "The real winners were the postal employees. It was unnecessary to bring politics into this to begin with." Copley is in the midst of working with the

in Iowa to have the Intelligent Mail Barcode to be used as way to track

to the great state of Iowa, added Axne.

***Here's wishing you a very Happy Holiday and a Prosperous New Year!***



# Disability Rates of Veterans with Dependents

Although most veterans are aware that they are entitled to compensation for their service-connected disability, many are unaware that the amount of compensation increases based on their marital status and number of qualifying dependents. If you have a 30 percent or higher disability rating from Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), you can add your dependents to your disability compensation and be eligible for a higher disability payment.

Dependents you can add to your benefits compensation include:

- A spouse (including common-law marriages);

- Children (including biological children, step children, and adopted children) who are unmarried and either:

- Under the age of 18,
- Between the ages of 18-23 and enrolled in school full time, or
- Who were seriously disabled before the age of 18;
- Parents, whose income and net worth are below the limit set by law.

If you haven't submitted a claim for disability compensation yet, you can add your dependent(s) as part of the claim application process. If VA rates your disability at 30 percent or higher, your dependent(s) will automatically be

factored into your award. If you have a 10 to 20 percent disability rating, you will not receive a higher rate – even if you have a dependent spouse, child, or parent.

If you have already submitted your claim and have received a 30 percent or higher disability rating, the fastest way to add a dependent is online through eBenefits ([ebenefits.va.gov](http://ebenefits.va.gov)).

Currently, you cannot add parents or spouses through common law marriages as dependents through eBenefits. To add a parent as a dependent, you must fill out VA Form 21-509, Statement of Dependency of Parent(s). To add a

spouse from a common-law marriage as a dependent, you must fill out VA Form 21-686c, Declaration of Status of Dependents.

## Disability Rates Of Veterans With Dependents

VA may pay you back to the date of your marriage or the birth of your child if you had already received your 30 percent or higher disability rating at that point and:

- Notified VA within one year of the date the dependency arose, and
  - Responded within one year to VA's
- continued on page 3*

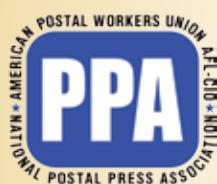


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*The Labor Press is the most important media to keep its members informed.*

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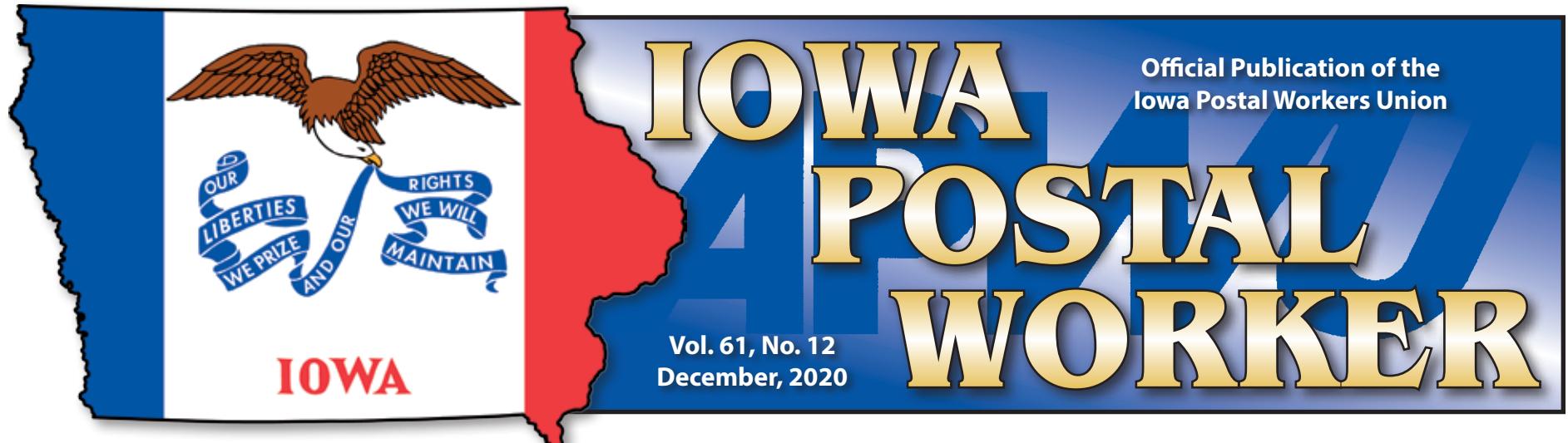
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# COVID Is Running Rabid Across The State

by Kimberly Karol,  
IPWU President

As I write this article COVID is surging once again through the state. In Hawkeye District we now sit at 499 COVID positive cases and rising on a daily basis, usually by double digits. The cases have nearly doubled since the end of October and dubiously we had a week where we had 100 new cases of Postal Worker positive cases in a week. As winter sets in and we are forced indoors we will need to be even more careful. I fear that if we do not work to protect one another we will not have enough staffing available to process and deliver the mail this peak season.

This is not business as usual. We need to do better in finding ways to protect one another in the workplace. Look at your daily routine. Do you come into contact with others? Is there a way to change the process to keep this from happening and still get the job completed? Can carry mail be staged on transport equipment that a carrier can retrieve once rather than the clerks repeatedly entering into the carrier work space? If computer desks have been set up where the users face one another? Can the desks be separated, or is there a barrier between the desks? Can sort plans be altered to have the mail flow support employee separation in operations downstream. I see opportunities for improving how we work to better protect the employees at my Plant. I will bet you can find ways in your own offices where we can do better with a simple adjustment. Please think about ways to keep employees isolated. Please let me know if you have an idea and you get resistance from your Postmaster.

It is important that we stop thinking about attendance in the same way as well. If you are sick-STAY HOME. Do not be a hero and come to work if you have any COVID symptoms-fever, sore throat, coughing or sneezing, loss of taste, aches. Symptoms very similar to cold and flu symptoms. At work we have been programmed to ignore cold and flu symptoms, come to work and soldier on. The reality is that people have been dying from the flu for decades. Maybe not in the numbers we are seeing with COVID but still the

permanent result of exposure to a virus, and not to be taken lightly. Part of beating COVID is changing how we think about reporting to work sick. No one should feel pressured to report to work knowing they are sick. You are not help-

tive or be exposed to COVID. It important that you report it immediately and correctly. This is the updated reporting hierarchy:

Please note there is now a dedicated email address to be used in conjunction

agers are notified of your absence and the proper leave that should be used as a result of COVID.

The Holidays have always been a time to take time to take stock and appreciate blessings in our lives. While many are challenged by the affects of the pandemic, there is much that can be found to be grateful for this season. Take the time to appreciate your blessings. You do not have to gather with family to show them how important they are to you. Be creative with your holiday celebrations and avoid gathering with friends or family outside of your immediate household. Extended family gatherings can be facilitated virtually using ZOOM or other meeting platforms. Plan family virtual game nights using these platforms to continue any game traditions. This is the season to re-think Holiday celebrations, maybe start new family or workplace traditions.

Even if a vaccine is released and becomes available precautions such as masks will need to remain a standard part of our daily routine. It will take time for the virus to be irradiated and the threat of infection abated. Please do not let your guard down. Remain vigilant and take actions to protect yourself and your loved ones this Holiday Season so you can celebrate with the ones you care about for many more seasons to come.

**ATTENTION PLEASE:**

What should I do if I'm sick or think I may have been exposed to COVID-19?
What should I do if I'm sick or think I may have been exposed to COVID-19?

**COVID-19 POSITIVE INFO:**

- IF YOU ARE AN EMPLOYEE THAT HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED COVID-19 POSITIVE
- IF YOU ARE AN EMPLOYEE WHO THINKS THEY MAY HAVE CONTRACTED COVID-19

**PLEASE FOLLOW THE NOTIFICATION PROTOCOL LISTED BELOW**

**COVID-19 HAWKEYE DISTRICT NOTIFICATION PROTOCOL:**

1. CONTACT THE HAWKEYE DISTRICT OHNA (Nurse) PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL.  
Email: [OccupationalHealth-DLHawkeye@usps.gov](mailto:OccupationalHealth-DLHawkeye@usps.gov)  
Office: Occupational Health 515-251-2168  
Fax: 515-251-2080
2. If you are unable to contact the OHNA-  
Contact Angie Pettinger, HR Manager @ 515-251-2220 or 515-918-8949.
3. If you are unable to reach the OHNA or Angie Pettinger—CALL YOUR SUPERVISOR.
4. The OHNA or Angie Pettinger, HR Manager, will contact you to PERFORM the Covid Contact Tracing and will advise accordingly.

ing out when you report to work sick, you are potentially infecting everyone in the office and sabotaging the ability to remain operational for your community.

In many counties in the state we are near or over a 20% infection rate; that is nearly one in every 4 people. Inevitably we will have other employees test posi-

with calling the Occupational Health nurse lines. Do not contact your Postmaster or Supervisor unless you are unsuccessful in reaching the OHNA or Angie Pettinger. These changes are being taken to ensure employees are being provided with correct information regarding their need to quarantine as well as assist in making sure your man-

## Disability Rates Of Veterans With Dependents

*continued from page 2*  
request for any additional information needed to confirm your dependent(s).

If it has been longer than a year since your marriage and/ or birth of your child, VA may only pay you back to the date you submitted your dependency claim or, in some cases, only up to one year before you submitted your dependency claim.

VA will track your child's age based on the date of birth you provide when filing your dependency claim. When your child turns 18, they will be removed from your disability compensation if they are not attending school. If your child is turning 18 and will still be

in school (either high school or college), you can update their school information in eBenefits. Simply log into your eBenefits account, click "Add or Remove Dependents" under the "Apply" section on the home page, and select "Update Dependents."

Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2020 (H.R. 6168)

On May 28, the House of Representatives passed a cost-of-living (COLA) increase for veterans' benefits in 2021, so long as Social Security and COLA increase as well. This bill directs the VA to increase, as of December 1, 2020, the rates of VA disability, additional com-

pensation for dependents, the clothing allowance for certain veterans with disabilities, and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation for surviving spouses and children.

While Social Security benefits are automatically adjusted annually to keep pace with inflation, Congress must pass legislation every year to provide a COLA for veterans and surviving family members receiving these types of compensation from VA.

As this issue goes to press, H.R. 6168 has moved to the Senate's Committee on Veterans Affairs, which must pass the bill before it can move to the Senate floor for a vote.

# Newly Released Documents Show Amazon Is A \$3.9 Billion-Per-Year Customer The Post Office Can't Afford To Lose

Recently released documents show that Amazon accounted for a good chunk of the money the USPS brought in just one year ago.

A slew of financial statements and emails obtained by American Oversight show that Amazon accounted for nearly \$3.9 billion in revenue and \$1.6 billion in profit for the postal service in the fiscal year of 2019, the Washington Post reported.

USPS delivered 1.54 billion packages for Amazon during the time period, or roughly 30% of the technology company's total volume, according to the documents, which also show that deliveries and revenue increased in fiscal year 2019.

Amazon's delivery network relies on the USPS for higher-cost deliveries, and the Post Office is required to deliver to every household in the US, even rural and hard-to-reach areas. But the government agency doesn't receive a dime in tax money, and has been struggling financially amid the pandemic.

The specific financial numbers released by American Oversight come as US President Donald Trump has consistently fueled the notion that Amazon is bad business for the Post Office; however, the numbers paint a different picture.

"Amazon and other companies like it, they come and they drop all of their mail into a post office," Trump said while appearing on "Fox & Friends" on August 17. "They drop packages into the post office by the thousands and then they say, 'Here, you deliver them.' We lose \$3 and \$4 a package on average. We lose massive amounts of money."

Business Insider previously reported on the multidimensional relationship between Amazon and the

USPS. Trump is correct in that the USPS does subsidize Amazon deliveries by charging the company below-market rates, although it's not clear where he's getting the \$3 to

\$4 per-package loss numbers from (Citi analysts in 2017 estimated it was around \$1.46 per package).

But Trump's criticisms of the below-market rates misses a key point: Losing Amazon as a customer would be a brutal blow to the Post Office, with the newly released fiscal 2019 numbers pegging that value at \$3.9 billion in revenue.

Simply put, in return for the lower rates, the USPS keeps a large customer, and staves off a possible future in which Amazon builds out its own delivery fleet, including drone



deliveries for rural areas, to the extent it doesn't need the USPS's delivery network — or even begins competing with USPS to deliver some non-Amazon packages as well.

"For more than two decades, Amazon has partnered closely with the United States Postal Service to invent and deliver for our customers, which has resulted in significant revenue for the USPS and thousands of American jobs," Rena Lunak, a company spokesperson for Amazon, said in a statement. "USPS continues to be a great partner in serving Amazon customers."

Trump's rhetoric regarding Amazon has heated up in 2020 with the presidential election on the horizon and his Democratic opponent, for-

mer US Vice President Joe Biden, maintaining a solid lead in the polls in battleground states such as Wisconsin and Nevada.

The President's attacks on the online retailer aren't anything new. In 2018, he said that Amazon had cost the USPS "billions" of dollars.

Trump, however, isn't alone on skepticism of Amazon's in-house delivery network that began being built out in earnest in 2013. A report in December by Morgan Stanley wrote that Amazon is "disproportionately servicing" the densest areas in the US in order to keep their costs low.

But as the newly released numbers reveal, the USPS isn't in a position right now to increase its rates and risk losing Amazon. It's hurting like many other businesses amid the pandemic, and it can't afford to lose a customer that generated \$1.6 billion in much-needed profit last year.

## Think Before You Post

### *Survival in the age of social media*

the entire country.

That is the unfortunate situation we're in now. Social media across all platforms are overrun with conspiracy theories containing misinformation and lies. The corporations that own these powerful platforms have displayed an inability — and, at times, unwillingness — to confront this problem.

Many of these conspiracies have come to mainstream attention as the United States continues to lack a unified response to the coronavirus pandemic. In the absence of a coordinated approach from the current administration, some Americans have put their trust in unproven "miracle cures" or channeled their frustration into outrageous claims about the origin of the virus and its continued spread.

Such dangerous theories used to be relegated to the dark corners of the Internet or laughed off as fodder for tabloid newspapers. But in 2020 they have real-world implications.

It is a verified fact that countries and organizations have been using social media to tear apart the social and political fabric that has bound Americans together for most of our nation's history. They do this by spreading outright lies and exaggerating minor events to inflame passions and stir up resentment between groups of Americans.

#### Consider The Source

Before you share something you see on social media, pause for a moment before pressing the "send" button. Consider whether the source is a reliable news organization. If it's an unattributed YouTube video or an organization you've never heard of, there's a good chance it is not legitimate.



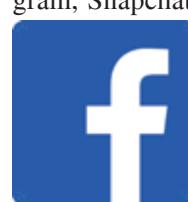
You can also verify the information by using one of several online fact-checking sites like Snopes.com or PolitiFact.com.

A functioning democracy requires having an informed populace. This can't happen when truth and falsehood are alternative "realities" that we select merely to confirm our personal prejudices.

Whether your social media platform of choice is Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Tik Tok or anything else, we urge you to keep your employer out of your status updates.

Please note that your company may not accept even looking for the time on your cell phone, let alone texting or checking social media, while on the clock.

Please do your part by sharing responsibly!





# Updates By Bates . . . And Bates

## COVID-19 And Your Personal Responsibility To Your Brothers And Sisters



by MJ Bates, President

The COVID-19 Pandemic is overwhelming our hospitals. As Americans we need to take some personal responsibility in helping our healthcare workers! We have been dealing with this pandemic for nine months. Our federal

We must come together as brothers and sisters to slow this monster down, and then crush it. We are asking all of our members to wear a mask! We don't understand why masks are not mandated inside public places and workplaces, but if management is not going to protect us, then who will? The answer is easy. YOU!

Let me explain what is going on here at the Postal Service. The number one thing is management's lack of contact tracing. Management has a mission to move the mail and at times will put safety aside to do it, which puts workers at risk. Under the Emergency Sick Leave policy the postal service has to pay you if you are quarantined, so it's not only the mission of moving mail but it is about saving money.

Since contract tracing is lacking, there is only one way to fix it. Do not be afraid to tell everyone that you have been TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID! We must protect ourselves and one another, at this time. Tell all your co-



government failed us and left it up to the states to come up with their own plan to deal with COVID-19. All the experts warned of a second wave. Well the second wave is here, and Americans are fatigued and this fatigue is contributing to the surge in cases.

We can play the blame game all day long, but that is not going to get us through the hardest part of this year!

workers when you tested and when the test came back positive. This information can be a matter of life and death. If I find out that you tested positive, I can protect myself and my family. What if I planned to visit my grandmother but learned I was around someone who tested positive? That information you provided would allow me to make an

*continued on page 9*

## Don't Be Intimidated – Know Your Rights – Protect Your Rights!

by Julie Bates, Clerk Craft Director

Report violations anonymously: [apwuviolations@gmail.com](mailto:apwuviolations@gmail.com)

**CALLING ALL CLERKS!** Management is continually and blatantly violating the contract while reducing clerk bids. We are seeing it in the form of SPBUW (Supervisors Performing Bargaining Unit Work), failing to schedule clerks to check-in carriers, crossing crafts, and assigning injured carriers to perform clerk work. It is especially common for management to hide clerk hours in the rural carrier craft. For example, West Suburban station management has gone as far as to schedule rural carrier overtime to perform clerk work – prior to utilizing clerks! This is insane and intentional. Management is hiding clerk hours in order to cut clerk work and clerk bids. If this is happening in your office, please report it!

**WE NEED YOU!** The new acting Postmaster is now withholding reports from the APWU, namely the Ad-Hoc Activity report from Rural Management Support System (RMSS) that specifically identifies clerk craft work being performed by the rural craft. They are insisting on statements from our clerks, in order to provide the report. This is where YOU come in! We need you to report not only rural carrier violations, but ALL violations that harm the clerk craft. When management or other crafts perform clerk work, we lose ALL CREDIT for that work. This means the hours reports that management relies upon to cut clerk jobs is skewed in their favor. We have had success defending clerk work in instances where violations are being reported and documented through grievances, so please make sure you're protecting your work and your office or area.

**STAND UP, FIGHT BACK!** To report violations without reprisal, please send your reports of violations to [apwuviolations@gmail.com](mailto:apwuviolations@gmail.com) We need to know the who, what, when, where and for how long regarding the violations. We also have a violations log that is

commonly used in grievances. If you'd like one, please request one through this email.

**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!** The biggest obstacle in protecting clerk work is getting our clerks to report violations. Many have experienced retaliation, as a result of reporting contract violations, and decide it's not worth the hassle. Don't give in to the intimidation. Don't let them win! Don't be fearful, know your legal rights and don't be afraid to assert these rights:

The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA, 29 U.S.C. 151-169) protects **employees** who engage in "concerted activities," including **union activities**. The NLRA makes it illegal for an employer to **retaliate against an employee**.

Here's what an employer legally cannot do under the NLRA:

- Threaten employees with loss of jobs or benefits if they join or vote for a union or engage in protected concerted activity.
- Threaten to close the plant if employees select a union to represent them.
- Question employees about their union sympathies or activities in circumstances that tend to interfere with, restrain or coerce employees in the exercise of their rights under the act.
- Promise benefits to employees to discourage their union support.
- Transfer, lay off, terminate or assign employees more difficult work tasks because they engaged in union or protected concerted activity.
- Discharge, constructively discharge, suspend, lock out, lay off, fail to recall from layoff, demote, discipline, or take any other adverse action against employees because they support the union or engage in union activities.

The NO FEAR ACT also protects against retaliation for whistleblowing and retaliation against employees who exercise their rights. "Managers and Supervisors may not punish employees or

*continued on page 9*



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# Scribbles from the VP . . . Clerks Cleaning The Small Post Offices

by Michael Gillespie,  
Vice President

Remember that the cleaning is extra hours. You should be getting cleaning time on top of your regular Clerk hours.

The cleaning should be built into your work hours. The cleaning should not be done between customers. It should normally be extra time at the end of the day. Also make sure that you put the cleaning time under operation 7470 on your timecard. Do not put the cleaning time under your regular Clerk hours.

If you do any snow removal or mowing, make sure that these are duties you are getting paid to do. There have been some offices that the Clerks did mowing or snow removal, but it wasn't on the list of cleaning that the Clerk was getting paid to do. These may be extra duties that you should get extra work time to do. Every office should have a PS Form 4852 which shows how many



cleaning hours your office has.

If you are in a RMPO your Postmaster may have this on file in their office. If you have any questions on cleaning contact the Union and we can assist you to determine your cleaning hours per week

#### See Something Say Something

If you see management doing clerk work. See something, say something.

If you see carriers doing clerk work. See something, say something.

If management is sorting parcels at a station let your union know.

If management is sorting letters

in the hot case or sorting flats let your union know. If the rural carriers or city carriers are sorting parcels, spreading flats or any other clerk work let your union know. This is stealing money from the clerks. It could be stealing overtime from someone who wants to work, or it could be stealing work hours from a PSE who isn't getting work hours.

Same for the plant. Let the union know if management is doing clerk work.

We need to know who did the work, what work they were doing and for how long?

For example: Supervisor X threw hot case from 730am to 830am at Z65 station or RR carrier threw parcels from 7am to 730am at WSUB. Please send this to the union weekly so we can be timely in filing the grievances.

Report violations to: apwuviolations@gmail.com or gillespiemd@yahoo.com

## The DMI Area APWU Local 44 Children's Christmas Party 2020 was CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19

Although the party was cancelled, the DMI Area APWU Local 44 Union and the DMI Area APWU Local 44 Auxiliary wishes to invite you to a

### "Christmas No-Contact Drive Thru Event"

- **When:** Sunday, December 6, 2020
- **Time:** Noon-1:30PM or as supplies last
- **Where:** DMI Area APWU Local 44 Union Hall @  
**1200 E. Euclid Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50316**
- **RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED:**
  - Please call the APWU Union Hall by Tuesday, November 24, 2020 @ 515-265-7371.
  - Information needed at Reservation: Age and Sex of child/children.
  - Please note: No gifts will be HELD for you. All gifts must be picked up at this event.
- **Upon making your RESERVATION** you will be assigned a "Number". Please write your number on a piece of paper and show the number when you arrive at the Union Hall. Showing your "Number" will make it easier and more efficient for us to select your gifts upon arrival.
- **MASKS REQUIRED** – Please wear masks when receiving your gifts.
- **Weather or Covid Cancellations** – Please do not attend if you are sick, Covid 19 positive or in Covid Quarantine. If Covid policies change, i.e.: limited group sizes or lock downs, the event may be postponed or canceled. If the weather is extreme that day, the event may be postponed or canceled.

**CALL 515-265-7371 to make your RESERVATION by November 24, 2020.  
Thank you from the DMI Area APWU Local 44 Union & DMI Area APWU Local 44-Auxiliary**

# NOTICE OF LOCAL ELECTIONS

Its election time and the Des Moines Area Local will hold nominations for local officers in February. Nominations for Officers and Convention Delegates will be at the February 6, 2021 meeting. New or returning officers will take office upon official posting of the winning candidates by the Election Committee.

All members of the Des Moines Area Local who are in good standing are eligible to run for the following positions:

President, Vice-President, Financial Secretary, Recording Secretary, Editor, Sergeant-At-Arms, 3 Trustees, Director Clerk Craft, Director Maintenance Craft, Director Motor Vehicle Craft, Director Support Services, State Convention Delegates and National Convention Delegates.

All elected positions will be for a two-year term. No nominated member may be a candidate for more than one elective office. No member will be considered a candidate for the office until accepted at the February 6th meeting

by their verbal or written acceptance of that nomination.

The election will be conducted by mail. The rules for conducting an election by mail are in the Department of Labor's book, "Electing Local Union Officers by Mail". This book is available at the union hall for any candidate to review or you may view it online at: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/olms/compliance-assistance/elections/mail>. It will be the responsibility of each candidate to review this book, be aware of his or her rights, and express those rights to the chairperson of the election committee if they so choose. Some of these rights are listed below but not limited to:

1. Review of the membership list.
2. Presence during the drawing of names for position on the ballot.
3. Presence during the mailing of ballots.
4. Presence during the checking of the post office box for undeliverable returned ballots.

5. Presence during the pick-up of the ballots on the final day of balloting.

6. Presence during the counting of the ballots.

The Election Committee in accordance with the local and national constitutions will set all dates and times. Each candidate wishing to exercise any of the above rights or others listed in the Department of Labor book must make themselves available at the time established by the committee.

The election committee will determine the date the ballots will be mailed.

No member can vote by proxy. To receive a ballot, you must be a member in good standing as of February 6, 2021. The DMI needs a good address on record. If your address has changed, please contact Viola at the Hall 515-265-7371.

All officers will be elected by the general membership except Craft Directors who are elected only by their respective crafts.

No member of the Local can hold any official Union position while serving for management or apply for one year from the date they last acted in any capacity for management.

Any candidate wanting to place ads in the *DMI NEWS AND VIEWS* is invited to. In order to meet publication deadlines and allow ample exposure to all candidates the following is the policy dealing with political ads for this election:

Even though nominations will not be completed until February 6th, any prospective candidate who may want to place an (ad) s in the *DMI NEWS AND VIEWS* may plan to do so now, even if not officially nominated. However, all ad(s) should be **emailed** to the editor by the February 6th Union meeting. Email your ad to: Sarconeapwu@gmail.com

**Anyone needing assistance organizing or designing an ad should contact the editor at Sarconeapwu@gmail.com**

## Point In Time

by Mark Sarcone, Editor/  
Legislative Director

Breathe a sigh of relief...

Postal workers dodged a bullet in the now completed, hotly-contested Presidential election. Just as important, postal workers everywhere provided heroic service in delivering election ballots in the midst of a raging pandemic. All of you doing the work need to be commended for your herculean efforts!!!

As I wrote in the October issue leading up to the elections, our jobs and retirement were *definitely* on the line in this election. Another four years of President Trump would have provided plenty of time for his administration to begin the dismantlement of the postal service leading to the selling off of its most profitable parts to the private sector. Gone would be our government jobs; government pay; government benefits; and government retirement. Maybe older workers nearing retirement would have been spared some of this bad but the union fights for all of our members and last I checked a majority of them are nowhere close to retirement.

However, Postmaster Louis De Joy and Trump's appointed Board of Governors are still calling the shots for the postal service. Make no mistake. This struggle is far from over! It is our hope that President-elect Joe Biden will see to it to balance out the board with appointees that are in favor of a strong and vibrant postal service that works for all Americans. It is our hope that the Senate will be in

the Democratic Party majority come January 5th. As of now, the majority hangs in the balance as both Senate seats in Georgia are going to a runoff on January 5, 2021. If both Democrats win these seats, the Democrats, with the President of the Senate, Vice-President-elect, Kamala Harris, would have the deciding vote on any tie-breaking matters.

This would force Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell out of this seat, allowing legislation passed in the House, like the "USPS Fairness Act" to be debated and hopefully, passed in the Senate. This act would remove the draconian pre-funding of future postal retiree's health insurance and allow the postal service to get back on the right financial track. More urgently, the Senate could introduce legislation to provide up to \$25 billion for COVID-19 related relief to the postal service. This funding has already passed in the House under both COVID bills and stand-alone postal bills. As of now, McConnell holds the keys to those two vital pieces of legislation, and he's shown no interest in reaching across the aisle. For him, it's my way or the highway.

That's why elections matter.

Specifically, that runoff election in Georgia! If you really want to help put an end to McConnell's gridlock, volunteer to phone and text bank for one or both of the campaigns of Jon Ossoff and Reverend Raphael Warnock. With the use of a computer, and your cellphone, you can do this from your home. You can Google

how to volunteer to phone and text bank for these campaigns. It's not the union's place to tell you who to vote for, let alone to volunteer for

a candidate but this runoff for Senate control will go a long way as to whether labor's and the postal service

*continued on page 11*

The Postal Service: What now?		
	Postmaster General Louis DeJoy's vision:	A public vision:
<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Reduce door-to-door delivery.</b> Push more customers into "cluster mailboxes." To cut costs, delay the mail more and more.	Defend our commitment to deliver on time to every household. Maintain the service standards that seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, and millions of other Americans depend on.
<b>Post offices</b>	<b>Reduce window hours at post offices,</b> creating even longer lines for customers. Lease space to private companies, inviting privatization of postal work.	Expand service into the evenings. Open more windows to reduce the wait during peak hours. Add services such as free broadband access, fishing and hunting licenses, document shredding, driver's license renewal, and census support.
<b>Postage</b>	<b>Charge higher prices for postage to Hawaii, Alaska, and Puerto Rico.</b> Then raise the rates for rural areas too.	Maintain universal service and universal rates for every corner of the U.S., including for the "last mile" of delivery.
<b>Banking</b>	<b>Do nothing about "banking deserts"</b> where check cashers and payday lenders extract \$100 billion a year in exorbitant fees from low-income residents.	Allow post offices to offer basic financial services such as low-cost checking and savings accounts, ATMs, and mobile banking, creating \$9 billion a year in revenue, by enacting the Postal Banking Act sponsored by Senators Gillibrand and Sanders.
<b>Network</b>	<b>Close and consolidate post offices and mail plants,</b> breaking up a valuable infrastructure and delivering a blow to communities.	Preserve the network of 31,000 post offices and hundreds of mail processing plants. Use them to aid emergency response in crises, as well as to deliver the mail.
<b>Jobs</b>	<b>Cut jobs and services.</b> Expand the lower-paid part-time workforce. Bust the postal unions. <b>Disregard worker safety.</b> Force mandatory overtime, speedup, and after-dark delivery—with some carriers working up to 16-hour days and going weeks without a day off.	Hire more postal workers, at full union wages and benefits, to alleviate the severe understaffing. Go back to reasonable work hours. <b>Defend good jobs in every neighborhood.</b> The Postal Service is the country's largest union workforce, and an important source of livable-wage jobs for Black workers (21 percent of the postal workforce), veterans (18 percent), and women (40 percent, compared to 20 percent at UPS).
<b>COVID</b>	<b>Make no serious plan for the coronavirus surge.</b> Keep cases and exposures secret. Don't enforce masks. Tell people their paid leave is all used up, even when they need to quarantine or take care of their kids.	Provide fully paid COVID leave for as long as it is needed. Mandate masks. Improve contact tracing. Allow those who can to work from home. Do better deep cleaning. Provide clear info when workers have been exposed or put at risk.
<b>Climate</b>	<b>Ignore climate concerns.</b> Keep using decrepit 30-year-old delivery vehicles that sometimes burst into flames.	Invest in a greener Postal Service, with a fleet of electric vehicles to deliver the mail. At post offices, add solar panels and electric-car charging stations.
<b>Finances</b>	<b>Cut costs to maximize profits.</b> Sell off resources and services piece by piece.	Focus on public service, not profit. The Postal Service is guaranteed to the people by the Constitution. Save \$5 billion per year by repealing the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act, which created a fake budget crunch by requiring extreme prefunding of retiree health benefits. Pass Medicare for All, alleviating the health care cost burden on the Postal Service.
<b>Accountability</b>	<b>Answer to no one.</b> Unilaterally dismantle sorting machines, remove mailboxes, close facilities, reduce hours, change policies, and delay the mail.	Establish a public commission to study innovations, welcome suggestions, and make recommendations. Examine creative ways to serve communities and build local resilience.
<b>Trust</b>	<b>Sabotage the Postal Service from within.</b> Erode the public trust. Pave the way for privatization.	Maintain confidence in the Postal Service to do what it has always done: deliver medicines, Social Security checks, ballots, business mail, and packages on time.

For more information and to help: [bit.ly/SaveOurPostalService](http://bit.ly/SaveOurPostalService)

# Prime Time AO's

## by Bryon Preminger, Represented by DMI Area Local 44

This article is to give our members the basics for Prime Time annual leave submissions. Please consult your local LMOU for more detailed rules. You can access your LMOU at APWU Iowa. When determining the number of employees count all clerks in the cluster including PSE's and apply the percentage.

### Altoona Cluster (Berwick)

Your choice vacation period is the 3rd Monday of May through the last Friday of September 2021. It also includes the week of Thanksgiving and the time from the beginning of the day of December 25th through the end of the day on January 1st. Submissions are due March 15, 2021.

The minimum number of bargaining unit employees to receive leave each week, will be 20% and any percentage of .5 or greater will be rounded off to the next whole number.

Outside of the Choice Vacation Period and under normal circumstances at least one bargaining unit employee will be allowed off when

leave is requested at least 14 days in advance. Submit requests in triplicate to the supervisor and at least five days prior to the requested leave. If the supervisor hasn't made a determination within three days, the leave request will automatically be granted.

### Ames Cluster (Gilbert)

Your choice vacation period is the 2nd Sunday of April through the last Saturday of October 2021. It also includes the week of Thanksgiving, the week of Christmas, and the week of New Years. Submissions are due by the first Monday in March. They must be returned by the third Monday of March.

The minimum number of bargaining unit employees to receive leave each week, will be 13% in April, May, June, July, and through the last Saturday in August, 9% in September and October and 7% for all remaining time. Any percentage of .5 or greater will be rounded off to the next whole number.

Outside of the Choice Vacation Period the percentage will be 7% and management has five days to

approve the request.

### Ankeny Post Office

Leave slips will be available from management by February 1, 2021 and are to be returned to management by March 1, 2021. Vacation requests shall be posted no later than April 1, 2021.

The Choice Vacation Period begins on Memorial Day weekend and continues through the Labor Day weekend. It also includes the 7 days between Christmas and New Year's Day.

The maximum number of bargaining unit employees to receive leave, if applied for, each week, will be 20% and any percentage of .5 or greater will be rounded off to the next whole number.

Outside the choice vacation period, annual leave will be considered for 20% of the bargaining unit when requested but a minimum of 10% will be granted. Submit requests in triplicate to the supervisor and at least five days prior to the requested leave. If the supervisor hasn't made a determination within three days, the leave request will automatically be granted.

### Colfax Cluster (Mitchellville, Prairie City, and Mingo)

Your choice vacation period is the first full pay period in January until the 1st of December. Submissions were due the first Monday in December. They must be returned by the third Monday of December.

The minimum number of bargaining unit employees to receive leave each week, will be 15%. Any percentage of .5 or greater will be rounded off to the next whole number.

deadline for submission of vacation leave for the Choice Vacation Period is March 15, 2021. Submissions shall be in duplicate and will be returned by management March 22, 2021.

During Prime Time ONLY, Monday will be the beginning day of an employee's vacation period. Employees may request two selections during the choice vacation period in units of either 5 or 10 days.

One bargaining unit employee will be granted leave during prime time.

Requests outside the choice vacation period will be made in duplicate and will be acted upon and returned to the employee in one week.

### Newton Cluster (Baxter, Kellogg)

The Choice Vacation Period is from the first Sunday in February until the last Saturday of November. Applications for annual leave during the choice vacation period must be submitted by January 10, 2021.

Applications for annual leave during the choice vacation period submitted after January 10, 2021 will be accepted on a first come, first served basis, five days after the official posting.

The minimum number of bargaining unit employees to receive leave each week, will be 15%. Any percentage of .5 or greater will be rounded off to the next whole number.

### Norwalk Cluster (Cumming, Martensdale, St. Charles, & Truro)

Your choice vacation period May 1, 2021 to October 31, 2021. Submissions were due the first Monday in December. They must be returned by the third Monday of March.

The minimum number of bargaining unit employees to receive leave each week, will be 15%. Any percentage of .5 or greater will be rounded off to the next whole number.

Outside of the Choice Vacation Period the percentage will be 10% and management has three days to approve the request or it is automatically granted.

### Waukee Post Office

Your choice vacation period is the first full pay period in January up to the first full pay period the following year. Submissions are due the first Monday in December. They must be returned by the third Monday of December.

The minimum number of bargaining unit employees to receive leave each week, will be 20%. Any percentage of .5 or greater will be rounded off to the next whole number.

Outside of the Choice Vacation Period the percentage will be 10% and management has three days to approve the request or it is automatically granted.

### Indianola Cluster (Lacona, Milo)

The Choice Vacation period is from June 1, 2021 through October 1, 2021 and the week between Christmas and New Year's. The

# USPS RETIREE

## E-Newsletter

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE®

November 2020

Open Season Starts November 9<sup>th</sup>

**VIRTUAL OPEN SEASON**  
NOVEMBER 9 – DECEMBER 14, 2020

Wellness | UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE®

**BALANCE YOUR BENEFITS**

Open Season 2020 will be held November 9, 2020, through December 14, 2020. Anyone eligible to participate in the FEHB Program may enroll, make changes to your medical, dental, or vision coverage, or suspend your FEHB enrollment. If you do not wish to make any changes, your current enrollment will continue automatically unless your plan is not participating in the FEHB Program the following year.

Unless you have a Qualifying Life Event (QLE), this is your once-a-year opportunity to make changes to these benefits. To help you select the right health plan, the Postal Service™ provides all employees and retirees with free access to CHECKBOOK's Guide to Health Plans for Federal Employees. This online tool takes you through a few simple steps to find every plan available to you ranked by estimated costs and more. For a full list of FEHB plans available in your area and an estimated total cost per year:

- Go to <http://www.keepingposted.org/>
- Click on the tab for Health Benefits near the top of the screen.

Have you connected with the Keeping Posted for USPS Retirees Facebook page? The USPS Benefits and Wellness Team will be providing information for a variety of Open Season 101 webinars on the Keeping Posted for USPS Retirees Facebook page throughout Open Season: <https://www.facebook.com/USPSKeepingPosted/>

Retirees are also invited to attend a Virtual Benefits Fair, hosted by Long Term Care Partners, from November through December 14. As part of the virtual fair, you may visit individual health, dental, and vision provider booths, watch instructional videos, register for educational webinars, and review and save 2021 health plan brochures. Explore and compare your benefits in one convenient location by logging into the fair site 24/7 during Open Season. Live chats with experts will be offered on four dates: Friday, Nov. 15; Friday, Nov. 20; Wednesday, Dec. 2; and Wednesday, Dec. 9; from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. EST each day. Register on the [2020 Virtual Benefits Fair website](#) or visit [www.ltcfeds.com](http://www.ltcfeds.com) to register.

More information will be updated throughout Open Season on: <https://liteblue.usps.gov/openseason>

Source: <https://liteblue.usps.gov/openseason>

continued on page 9





by Christine Sarcone, Auxiliary President

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, The DMI Area APWU Auxiliary had to cancel its annual summer charity event, "An Auxiliary Christmas".

Our charity event is hosted every year from, Memorial Day through Labor Day.

The Auxiliary collects needed items for Haw-



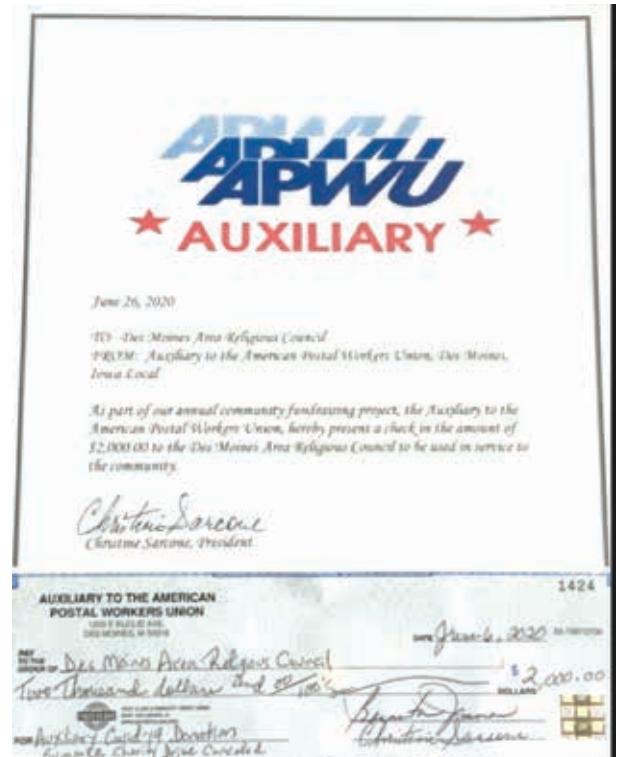
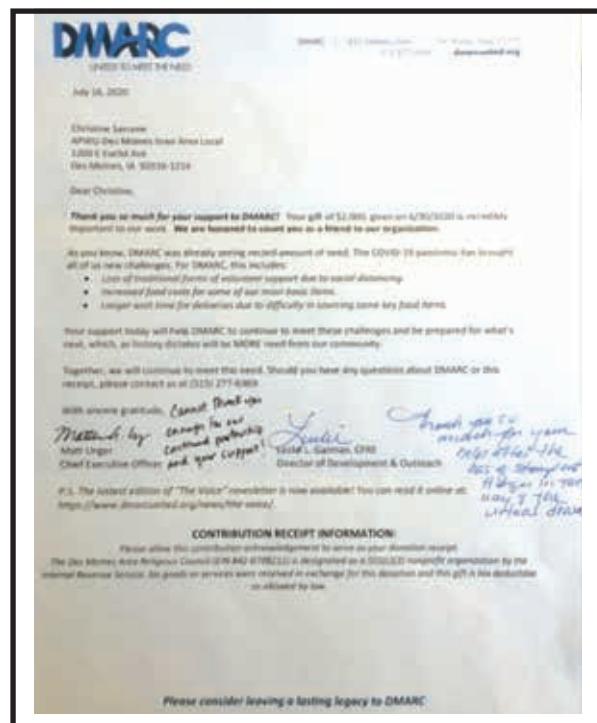
thorn Hill, Women and Children's Shelter and the yearly, Des Moines Homeless Veteran's Stand Down.

Because we were unable to host our annual charity event, we passed a motion to make a monetary donation of \$2,000 to DMARC, Des Moines Area Religious Council Food Pantry, Des Moines, Iowa.

In the season of giving Thanks,

We wish to thank all Auxiliary Members, APWU Members, all Postal Workers and their families that purchased our fundraising raffle tickets over the past few years. Your generosity provided us with the funds to make this donation to those in need of food assistance during this crazy year of 2020.

We are blessed to have good Union jobs and job security. Thank you for your support over the

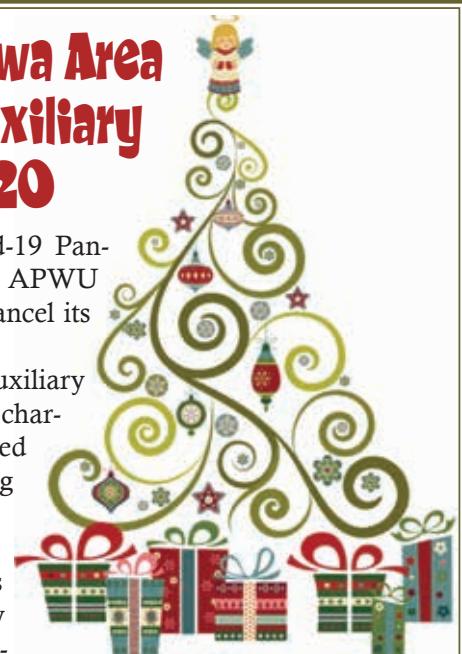


years and allowing us to support those less fortunate.

Thank you for your generosity!!!

On behalf of the Officers and Members of The Des Moines Iowa Area APWU Local 44-Auxiliary, we thank you.

## The Des Moines Iowa Area APWU Local 44 Auxiliary ANGEL TREE 2020



Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Des Moines Iowa Area APWU Local 44 Auxiliary has chosen to cancel its annual Angel Tree Project 2020.

The DMI Area APWU Local 44 Auxiliary voted to give monetary donations to charities that will help people most in need of assistance during the upcoming Holiday Season.

Postal Workers are the most generous, always giving to those less fortunate. Always buying Auxiliary raffle tickets and supporting our organization. Because of your support, the Auxiliary has the means to pay it forward and donate to those in need during this most difficult year.

The Auxiliary looks forward to hosting its Angel Tree Project with all of you next year.

We are all blessed and fortunate to have good, Union jobs, especially this year.

Please be safe during the Holidays and please wear a mask. Thank you! The Des Moines Iowa Area APWU Local 44 Auxiliary will send \$250 dollars to each of the following Charitable Organizations for the Holiday Season 2020:

- **Hope Ministries for Thanksgiving** (Provides 135 Thanksgiving Meals).
- **DMARC for Christmas** (Des Moines Area Religious Council-Food Pantry).
- **Toys for Tots for Christmas** (IBEW Local Union #347 Toys for Tots Campaign).
- **Salvation Army for Christmas** (Des Moines Central Office).

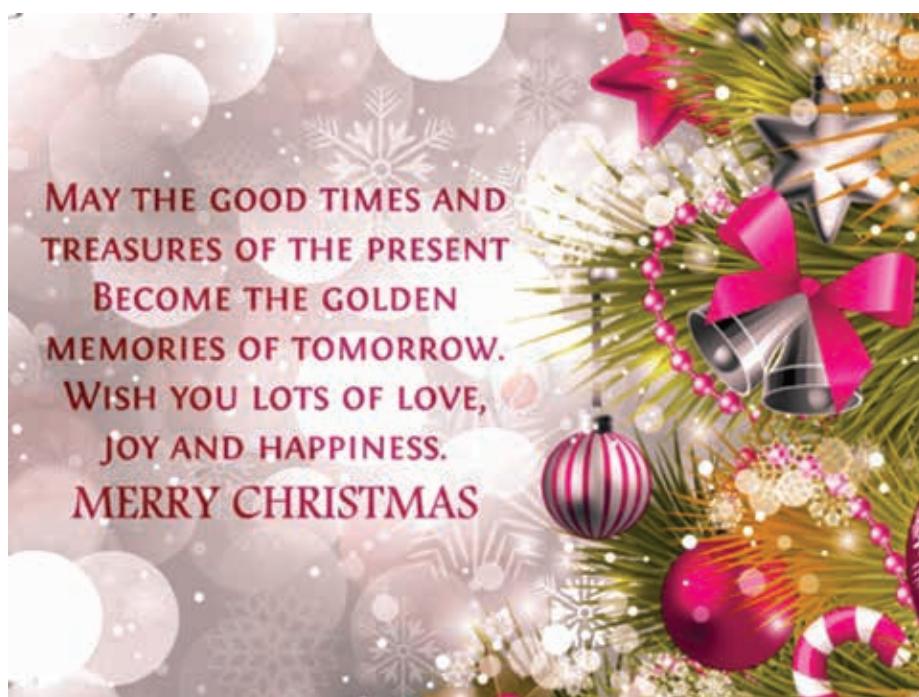
*Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!  
From the Des Moines Iowa Area APWU Local 44 Auxiliary,  
Christine Sarcone, President*

**DMI News & Views**  
Official Publication of the Des Moines, Iowa Area Local #44, APWU

**EDUCATE TO ORGANIZE**

**DMI-APWU AUXILIARY OFFICERS**

<b>PRESIDENT</b> Christine Sarcone	<b>TREASURER</b> Bernita Jones
<b>VICE PRESIDENT</b> Cindy Weems	<b>RECORDING SECRETARY</b> Debra Dickerson
<b>EDITOR</b> Janice Gillespie	



# The Biden Administration Must Strongly Advocate For Working People

Now that the 2020 presidential election is finally decided, working people can look forward to a moment of hope and opportunity. In January, Americans will have a president and vice president who have pledged to prioritize the needs of working families. Despite extraordinary and unconscionable efforts to silence voters, the democratic process has prevailed in the most important election of our lifetime.

President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris won on a platform that addresses the urgent needs of working people. EPI has long called for policies that would shift bargaining power back toward

workers, curb accelerating income inequality, shore up the nation's infrastructure and educational systems, protect and expand social insurance programs, and help close gender and

ing and reversing systemic racism.

Many elections across the country demonstrated that progressive, pro-worker policies are not just good economics, but also can be electoral

economic recovery at this precarious moment in history.

We encourage the incoming administration and Congress to focus on building worker power, fighting for racial justice, and making the transformational changes we need to invest in America, including through clean energy and other forms of climate crisis mitigation, public health,

***"We look forward to working closely with the incoming administration to systematically undo the harm caused by the Trump administration — and to build an economy that works for everyone in America, elevates the contributions of working people, and is committed to addressing and reversing systemic racism."***

racial wage gaps. We look forward to working closely with the incoming administration to systematically undo the harm caused by the Trump administration — and to build an economy that works for everyone in America, elevates the contributions of working people, and is committed to address-

winners. By overwhelming margins, Florida residents voted to raise the state's minimum wage to \$15 an hour, and Colorado residents voted for a 12-week paid family and medical leave program. As EPI's work has shown, the progressive agenda is both popular and necessary for a robust and fair

care economy, the immigration system, and public education. This is not a time for timidity or austerity. This is a time for courage and ambition, and we are ready to work with Congress and the incoming administration to achieve the changes our country needs.

— epi.org

## Point In Time

*continued from page 7*

vice's objectives can be forwarded or held back for the next two years. Just a reminder, per the Hatch Act, you may not partake in partisan political activity while on the clock, in or on postal property, or in uniform.

Meanwhile, De Joy has signaled that he plans to roll back service standards more in line with those of Summer 2020. In an October article in the *Washington Post*, the following are initiatives De Joy has in store for the post office moving forward: De Joy "has told associates he was brought in to stem the Postal Service's losses and that drastic changes were needed to make the agency solvent. He is determined to stay the course and make wholesale changes after the election, according to an associate who spoke with him recently."

In addition to all the changes we saw taking place in July, these additional changes, reports *The Post* may include the following:

- Transporting more mail via trucks and trailers rather than airplanes (which would require relaxing service standards);
- raising package rates, particularly when delivering the last mile on behalf of big retailers like Amazon;
- setting higher prices for service in Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico;
- curbing discounts for nonprofits; and
- leasing space in Postal Service facilities to other government agencies and companies.

Other changes that may be announced at any time include:

- Relaxing service standards to make it easier to make all the other changes (which would definitely require request-

ing an advisory opinion from the Postal Regulatory Commission);

- consolidating more mail processing plants (which has been facilitated by the removal of the sorting machines);
- making more aggressive efforts to switch customers from home delivery to cluster boxes (which helps reduce letter carrier work hours);
- outsourcing more elements of the transportation network (a new program called Surface Transportation Center Redesign involves contracting out to private companies, including a new STC in Orlando); and
- putting "Alternative Delivery and Access Points" in big box stores like Staples and Target (which will allow postal customers to pick up and drop off packages at participating stores and thereby decrease traffic at post offices and make it easier to cut window hours).

As you can see, we are hardly out of the woods when it comes to restoring a fully-functioning post office. De Joy is poised to install austerity measures in his race to the bottom. Again, this fight isn't over by a long way! Please continue to put pressure on Senators Grassley and Ernst and tell them to: Provide \$25 billion in COVID-19 relief; End De Joy's delays; and grow and expand postal services. We proved our mettle during the election season during a pandemic. I believe we are up to it every day of the year.

Now you see why elections matter and why the Democrats holding the Senate can pass favorable legislation that will remove the pre-funding mandate and take the above-mentioned points off of the table.

**COVID-19** cases have spiked significantly in the last couple of months, as

was expected as more activities moved indoors. As of press time, the Hawkeye District had over 500 reported cases and climbing with no end in sight. We were seeing about 20 cases per day in the district in early to mid-November. New hires are coming on board just to fill in the gaps when existing employees are sent in to quarantine. As we approach our busiest season, be mindful that you will be working with new employees who don't know all of the processes. Be patient, mask up, and get familiar with the Required and Optional masking situations posted in your facility. It gets busy but try to keep your cool and understand that these new employees are trying to make a living, too.

**Local Elections** will be held in 2021 starting with nominations at the Sat-

urday February 6th meeting. This is your union. It's not Mark Sarcone's union. It's not Mike Bates' union. It's not Mike Gillespie's union. It's YOUR union. Take ownership in it and take your involvement to the next level. Yes, there are sacrifices to be made but the rewards far outweigh the sacrifices.

Please see the article in this paper that outlines the offices up for election and consider running and having a say on the direction of our local.

Here's wishing you and yours a safe, healthy MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

*"Every piece of progressive social legislation passed by Congress in the 20th century bears a union label."*

— George Meany

In Solidarity . . .



## DMI Area Local Meeting Schedule

**Meetings held at 1200 E. Euclid Ave.**

**December 5th @ 10:00 AM**

**January 20th @ 7:00 PM**

**February 6th @ 10:00 AM**

**February 17th @ 7:00 PM**

If you would like to attend via Zoom please send your email address to [mjbates2016@gmail.com](mailto:mjbates2016@gmail.com).

**Keep up-to-date with what's going on in your union. attend your monthly union meetings!**

# Outcry Halts New Postmaster General's Attacks On Service . . . For Now

*excerpted from an article in October, 2020  
Labor Notes by David Yao*

Unless he's ousted, the Postmaster General will resume his attacks after the November election takes the spotlight off of postal delays.]

"As a postal worker I've seen first-hand how new Postmaster General Louis DeJoy has changed mail delivery in his first months on the job, all in the name of "efficiency." . . .

DeJoy's cost-cutting initiatives in July began with the order that all trucks must leave on time . . .

"On time" sounds reasonable, right? But in the real world, sometimes the mail isn't ready to go at the scheduled time — a batch is still being sorted, or hasn't been loaded onto the truck yet. DeJoy's order, enforced by letters of warning on violators who dared hold up a truck, meant mail was left behind. Some trucks even departed empty.

## Mail Left Behind

Hundreds of mail sorting machines across the country were dismantled and shipped out, mostly to be scrapped. The reduced capacity has delayed mail and stretched out workdays. Operators at the Seattle processing plant have been working over 50 hours a week since some machines were removed. They used to process all the mail, every night; now mail is left unworked for the following day.

Another directive, which DeJoy later denied responsibility for, was a ban on overtime. With many offices short-staffed, no overtime would mean all



the mail could not be delivered, and it would back up — which is exactly what happened in places where the ban was enforced . . .

## 'Dump DeJoy' Catches On

Meanwhile, postal unions have been urging their members to lobby Congress for pandemic funding for the Postal Service; \$25 billion in such aid was reportedly removed from the first stimulus bill at the behest of the White House. In June a call by the Postal Workers (APWU) to rally for postal stimulus money was answered in 20 cities . . .

DeJoy has been a major donor and fundraiser to Trump and the Republican Party; he was selected by a Board of Governors entirely appointed by

Trump. So when Trump attacked voting by mail and questioned the ability of the Postal Service to deliver ballots, DeJoy's disruptive moves set off a firestorm . . .

## Largest-Ever Display

In August, 800 rallies were organized by MoveOn.org and allies to "save the post office from Donald Trump and declare that Postmaster General Louis DeJoy must resign." Days later, 300 more actions, organized by the APWU, Action Network, and other groups, urged Congress to supply the \$25 billion and permanently reverse DeJoy's mail-delaying policies . . .

It was undoubtedly the largest-ever display of public support for the

nation's Postal Service . . .

And after state attorneys general announced a lawsuit against the Trump administration over concern with election interference, and both the House and Senate grilled DeJoy over his actions, he announced a freeze on some of his moves — at least until after the November election.

Recently a federal judge granted an immediate injunction to allow trucks to hold their departures until the mail is ready to go. USPS indicated it would comply...Even some of the removed sorting machines have begun to reappear.

## Privatization Threat

DeJoy's woes have continued to mount — first with a bill for back taxes for improper deductions, which he of course blames on his accountant, and now over alleged illegal campaign contributions, for which we can expect a congressional investigation . . .

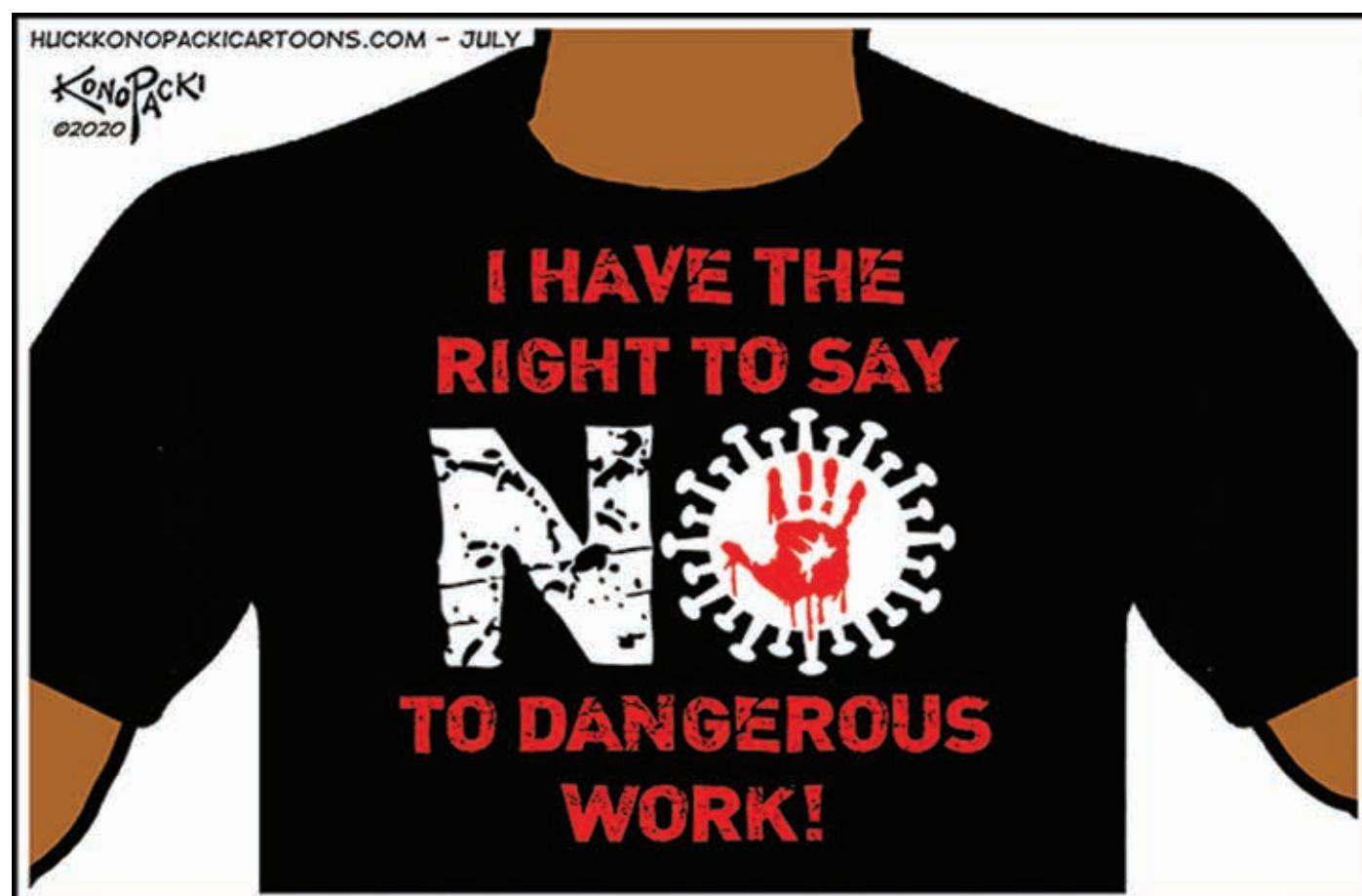
A modest amount of postal pandemic funding has only been discussed . . . and may not pass this year. The Postal Service is still in jeopardy. Without the emergency funding, the forecast is insolvency in 2021.

A Trump victory in November would supercharge efforts to privatize the postal service as well as attacks on union contracts and union power. But a victory by Biden — a corporate Democrat — is no guarantee of protection. A congressional mandate enacted under President Nixon in 1970 requires the Postal Service to break even over the long term. Yet this makes no allowance for its role as a basic part of the nation's infrastructure . . . We have a Universal Service Obligation to deliver to all communities, rich or poor, rural or urban, even if an individual post office is not "profitable." . . .

The threats to the Postal Service are expected to resume after the election . . . Cuts in retail hours, including closing during the lunch hour, had been announced in several states but then hastily withdrawn.

We can expect these and other service reductions to resume under our "efficiency"-touting boss from the private sector — followed by job cuts, of course. Fortunately, we now have an aroused set of allies."

David Yao is a full-time lead clerk and the vice president of the Seattle local of the American Postal Workers Union. Follow postal workers organizing to save the Postal Service, and find out how you can push the Board of Governors to dump DeJoy, on the Facebook page Save Our Postal Service.





# Local 7027 Meeting Minutes

**October 20th, – 21st, 2020**

**Call to Order:** Tuesday October 20th, 2020, 1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.; Wednesday October 21st, 2020, 08:00 President Rob Moyer presiding.

**Roll Call:** Members signed in.

**Officer's Reports:** President Rob Moyer discussed new LMOU language that had been agreed upon with the NDC Plant Management. Provisions include a leave submission documentation copy to be provided to the employee when the leave submission is provided to the supervisor. Employees are advised to submit the leave request in duplicate to provide management the copy to return to the employee when acted upon. Leave submissions not acted upon within 2 employee work days will be considered approved. SDOs do not count in the Employee Work days 2 day approval period. Leave submissions made with less than 2 days notice are to be granted based on the operational needs of the leave period.

**Overtime Desired Lists** have 3 categories. Early / Begin Tour Overtime; Late / End Tour Overtime; and Scheduled Day Off Overtime. The sign up period for the new OTDL lists is required to be signed between October 17th and November 1st for employees to be on the OTDL as of November 1st, 2020. The following 2021 quarters sign up will be the quarterly signup periods. Daily Volunteers for overtime are limited to no more than 10 hours on a regular work day, not over 8 hours of overtime on an SDO, and only 1 SDO per service week which is in keeping with the National CBA and may only be utilized after available OTDL employees have been utilized for the maximum amount of overtime. Tour Overtime which has an assignment that begins within an 1.5 hours of an adjacent tour start time will rotate the OTDL employees whose start times are within 1.5 hours of the adjacent tour so that 1900 and 2000 OTDL rotations will be combined on a seniority basis for overtime that is needed for such periods. Unassigned regulars are now

permitted to be on the sectional overtime list of the section and tour to which they are temporarily assigned. Involuntary schedule changes will be addressed to permit employees to be on the OTDL of the assignment of their involuntary schedule change. Employees who are absent for all or all but 1 day of the OTDL sign up period, or who have a duty assignment tour change will be permitted a 10 day period following their absence or tour change to place their name on the OTDL.

**Maintenance Report:** President

Rob Moyer had negotiated Maintenance OTDL provisions which address OTDL assignments in some different Levels to be combined on a rotating basis for the OTDL employees in those different levels with the skills and abilities needed for Area Assurance and Preventive Maintenance tasks.

**Nominations:** For the 2021 – 2022 term Local 7027 APWU Election of Officers were conducted by Tabbatha Bailey and Mark Clifford

**September 2020 T-Shirt Winners:** Rob Moyer and Mark Clifford

**Meeting Cup Winners:** Jeff Shook

**Plant Cup Winner:** C J Tucker

**\$300.00 Door Prize:** Not Won -

Name Drawn: Jasmine McCorley

**October 2020 T-Shirt Winners:**

Rob Moyer and Mark Clifford

**Meeting Cup Winners:** Lynn Rumbaugh

**Plant Cup Winner:** Clint Parrish

**\$300.00 Door Prize:** Not Won -

Names Drawn:

1.) Desi Villareal

2.) Anthony Mayner

**Recess:** 14:40 and 16:25 pm

**Adjournment:** Wednesday 8:50 AM

## Employee Assistance Program

by Melissa K. Pelc

With the pandemic of "Covid-19," "State of Emergency", "George Floyd," "Black Lives Matter," Stay-at-home orders, reopening up Business, the list can go on and on. I'm sure everyone's anxiety and stress levels are at its' peak. I myself have even snapped at my children over such petty little things.

Did you know that the United States Postal Service provides an Employee Assistant Program, in other words "EAP"!

You may ask yourself what can EAP do for you? and what is it?

EAP is an employee benefit programs that assist employees with personal problems, work related problems that can impact your health and your job performance, arid or your mental wellbeing. EAP has professional counselors that you can talk with 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. These Counselors keep everything

Confidential/private and they have access to outside resources and referrals.

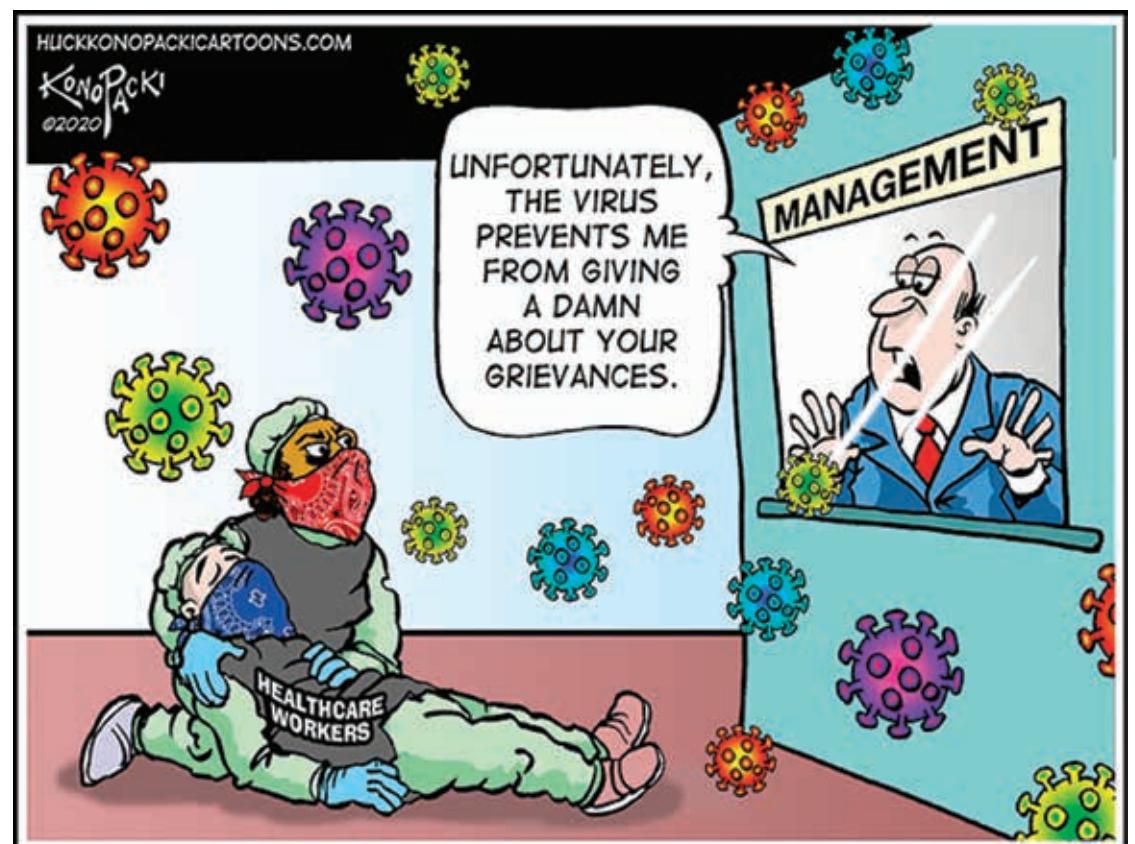
This service is not only provided to the employee but offered to anyone in your household. EAP Counselors specialize in Harassment, Bullying, Substance Abuse, Stress, Depression, Financial Problems, Suicidal Thoughts, Family issues, Legal matters, Child Care, Relation-

ship concerns . . . etc. just to name a few.

If you need help or just want to talk to have someone listen to you call.

800-EAP-4YOU [800-327-4968]  
TTY is available at 877-942-7341  
Check out the website and contact someone that way at [usps.ndbh.com](http://usps.ndbh.com)

—Auto City Flint Facts





## Des Moines Bulk Mail Center Local 7027 APWU

### PRESIDENT

Robert D. Moyer

### VICE-PRESIDENT

Steve Allen

### SECRETARY

Frank Sample

### TREASURER

Teresa Daleske

### CLERK CRAFT

#### DIRECTOR

Cyndi Miller

### MAINTENANCE CRAFT

#### DIRECTOR

acting Rob Moyer

### MOTOR VEHICLE CRAFT

#### DIRECTOR

acting Andrew P. Tuttle

### EDITOR

Mark Clifford

### TRUSTEES

Chris Strait

Mike Cope

Richard Schneider

### STEWARDS

#### Maintenance

Mark Clifford

#### Clerk

Dave Hefel

**Meetings on Third Tuesday  
of every month at**

**5806 Meredith Drive, 276-5272**

## BMC Local 7027 Meeting Schedule

**Tuesday**  
**November 17, 2020**  
**1:30 PM & 4:00 PM**

**Wednesday**  
**November 18, 2020**  
**8:00 AM**

**Tuesday**  
**December 15, 2020**  
**1:30 PM & 4:00 PM**

**Wednesday**  
**December 16, 2020**  
**8:00 AM**

**Tuesday**  
**January 19, 2021**  
**1:30 PM & 4:00 PM**

**Wednesday**  
**January 20, 2021**  
**8:00 AM**

**August Door Prize Amount: \$280**

**LOCATION**  
**8435 University Boulevard**  
**Suite 1**  
**Clive, IA 50325**

# How Postal Workers Saved The Election

by Jane Slaughterenlarge

The story of mail ballots in 2020 is the story of a union postal workforce willing to go to extraordinary lengths to make sure that every vote got delivered.

Postal workers did this despite the deliberate holdups created by new Postmaster General Louis "Delay the Mail" DeJoy, and a workforce hit hard by COVID.

But his plan isn't the only one on offer. A working group of rank and filers has compiled all the ways his vision is antithetical to what the public needs.

To imagine a green, expanded, universal Postal Service with more hours, more services, and more good jobs, visit [bit.ly/postalvision](http://bit.ly/postalvision).

More than 65 million people voted by mail this fall — a record. And the Postal Service has been working at reduced numbers for months. As of August 40,000 postal employees had been forced to quarantine. Roscoe Woods, president of the 480-481 Area Local of the Postal Workers (APWU) near Detroit, said the workforce he represents is down 30 percent.

How did postal workers pull off this gargantuan feat? "Most of our employees were very prideful," said Keith Combs, president of the APWU Detroit local. "They were really happy they were able to complete the mission with the ballots. They want the Post Office to be seen in a different light than the White

House had been portraying it."

### ABOVE AND BEYOND

Woods represents workers at the Michigan Metroplex in Pontiac, the largest mail processing facility in the region. On a normal day it processes a couple of million pieces of mail. How did workers make sure the ballots didn't get lost in that fast-moving stream?

The mail is sorted at 36,000 pieces per hour by giant machines that read the envelopes. Before the election, workers set the machine to direct ballots to a designated holdout, then took them to another area for special manual sorting. Experienced clerks hand-sorted the ballots to county clerks' zip codes. From there they were dispatched by truck.

Workers went further. "Say a ballot arrives in Flint but it was supposed to go to Muskegon," Woods said. "Our people were meeting people in the middle to hand them off. I checked in with my plant manager the day of the election at a quarter to 8 [when polls closed]. He had just sent a supervisor out with 10 ballots to drop off at the Clerk's office.

"Whatever was necessary. Our people rose to the occasion. It's not every day you become an active participant in a functioning democracy."

### GET THE CROOK OUT?

All year postal workers have been under attack by the Postmaster General, a Trump fundraiser and ex-

pert job-killer from private logistics. Hundreds of mail sorting machines were dismantled; overtime was denied; letter carriers were directed not to sort all their mail when received, but to leave it behind for the next day.

It was only an outcry from postal unions and the public that forced DeJoy to say, on August 18, that he would postpone his service cuts till after the election. But he made clear he was only hitting pause.

Contrary to what you might assume, DeJoy and his schemes won't automatically be swept out by a new administration. The men who hired him, and could fire him, are the Postal Board of Governors.

Unfortunately, the six current members are mostly anti-worker and pro-privatization. There are three empty seats that Joe Biden could fill immediately — except that any appointments must be confirmed by the Senate.

One promising strategy is to pressure the existing Board members, who aren't used to a public spotlight. New Orleans activists got the ball rolling in October with a neighborhood "Cook Out to Get the Crook Out" near the home of one Postal Board member. Other members are in New York City, Los Angeles, eastern Kentucky, Palm Beach, and D.C. — for those similarly inspired.

*Jane Slaughter is a former editor of Labor Notes. This piece was first published in The Detroit Socialist.*



## MILESTONES IN LABOR HISTORY — December —

3

**1866** - Textile strikers in Fall River, Massachusetts win 10-hour day.

4

**1906** - National Federation of Postal Clerks (NFPOC) chartered by the American Federation of Labor. Locals chartered establishing official birth of NFPC: Chicago, Louisville, Milwaukee, Muskogee, Oklahoma, Nashville, Salt Lake City, San Francisco.

5

**1955** - Merger of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), forming the AFL-CIO. The merger ended a 20-year split in the American labor movement growing out of differences over the form trade union organizations should take.

The merger recognized that both craft and industrial unions are appropriate, equal, and necessary as methods of union organization.

8

**1886** - American Federation of Labor (AFL) organized in Columbus, Ohio by twenty-five craft unions.

9

**1869** - Knights of Labor founded. The Knights broadened the labor movement beyond a few skilled trades and reached out to all working men and women. Its goals of equal pay for equal work, abolishing child labor, and the eight-hour day provided a rallying cry for all workers.

12

**1898** - Accident Benefit Association (ABA) established.

13

**1924** - Death of Samuel Gompers, president and founder of American Federation of Labor. One of the labor leader's most famous remarks, in response to the question, "What does labor want?" was: "We want more schoolhouses and less jails, more books and less arsenals, more learning and less vice, more constant work and less crime, more leisure and less greed, more justice and less revenge."

24

**1888** - Retail Clerks National Protective Association chartered (RCNPA) by the American Federation of Labor. The RCNPA became the Retail Clerks International Union, which merged with the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America to form the UFCW in 1979.

**1913** - Seventy-two miners' children killed during strike in Calumet, Michigan.

28

**1936** - United Auto Workers sit-down strike against General Motors begins at Fisher Body plant in Cleveland.

29

**1970** - Congress passes Occupational Safety & Health Act.

30

**1936** - United Auto Workers sit-down strike begins in Flint, Michigan.

# Management Must Abide By The Collective Bargaining Agreement

by Vance Zimmerman, National APWU Industrial Relations Director

It has been a different summer for all of us. Every member of the APWU has been touched by the COVID-19 pandemic in one way or another. Yet all of you continued to provide essential postal services to the public admirably and with dedication. The USPS also got a new Postmaster General who implemented changes and policies that severely degraded the services we provide. But you were not deterred; you still worked hard for the public.

The public recognized us for our dedicated work and stood up against the degrading of the service we provide and of our jobs. If we were all in the same room, I would ask you to give yourselves a round of applause for what you have done during the pandemic and the fight to protect the people's Post Office!

With Postmaster General DeJoy taking the reins of the USPS, the people saw their service degraded and the mail slowed down. We work hard to get all the mail out every day, but PMG DeJoy put policies and procedures into place without understanding how we do our jobs and how the mail is processed, moved and delivered. PMG DeJoy also made these changes without consulting with the unions or getting any feedback on how the changes could impact our collective bargaining agreement with the USPS. Let us be clear – not a single decision he makes or policy he implements can usurp the tenets of our contract.

For example, overtime. All of us know that overtime was reduced. We also know that no manager or supervisor in the Postal Service would make such a decision without a higher directive – in this case from the PMG's office. Just because he said "no overtime" does not mean the Post Office can ignore the overtime pecking orders of our LMOUs or Article 8. It does not mean that the Postal Service can ignore and violate the employee classification limitations of Article 7 and the various Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) that are in place as part of the collective bargaining process.

In some locations where overtime was reduced, the USPS started using temporary assistants in all crafts in lieu of overtime, even if there were not COVID-19 related absences. The contract does not allow for this! The overtime desired list (OTDL) still must be used before these assistants are used and COVID-19 absences must be occurring. PSEs cannot work more than 8 hours in day without using the OTDL, and PSE caps still cannot be exceeded. No matter the PMG's "cost cutting, post office saving" policies – the contract cannot be violated.

We all must watch for violations and insist the contract be enforced. Grievances must continue to be filed and postal management, including the PMG, must be held accountable!

## New Local Memorandum Of Understanding For Members At Large

In the last few months, the Local Memorandum of Understanding for Offices Without a Local Union Structure was finalized and signed. This LMOU provides significant rights to

those employees whose offices are not represented by a local – often known as Members At Large.

The LMOU is especially helpful regarding leave. For example, it guarantees at least one person off on annual leave per APWU craft, per week (excluding December).

This is especially important if management tries to deny leave because the postmaster of the small office is also on leave. The LMOU requires that requests for incidental leave be acted upon within 72 hours. If not, the leave

is considered approved. The LMOU also defines a specific pecking order for backfilling of bargaining unit employees on leave. The LMOU can be found on the APWU website under "Frequently Requested Resources" on the "For Locals" tab.

The 2018-2021 Collective Bargaining Agreement is also now available on both the website as well as in print form. Copies of the spiral bound book can be purchased on apwu.org through the "APWU Store" link. Register to vote and then do it! Solidarity!

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# Wow, How About That Dow?



Jim Hightower is a national radio commentator, writer, public speaker, and author of the book, *Swim Against The Current: Even A Dead Fish Can Go With The Flow*. Hightower has spent three decades battling the Powers That Be on behalf of the Powers That Ought To Be – consumers, working families, environmentalists, small businesses, and just-plain-folks.

by Jim Hightower

The Dow-Jones Average of corporate stock prices, I mean – the one economic indicator that our nation's establishment watches religiously.

They're like ancient priests watching a burbling, hissing volcano to determine if the gods are pleased or angry.

Bizarrely, despite the pandemic recession that's knocking down millions of Americans, corporate profits are soaring. So, believers in the infallibility of the Dow exclaim that these are boom times, with the economy showering shareholder wealth on us like manna from heaven!

But most Americans are asking: A boom for whom? America's real economy is a shambles. Joblessness is still above 10 percent, with a tsunami of new firings coming as airlines, retail chains, the restaurant industry, state and local governments, Main Street businesses, and so many more

are now collapsing right in front of us.

Forget the Dow-Jones Average, we need policymakers who give a damn about the Doug Jones Average – how are Doug and Desiree doing? Telling them about the booming stock market is stupid, for the Jones don't share in that wealth. In fact, the number of Americans who own even one share of corporate stock has plummeted in the past two decades as the rich and superrich have grabbed the bulk of our nation's wealth. Today, nearly 90 percent of all stocks are in the hands of

the richest 10 percent of Americans.

Yet, the menagerie of laissezfairyland ideologues and lawmakers now in charge of our economic policy continue genuflecting to the Dow, insisting that the price of stock equates to a high standard of living for all. As Republican Senator Pat Toomey recently proclaimed, "Life is better today than it ever has been for the majority of the American people."

His proof? Toomey pointed to the fact that cars now come equipped with seat warmers.

(via [www.otherwords.org](http://www.otherwords.org))

## Harassment Is Against The Law

by Joyce B. Robinson,  
National APWU Research &  
Education Director

Harassment is a form of employment discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, (ADEA), and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, (ADA). The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) defines harassment as "unwelcome conduct that is based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. Harassment becomes unlawful where: 1) Enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or 2) The conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive."

### Offensive Conduct

To be unlawful, the conduct must "create a work environment that would be intimidating, hostile, or offensive to reasonable people." The EEOC's examples of offensive conduct include "offensive jokes, slurs, epithets



or name calling, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, ridicule or mockery, insults or putdowns, offensive objects or pictures and interference with work performance."

### Employer Liability For Harassment

The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, an agent of the employer, a co-worker, or a postal customer. The victim does not have to be the person harassed, but can be anyone affected by the of-

fensive conduct. The Postal Service is liable for harassment by a supervisor that results in a negative employment action such as termination, failure to promote or hire, loss of wages and/or when the supervisor's harassment results in a hostile work environment and the Postal Service did nothing to prevent and promptly correct the harassing behavior.

The Postal Service will also be liable for harassment by employees or non-employees over whom it has control (e.g., independent contractors or customers on the premises), if it knew, or should have known about the harassment and failed to take prompt and appropriate corrective action.

### What To Do If You Are Harassed?

- If you are offended by the conduct of a manager or another employee:
- Tell the harasser that their behavior is unwelcome and object verbally.
- If the harassment does not stop, talk to your shop steward or contact another local union officer.
- Report the incident(s) to a supervisor, manager, or postmaster.

- Keep a diary at home of incidents, dates, times, places, behavior, what was said and of all witnesses.

- Tell friends, family and co-workers about the harassment.
- If the supervisor, manager or postmaster is doing the harassing, file a grievance and an EEO Complaint.
- Insist that the "proposed solution" does not adversely affect you. Insist that the harasser be the one who is inconvenienced or moved.

### What If It Does Not Stop?

Harassment is a form of employment discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Article 2, Section 1, of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the USPS and APWU. The EEOC's anti-discrimination laws prohibit harassment against individuals in retaliation for filing a discrimination charge, testifying, or participating in an investigation, proceeding, or lawsuit or opposing employment practices that they reasonably believe discriminate against individuals.

If the problem cannot be resolved, file a grievance against management to document that the Postal Service knew about the harassment and was given an opportunity to stop it. In addition, file an EEOC complaint within 45 days of the incident by calling 1-888-336-8777. If the alleged harasser's behavior included assault and battery or rape, file criminal charges with the police and consult an attorney. Also, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to give employees emotional support for problems that may result from being harassed. Contact the EAP at 1-800-327-4968.

**References:** EEOC's Harassment webpage ([eeoc.gov/harassment](http://eeoc.gov/harassment)) and the USPS Policy on Workplace Harassment.

