

SOLIDARITY

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

April, 2021

Using The JCIM To Settle Disputes

by Vance Zimmerman,
National APWU
Industrial Relations Director

House Passes the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

On February 27th, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 1319, the “American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.” This bill promises to help stabilize communities across the country and provide emergency assistance to the working class. If passed in the Senate and signed into law by the President, the \$1.9 trillion package will provide workers long-overdue and much-needed relief they deserve.

Many workers had hoped that the previous package which passed in December would have extended the leave provided in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). Unfortunately, the FFCRA paid leave was not included in the December package and expired on December 31st. As your paid leave dwindled, Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman collaborated with the Legislative Department, and we shared your stories with members of Congress and built support for a legislative solution. After intense advocacy, we were able to secure several postal worker provisions in the House’s American Rescue Plan Act of 2021:

- Emergency paid leave. The pandemic has exacerbated many

continued on page 2

Finalizing all the documentation around a contract is a long process. For the 2018-2021 contract, the APWU and the USPS first had to agree on the production of the written contract. This included agreeing to the finest details like the color of the cover, the font, and to use the cliché, making sure that every “i” was dotted and “t” was crossed.

It does not end there. Next was finalizing the Joint Contract Interpretation Manual (JCIM). This past December, the text of the JCIM was finalized and printed. I want to thank all of the national officers who helped update the new version.

Each state and local president was sent complimentary copies for their local. Additional copies can be purchased from the APWU store. You can also download a copy of the bookmarked JCIM and other important documents from this page: apwu.org/contract-informationand-frequently-used-resources.

The JCIM is the manual that should be used by both parties when attempting to settle disputes, whether in the grievance process or before it becomes necessary to file a grievance. The JCIM addresses various contract subjects. Not all contract issues are addressed; rather it is a collection of agreed-upon interpretations that have been made over decades of collective bargaining. Whether those interpretations have been made by simple discussion and agreement,

interpreted by a national arbitrator in arbitration proceedings, agreed upon in memoranda of understanding or through dispute settlements, the JCIM is the final word on issues printed in the booklet for all levels of the grievance process.

The purpose of the JCIM is stated at the beginning of the manual:

When a dispute arises, the parties should first go to the JCIM to determine if the issue in disputes is addressed. If it is, the parties are required to resolve the dispute in accordance with this manual. If the parties effectively use and consult the JCIM, many disputes can be settled early on in the grievance/arbitration process.

Some of the changes that were made in the 2020 version of the JCIM include the following:

- Language updated in Article 8 to reflect PSE overtime application in accordance with the Workforce Benefits Fund settlement.
- Language added on the citing of previous discipline issued prior to a career conversion.
- In Article 26 – added items to the authorized Uniform and Work Clothes Programs and updated PSE uniform allowance.
- In Article 37, updated Mutual Exchange language as well as multiple questions and answers.
- In Article 38, multiple sections were updated, including the Filling of

Maintenance Vacancies pecking order.

- In Article 39, added new language in multiple sections and updated Question No. 23 on retreat rights.

These are just a few of the updates. All of the updates are listed at the beginning of the JCIM in the “Summary of Changes” table on pages I-IV.

Article 16 Changes

One change that is of particular note was the change to Article 16. Article 16 covers the procedure the USPS must follow when disciplining an employee. The Postal Service had taken a position in the field that when a PSE was converted to career status that any previous discipline followed them. Management was citing discipline PSEs had been issued as being “progressive” for removals that newly converted career employees were subsequently issued. Throughout the country, local stewards and officers had argued that this discipline should not follow PSEs into career status. Many of these cases went to arbitration where arbitrators were ruling that citing this previous discipline was improper. With rulings mounting against them, the Postal Service agreed to put language in the JCIM that PSE discipline would not follow new career employees.

If not for the hard work of our front-line stewards, officers, NBAs, and arbitration advocates this change may not have been added to the JCIM.

Solidarity!

Doing Too Little In This Moment Of Crisis Will Come Back To Haunt The U.S. Economy

by Thea M. Lee

The \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan (ARP) is essential to a robust and

equitable recovery. The risk of doing too little is far greater than the risk of doing too much, and the American Rescue Plan meets the scale of the crisis.

The overall size and components of the ARP have been carefully studied and considered. Given the balance of risks facing the economy and the danger of delay, passing the plan at its current scale and composition is the most prudent thing policymakers can do to ensure a rapid and fair recovery. Clearly, this is necessary.

As the Senate debates what belongs in the final relief bill this week, policymakers must not shortchange aid to state and local governments, which is

essential to a robust recovery. While projected state and local revenue shortfalls are shrinking from the horrifyingly large forecasts of last year, fiscal stresses remain intense, driven by demands on state and local spending that have increased because the COVID-19 economic pain has been concentrated among low-wage workers. This state and local aid is the best and most immediate way to finance public investments in education and safety net programs. Scaling back this aid would make our economy, and the people in it, worse off. Further, we should extend pandemic unemployment provisions to October 3 so relief does not expire in August while Congress is in recess.

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House Passes The American Rescue Plan Act Of 2021

continued from page 1

workers' need for paid leave, whether they have fallen ill, been exposed to COVID or have increased need to care for their family. This bill creates a fund for federal agencies, including the Postal Service, to extend additional paid leave under certain conditions for workers to take time off to for COVID-19-related leave.

- **Workers Compensation.** This bill will improve the process for COVID related workers compensation claims. Workers who contract COVID-19 will be assumed to have contracted the illness on the job, streamlining the workers' compensation claims process from.

In addition, individuals who filed COVID-19 related claims and were denied will be able to resubmit them.

- **Direct cash assistance.** The bill provides each qualifying citizen with a \$1,400 stimulus payment.

- **Raising the federal minimum wage** to \$15 per hour.

- **State and local aid** – The bill will also provide billions in aid to state and local governments to help meet growing public service needs and to help safely reopen schools and other critical services.

Now that this bill has passed the House, it has been sent to the Senate for deliberation. During this process, APWU will continue to fight off at-

tempts to weaken the bill or remove worker protections.

"I would like to thank the Chairwoman of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, Carolyn Maloney, and the House Education and Labor Committee Chairman Bobby Scott for their leadership and hearing our needs and taking action to address them," commented Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard. "Once this bill becomes law, our members can help slow the spread of COVID-19 by staying home when they are sick or take leave to care for a sick loved one, with fewer worries about how to make ends meet."

"This positive step shows what we can accomplish when we all work together," said APWU National President Mark Dimondstein. "Director Beard has shared your stories with members of Congress and we fought successfully to ensure these pro-worker provisions in the bill."

In future legislation, we will continue to work collectively to address the challenges that face our members during this pandemic. Together, we will work to ensure that the Postal Service receives the \$25 billion infrastructure funding and emergency COVID-19 funding it needs to continue serving the American people.



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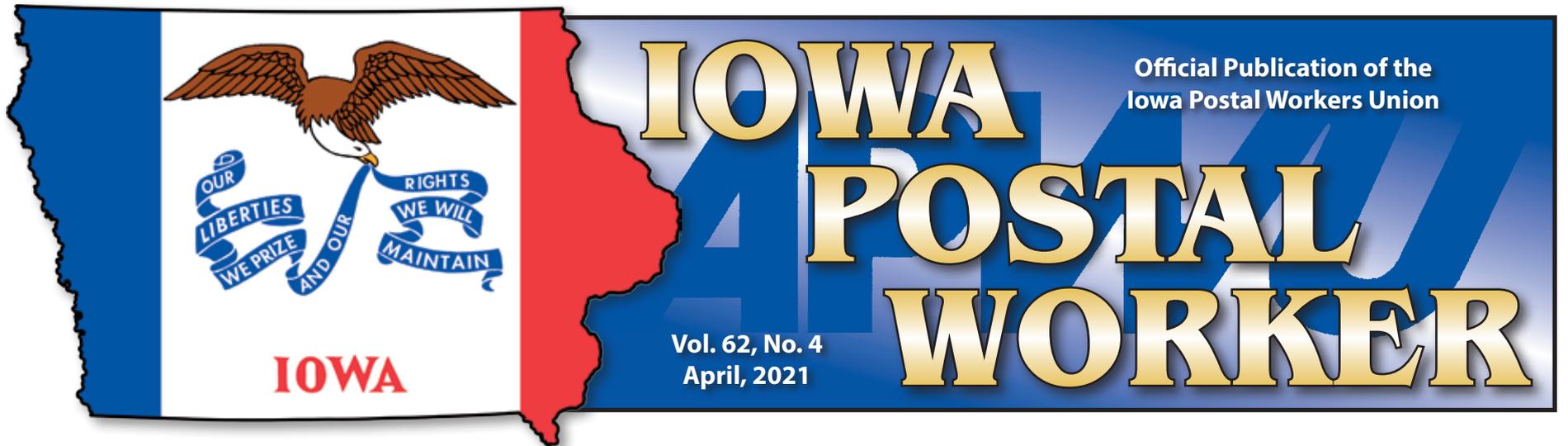
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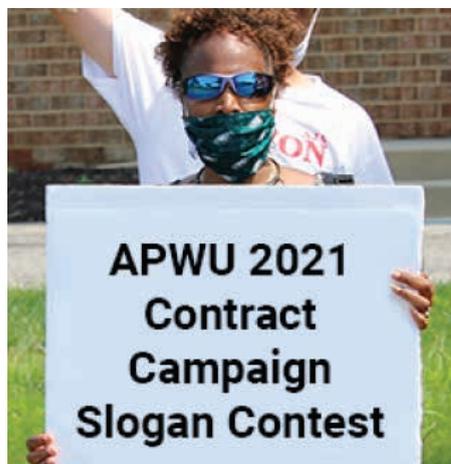


Submit A Campaign Slogan

APWU National is again putting out the call to active members and retirees to submit slogan ideas for the 2021 Contract Campaign.

The last year was historic for the country and historic for postal workers. We reminded our community members about our essential services and the need for reliable, public postal services.

Throughout the pandemic, postal workers courageously fulfilled our mission to 'bind the nation together.' From vital medicines to ecom-



merce and business mail, from distant greetings and gifts, from census forms to 65 million mail-in ballots, postal workers proved once again that we are essential to every person and community across the country.

Now is the time to create a slogan for our contract negotiations for good wages, strong benefits, and safe workplaces that incorporates our essential work and our tremendous community support.

CONTEST RULES:

Open to all active and retiree APWU members and auxiliary members.

Must be submitted no later than April 20, 2021 (exactly five months before our contract expires)!

Enter as many times as you wish by filling out this online form. Ideas can also be submitted by mail in a

continued on page 10

Window Clings 6" X 6"



USA and union made

A great way to show your support for the United States Postal Service. They are a 6X6 cling that can be placed in a car or house window and will remove easily. If you need larger quantities, you can contact Treasurer Bonnie Sevre for pricing details. bsevre@apwuauxiliary.org include shipping

Prices include shipping

Item	Price	Quantity	Total	Total Price
1 Cling	\$2.00			
3 Clings	\$5.00			
10 Clings	\$15.00			
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100 Clings	\$140.00			
101+	Call for Pricing	(612) 788-3440		
		Totals		

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Address

City State Zip

Make checks payable to: Auxiliary to the APWU

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2836 Highway 88

Minneapolis MN 55418

— Imperfect Storm —

by Mark Dimondstein,
National APWU President

The mail system is in chaos. Postal workers are tired and frustrated. Customers are angry.

Despite the courageous efforts, hard work and dedication of postal workers throughout this dangerous pandemic, service has deteriorated to levels never seen in modern times. On-time first class mail delivery has fallen below 50 percent in many areas. Medicines, greeting cards, holiday gifts and vital correspondence are arriving late, not by days, but by weeks.

Several factors have created such an “imperfect storm.” The Postal Service suffers from chronic understaffing. COVID-19 pressures have exacerbated staffing issues, as has large turnover of the workforce. Packages have reached record volumes. Congress has still not resolved the manufactured postal financial crisis created by the absurd 2006 mandate to pre-fund retiree health benefits.

One can debate how much the arrival of PMG Louis DeJoy has led to this debacle with the mail.

Certainly, some problems were inherited, others are results of management policies. We certainly welcomed the recent positive step of increasing career staffing in mail processing.

But there is no argument that DeJoy is the captain of the ship that is sinking on his watch. He must be held fully accountable by the Postal Board of Governors, elected officials and the public for the delays, loss of revenue and business, and for breaking the bond of trust between the people and the public Postal Service.

The Postal Board of Governors is responsible for setting the policy and direction of the Postal Service. The Board, not the U.S. President, hires, fires and directs the PMG.

The APWU initiated a petition campaign urging President Biden to quickly nominate strong postal advocates to the four vacant Board positions. More than 400,000 signatures, many from members like you, were recently presented to the White House.

These are critical appointments. We have submitted recommenda-

tions for passionate pro-worker, pro-postal nominees to the Biden administration. A strong Board can go a long way to holding the current postal leadership accountable to the needs of the people and the requirement of the law that promises “prompt, reliable and efficient” services.

We can influence the direction of the Postal Service in other ways, as well.

National negotiations for a new union contract (collective bargaining agreement) are around the corner. Our current contract expires September 20, 2021 and official negotiations commence in June. We will be dealing with many issues critical to postal workers – including wages, COLA, job security and safety. It is also a great opportunity to “bargain for the common good.”

We have a role to play in defense of the people and their right to robust public postal services. Issues including staffing, expanded services such as financial services, reducing turnover in the workforce and increasing hours of retail operations can all be discussed and bar-

gained with management. We plan to do so.

Others have helped light the way of progress through unity between unions and the needs of the people. Karen Lewis, the outstanding former leader of the Chicago Teachers Union, recently passed away after a long illness. Her passing is a huge loss for the labor movement. A major part of her wonderful legacy was positioning the union on the side of parents and students – bargaining for smaller class room sizes, more social workers and keeping neighborhood schools open. In turn, parents and students stood with the workers. Unity between the workers and the community has been key to their union’s success in winning better public schools and education, along with better working conditions.

The only way that postal privatizers can succeed is to break the tremendous bond between the people and their Post Office. The union will continue to defend and build this bond as it is the key to ensuring good jobs and vibrant public Postal Service for generations to come.

COVID-19 Spotlights The Need To Continue The Fight For Safety And Health

Every year on April 28, workers come together for Workers Memorial Day to remember those who have died, been injured, or contracted an occupational disease at work. The memorial day is on the anniversary of April 28, 1971, when the Occupational Safety and Health Act became effective and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) was formed.

In a normal year, a worker is killed on the job every seven seconds. In particular, postal workers have some of the most dangerous jobs in government service. In the last year, the COVID-19 pandemic has been an unprecedented disaster for working people in the country, including postal workers.

Over 500,000 people have died of COVID-19 in the United States. Recent studies show that essential workers outside health care are 20 percent more likely to die from COVID-19 than other workers. Tens of thousands of postal workers have been forced to quarantine, and over 150 have died.

Other essential workers have also borne much of the brunt of the pandemic as they kept vital services running. Instead of protecting their workers, too many employers sacrificed their employees’ health and safety in



the name of the economy. COVID-19 tore through meatpacking plants, long-term care facilities, kitchens, Amazon warehouses, and countless other workplaces across the country, while workers were left without proper PPE and the White House took a ‘hands off’ approach to worker safety.

As of January, At least 239 meatpacking workers died and 45,000 had contracted the coronavirus since the

start of the pandemic, according to a USA Today report. Some employers did not report these deaths to OSHA.

In New York City alone, 136 transit workers had died of COVID-19 by the end of January.

At Amazon, which has made record profits during the pandemic, nearly 20,000 workers were reported to have contracted COVID-19 by October 2020. When employees protest-

ed the company’s poor safety policies, Amazon cracked down, firing workers for speaking out and protesting for safe workplaces. New York Attorney General Letitia James brought a lawsuit against the company in February, suing Amazon for not properly conducting contact tracing and improving ventilation in its facilities in the state, as well as illegally firing a worker at its Staten Island warehouse for whistleblowing about its lack of safety.

OSHA Failed to Protect Workers During the Pandemic

President Trump’s OSHA failed workers during the pandemic, making many safety recommendations voluntary for employers and allowing them to determine whether a death from COVID-19 was workplace-related. Workers were forced to choose between putting food on the table and keeping themselves and their families safe during the pandemic. Fortunately, the Biden administration has made worker safety a priority, and important changes have been made on the federal level to protect workers across the country.

Though this progress is welcomed,
continued on page 7



Point In Time

by Mark Sarcone, Editor/
Legislative Director

Postal reform is coming. It won't be easy, but it's coming.

Back in the 1980's the band The Police had a song that started out like this:

Too much information running through my brain

Too much information driving me insane

Too much information running through my brain

Too much information driving me insane

Considering all that has been going on, just in the postal legislative world, not to mention the cruel and draconian measures being passed in the Iowa Legislature, including restrictions on *voting*, there's a lot of information to keep up on.

Almost 10 months ago, Postmaster General Louis DeJoy was installed as the head of the U.S. Postal Service in the midst of a crippling pandemic and on the eve of the most critical election of our lives. A controversial selection himself, he has instituted radical changes that he believes will return the postal service to sustainability. Most recently, he has implemented an organizational shakeup, including the abolishment of the Hawkeye District. Hawkeye District has been folded into the adjoining states of Nebraska and South Dakota, with the western part of Illinois removed. It's hard to keep up with all of the organizational changes. Personally, it's not the union's concern what management does in that regard until the contract is violated. Then, we got concerns.

Fortunately, it has not come to that yet and DeJoy even said in his testimony before the House Oversight and Reform Committee in February, that his proposals can be implemented "while sustaining and improving our valued benefits to our employees." What exactly does he mean by "valued?" The proof will be in the pudding and by pudding, I mean the 10-year business plan "Delivering for America" that was released literally as this article was going to the printer. He said he will continue to support maintaining a two-day delivery standard for some mail but said some mail currently in that category would be slowed and less of it would use air transportation.

The essence of this proposal did not sit well with Representative, Stephen Lynch (D-MA). "If the business plan for the postal service is to deliver an inferior product, and we're in competition with FedEx, and UPS and Amazon, that spells trouble. That sounds to me like we are going into a downward spiral."

De Joy said he does support the USPS Fairness Act, currently in committee in both chambers. He said he believes the "status quo" is unsustainable.

De Joy later appeared, via Zoom, before the House Financial Services and General Government (Committee on Appropriations) in early March where he gave himself an "A" for effort when asked how he would grade himself? Really, an A?! When our service standards have turned into a dumpster fire? When he tried to lower delivery standards by delaying trucks, removing mail processing machines, and drop boxes last summer in the run-up to the elections—only to be called out on it. An A? Really? I'd like to think he truly has the postal service's true mission at heart, but talk is cheap. Its actions that matter.

The good news. DeJoy cannot, legally, go about this alone. When postal reform legislation is passed and signed into law, the USPS would have to set annual performance goals to meet delivery service standards. The Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) would be charged with making sure that the post office is in compliance. If the postal service fails to meet these goals, management would have to draw up a new plan to do so or adjust the service windows and this plan would have to be approved by the PRC.

Changing delivery standards gives me pause. Meaning, DeJoy, with the Board of Governors blessing, could decide to make the postal service lean and mean. By lean and mean, I mean plant consolidations, small offices closed, and reduction in hours in other small offices, more automation, and fewer bids. Hence, I believe that since we won't need to meet such stringent delivery standards, customers will take their business elsewhere as DeJoy also plans to raise prices on some mail, too. The Universal Service Obligation won't go

anywhere but the customers, who rely on it, *will*. Especially, when you jack up your prices and are no longer competitive. He will force the market to shift to other delivery services. A horrible idea now given that you can look out your front window and see an Amazon delivery van most any day. I believe that parts of this 10-year business plan will conflict with postal reform legislation, expected to be passed in to law sometime this year. Stay tuned. This thing is just getting heated up.

In the wake of DeJoy's testimony in both February and March, Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA), Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Government Operations, Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Chairman of the House Ways & Means Subcommittee on Trade, and Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ), Chairman of the House Ways & Means Subcommittee on Oversight, led over 50 of their colleagues in writing to President Joe Biden to urge him to immediately **remove and replace** the six current members of the Postal Service Board of Governors, according to the U.S. House website.

There's been pressure on Biden to just have DeJoy removed. While that would be nice, it's beyond Biden's authority. However, it's hoped that with Biden's three nominees to the Board of Governors put forth, that with a board consisting of majority Democrats, they will keep DeJoy, and his privatizing ways, in check. It's generally believed that Biden wants to approach this in a bipartisan manner if he can. However, if DeJoy continues to run amok, the board could . . . and should, in my opinion, sack him!

In the meantime, we can put pressure on our Senators to sign on as co-sponsors to S. 145, the USPS Fairness Act. This Act would remove the onerous obligation for the USPS to pay \$5.5 billion per year for 10 years for future retirees' healthcare. You can reach Senator Chuck Grassley at 202-224-3744 and Senator Joni Ernst at 202-224-3254. As of this writing, Congresswomen Cindy Axne from Iowa's Third District and Mariannette Miller-Meeks, from Iowa's Second District have signed on as co-sponsors to H.R.

continued on page 6

2021 DMI Area Local Meeting Schedule

Meetings held @ 1200 E. Euclid Ave.
Email MJBates2016@gmail.com to attend via Zoom

April 21st	7:00 PM	October 2nd	10:00 AM
May 19th	7:00 PM	October 20th	7:00 PM
June 5th	10:00 AM	November 6th	10:00 AM
July 21st	7:00 PM	November 17th	7:00 PM
August 7th	10:00 AM	December 4th	10:00 AM
September 15th	7:00 PM		



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Point In Time

continued from page 5

695, the companion bill to S. 145. You can reach House Representatives Ashley Hinson at 202-225-2911 and Randy Feenstra at 202-225-4426 and ask them to sign on as well. It's imperative that we get this legislation through without much delay. I believe both bills will have some bipartisan support as the postal service is, truly, a nonpartisan facet of our government.

Most likely, there's going to be a tradeoff (isn't there always?) for passage of this legislation in both the House and Senate. It's called Medicare Integration. When postal employees retire or are still working and are enrolled in Medicare at 65 or older, their Medicare coverage becomes their primary health coverage and their FEHB plans become their secondary health coverage. Most private sector employers — and many state and local governments — that provide retiree health care to their employees require them to enroll in Medicare parts A and B.

While current postal retirees are not required to enroll in Medicare when they become eligible at age 65, the majority of retirees do so voluntarily. In fact, three out of four retirees sign up for Medicare Part B because they determine that having both Medicare and an FEHB plan provides a better value for their out-of-pocket medical costs.

Current legislative proposals being discussed in Congress would require that the Postal Service's FEHB plans integrate with Medicare. If this Medicare integration is enacted, these proposals would be similar to what occurs in the private sector and at the state and local government levels. By the way, this proposal, as part of postal reform legislation, has support from all stakeholders, including the unions. I believe this is a case of the "don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good" situation.

The kicker is that postal employees would no longer be eligible for an FEHB plan but only health insurance geared toward postal employees. I believe this is another way DeJoy can set the table for the USPS moving toward privatization. Just another way to stick it to the working class!!!

Where's Our COVID-19 VACCINES????

Many of you might be asking: Where's our COVID-19 vaccine that we thought we would be getting in February!!!! Good question. It's been reported that the postal service did make arrangements to get all postal employees, nationwide, vaccinated. However, in the end, it was left to each state

governor and departments of health to administer the vaccines and, at least in Iowa, it was determined by Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds, in February, that postal workers did not qualify for tier 1b, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Maybe they think we are not at high risk. Wrong! We work a lot of the time in close quarters in our plants, associate offices, and stations. Often, some of our co-workers choose not to wear a mask, leaving everyone else who chooses to wear a mask with a greater chance of contracting the coronavirus. We've had over 800 positive, reported cases of COVID-19 in the Hawkeye District alone in the past year!

Further, our clerks working at the windows are exposed to a more diverse population on a daily basis as they interact with postal customers. Meanwhile, I personally know of people who are not considered "essential" employees who have had one or both jobs by mid-March. I get it that everyone wants this pandemic to be over and they're all (those that want to be vaccinated, that is) rushing out to get their jab but it seems like we are now left to fend for ourselves and fight for whatever vaccine is available "hunger games" style in each of our individual states. So much for being "essential."

As of this writing, Reynolds has an-

nounced that vaccines should be available to anyone in Iowa by April 5th and Biden has stated that by May 1st, anyone who wants a shot should be able to get one. It's been a long, dark, cold COVID winter. We all want it to be over ASAP. At least Spring is here. Happy Spring!

Stay. In. The. Know!!!

Up-to-the-minute information about postal reform legislation, the status of the Postal Board of Governors, the Postmaster General, the status of legislation moving through the Iowa Statehouse and Congress, COVID-19, and much, much more can be yours if you follow us on our social media platforms. You can like our Facebook page at: APWU Des Moines Iowa and follow us on Twitter at: APWU Local 44 Des Moines Iowa (@DMIAPWU). Further, I would highly recommend that you join (by invite only) the Facebook page: Rank and File Postal Organizers. They have about 100 members and are looking to grow their membership with more current postal employees who want to increase their activism. Most of their members are retired but some are active, and they meet via Zoom each Sunday at 7 p.m., Central Daylight Time.

Until next time . . . In Solidarity.

"A vote is a kind of prayer about the world."

— U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock

From USPS HQ – Effective March 12, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act (Act) provides employees with up to 600 hours of paid Emergency Federal Employee Leave (EFEL). This leave is available to employees beginning on March 12, 2021, and continuing through September 30, 2021—or until the funding established in the Emergency Federal Employee Leave Fund (Fund) for reimbursement is exhausted. The leave is available to eligible employees who are unable to work due to one of eight qualifying reasons as summarized in the chart below:

Emergency Federal Employee Leave	
Qualifying Reasons	Leave Eligibility
<p>An employee is entitled to take EFEL related to COVID-19 if the employee is unable to work because the employee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19. has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19. is caring for an individual who is subject to such an order as in (1) or has been so advised as in (2). is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis. is caring for the employee's son or daughter if the school or place of care of the son or daughter has been closed, requires or makes optional a virtual learning instruction model, requires or makes optional a hybrid of in-person and virtual learning instruction models, or if the child care provider of the son or daughter is unavailable, due to COVID-19 precautions. is experiencing any other substantially similar condition. is caring for a family member with a mental or physical disability or who is 55 years of age or older and incapable of self-care, without regard to whether another individual other than the employee is available to care for such family member, if the place of care for such family member is closed or the direct care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19. is obtaining immunization (vaccination) related to COVID-19 or is recovering from any injury, disability, illness, or condition related to such immunization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All career and non-career employees, regardless of tenure, are immediately eligible for EFEL. Full-time Employees can receive up to 600 hours of paid EFEL, capped at \$2,800 per pay period. Part-time Employees can receive up to the proportional equivalent of 600 hours, capped at a proportional equivalent of \$2,800 per pay period.
	Other Considerations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EFEL does not count as creditable service toward an employee's retirement benefits. Employees cannot contribute to Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) while on EFEL.

We Need You!

by Janice Gillespie,
Legislative Aide-Editor
National Auxiliary APWU

The Auxiliary to the APWU is an organization that consists of APWU members, retirees, and family and friends of both. It costs very little to join, but the rewards are huge. As you can imagine, the pandemic has affected us, but before asking for help, let me explain what the Auxiliary is and what its members do.

Auxiliary members support the APWU by preparing mailings and helping with marches, phone calls, and letter writing. They host parties, luncheons, and picnics. Their focus is on assisting the union, advocating for favorable union legislation, and helping with human and public relations. Joining the Auxiliary allows members to have fun while doing some good for the APWU and their communities.

The National APWU has an executive board made up of four General Officers and coordinators representing seven districts across the US. Many Auxiliary members attend conferences and conventions to aid the APWU by

making preparations, taking registrations, and staffing booths. The National convention for the Auxiliary coincides with the APWU and is an excellent opportunity to make friends and gain contacts. They have awards programs, a scholarship fund, and just since 2019 have raised over \$51,000 for the Fisher House project. They are there to assist and guide local and state chapters in their endeavors to make a difference.

We need to grow our state Auxiliary here in Iowa. The lack of in-person gatherings due to Covid-19 has made recruiting new members difficult. We hope to incorporate zoom meetings for Iowa members even after it is safe to get together. We did have a State convention via zoom last October with elections. The current officers are new in their positions and cannot build this chapter by themselves. The foundation is there, but an expansion is needed.

The DMI local, under the leadership of Christine Sarcone, is very successful. Chris started from scratch and has been an inspiration to all. Over the years, she has been instrumental in

collecting and delivering clothing and toiletries for the Hawthorn Hill Women's Shelter, organizing the Angel Tree Christmas drive, arranging the retiree's luncheons, and so much more.

Unfortunately, it is time for her and a few other officers to move on, leaving behind a proud legacy. Their shoes would be hard to fill if not for the groundwork they have established. We desperately need to fill these openings to keep the local intact. There are no qualifications or experience required.

Working union members may feel that they haven't the time to give, but what about spouses, children, siblings, parents? APWU members' relatives gain a better understanding of the Postal Service and its demands on employees when they join the Auxiliary. An Auxiliary membership does not require a lot of time or work. We ask that each person give what they can. Some people can make something for one luncheon a year or donate a few hours a month to sort clothing or help with a mailing. If that is what you have to give, we will

welcome you with open arms. Volunteering will not obligate anyone to do more than they are capable. Yes, we need leaders also — activists who are passionate about the APWU and their communities. Those who are willing and able to learn the ropes by shadowing the current officers. Young and old alike with fresh eyes and ideas.

The yearly membership is minimal at \$5.00 for the National and \$5.00 for the state, and \$5.00 for the DMI local. If you are in the Des Moines area, you will pay \$15.00 for a year. You will receive the bi-monthly "News and Views" newsletter, join our bi-monthly educational zip-line meetings, receive the Newsflash periodically and have the chance to go to conferences and conventions.

After receiving a personal invitation, I became involved in the Auxiliary, so this is our invitation to each of you and your family members. Please join us.

The Auxiliary is a group of like-minded individuals who want to make a difference and form new friendships. It is camaraderie at its finest.

Postal Workers Are Essential Workers

by Sharyn M. Stone,
Central Regional Coordinator

Moving forward into 2021, we can be amazed and be proud of how we persevered and managed to get through the past year of COVID-19 battered but unbowed. The work of representation did not stop, but the way we got the work done had to be identified and modified. Local, state, regional, and national levels of APWU are working together to serve the membership to the fullest extent necessary. You can see some of the vital union business being conducted through MOUs and bulletins. Our national officers continue to work tirelessly to stay on top of all relevant issues and ensure that necessary information is sent out.

In this new world, where everything that can be done virtually is online for the safety of all involved, we use Zoom as a means to communicate with each other, do trainings, conduct union meetings and discuss issues.

We have also utilized Zoom to assist locals with issues including a means to address constitutional issues and have timely elections in accordance with local/state and our national constitutions. With this tool we have extensively educated, informed and stayed in touch with the membership.

I look forward to continuing the work with our locals and our officers at every level to maintain representation and move the union forward.

Safety

It is imperative that all members know their rights and assert them, especially your right to representation and the right to be safe.

Wearing a mask and maintaining social distancing is not always easy, but it is always necessary. We are still in the troughs of COVID-19. We have to make safety a priority, especially now. Continue to mask up and stand up for safe jobs while maintaining social distancing. We're not just essential workers; for

the most part there are not enough employees to replace us. Please do everything you have to do to protect yourself, which also protects your loved ones and family.

Now that we have a COVID-19 vaccine, hopefully state/local health authorities will prioritize vaccinating essential postal employees.

Essential workers: we get the job done!

We need everyone to get involved. There are still many opportunities for all our members to get active and

support our organization. You do not have to be a national, state, or local officer to be involved. Members are our most important asset. Volunteer for a committee or a single event, or just attend a local meeting. My first local position was Entertainment Committee member. We all have something to contribute.

*Get up, Stand up
Stand up for your rights
Get up, Stand up
Don't Give up the fight*
— Bob Marley

COVID-19 Spotlights The Need To Continue The Fight For Safety And Health

continued from page 5
we must continue to demand that OSHA aggressively enforce workplace health and safety regulations, and hold employers accountable for unsafe working conditions.

"The APWU's top priority is keeping postal workers safe. Management's priority must be the same," said Industrial Relations Director Vance Zimmerman. "As we honor the struggles of our fellow workers during this difficult year, we must continue to demand management honor their responsibility to us each and every day."

On April 28, we will remember our fellow workers who have been hurt or died on the job, and recommit ourselves to the fight for safe jobs and workplaces through the pandemic and beyond. Mark your calendars and start speaking to your local representatives about what your local/

state union or retiree chapter can do to mark the day.

"As essential workers, postal workers have deeply felt the impact of COVID-19 in the workplace," said President Dimondstein. "On every Workers

Memorial Day, we 'remember the dead, and fight like hell for the living.' This year has shown just how important that fight still is."

Resources: khn.org/news/tag/lost-on-the-frontline/



**DMI-APWU
AUXILIARY OFFICERS**

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

APWU Statement On The Release Of The Postal Service's 10-Year Plan

On March 23, Postal Service management issued a 10-year plan they are calling Delivering for America. The plan lays out a number of steps management hopes to take to bridge the projected \$160 billion financial shortfall projected over the next ten years. There are elements of this plan the APWU will support and there elements of the plan we will oppose.

For generations, postal workers and the United States Postal Service have fulfilled the postal mission of

“binding the Nation together” by providing the “prompt, reliable and efficient” services the law requires. Postal workers are justifiably proud of our commitment to service and our role in connecting every home, business and civic institution in the country.

Our experience of the past year amidst the pandemic has only underscored the essential role the Postal Service plays in every community across the country. However, the Postal Service is at a critical

uncture and the future of the Service itself, hundreds of thousands of family-sustaining postal jobs and a critical national institution, lay in the balance. The Postal Service’s finances, squeezed by more than a decade of a congressionally-manufactured crisis and a lack of much-needed investment in people, processes and equipment, are in a dire state. On-time mail delivery is at unprecedented and unacceptable low levels.

It is no exaggeration that the fu-

ture of our national treasure, the public Postal Service, will be determined by the actions of Congress, the Postal Service, postal workers and the mailing public in the months to come.

Some elements of the plan are welcome proposals which reflect the enormous dedication of postal workers and the Postal Service’s unrivaled network and its unmatched presence in communities across the country. We share management’s optimism in the Postal Service’s potential to grow new lines of business, capitalize on the booming package market, connect everyone more closely with all levels of government, and to increase and improve services offered to business and household mailers alike.

The APWU will continue to work to ensure the Postal Service succeeds in expanding and enhancing service to the public. We welcome those proposals in the plan and will also continue to advocate for other enhanced services, like expanding postal financial services.

There are parts of the plan that raise deep concerns to the APWU and our members. At a time that the public is demanding faster delivery of mail and packages, proposals that would slow the mail and reduce retail services – such as changing service standards, plant consolidations and reducing operating hours at post offices – will only have a negative effect on postal workers and the public. We will proactively engage with management, the PRC, Congress and the public to address areas of concern and defend the jobs and living standards of APWU members. As always, the APWU is united with the people of the country in our demand for prompt, reliable and universal postal services.

The APWU considers management’s introduction of the plan an opportunity to debate and discuss the future of the United States Postal Service and the jobs and livelihoods of the postal workers who make it the most trusted agency in America. We have a vision for the future of the Postal Service that shares some of the proposals in this plan, and departs from it in other areas.

Above all else, the plan underscores the urgent need for Congress to act swiftly and boldly to provide the Postal Service with critically-needed relief from the financial constraints of the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act, funding to make the Postal Service whole from COVID-related losses

Iowa Postal Workers Union Official Scholarships E.R. Stowers and Aaron Baer

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

City State Zip

SSN #

Phone

Phone

e-mail address

e-mail address

NAME OF PARENT/UNION MEMBER _____

LOCAL MEMBER OF/OR MEMBER AT LARGE _____

Office working in

I WILL GRADUATE FROM _____ ON _____

(For High School students only)

I understand that I am responsible for sending the required essay to the Iowa Postal Workers Union Treasurer by the stated deadline.

I further understand that I must attend a college or university, which meets the requirements set forth in the rules and guidelines in the coming year.

Failure to comply with these requirements will mean forfeiting the scholarship.

Applicants Signature

Parents Signature (For High School Applicants)

List any supplementary information: (Such as scholarships, honors, awards, special experiences, organizations active in, etc)

THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY LOCAL OFFICER OR IPWU TREASURER

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT _____ IS AND HAS BEEN A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING OF THE IPWU FOR THE PAST 12 MONTHS (OR IF DECEASED FOR ONE YEAR PROCEEDING DEATH)

SIGNATURE OF LOCAL PRESIDENT OR IPWU PRESIDENT/TREASURER DATE

RETURN THIS APPLICATION WITH THE REQUIRED ESSAY by June 1 TO:
IPWU Scholarships, PO Box 539. Des Moines, IA. 50302

— Job Insurance —

by Mary Sitko

Effective February 27, 2021, APWU career employees will receive a 20 cents per hour cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). Our 5th of 6 COLA's under the 2018-2021 CBA. The pay increase will appear in paychecks dated March 19, 2021 (Pay Period 06-2021). Annually, full time employee's increase will be \$416.00 and hourly rates for part-time employees will be adjusted accordingly. Cost of living Adjustments are in addition to negotiated wage increases. Post Support Employees (PSE's) will receive several general wages increases instead of COLA under the 2018 contract. PSE's will receive a 20-cent raise effective May 22, 2021.

So, imagine my surprise when I receive phone calls, texts and emails from employees asking how to resign from their Union membership. I'm told by these employees that they can't afford to pay the extra money. My response to

APWU Statement On The Release Of The Postal Service's 10-Year Plan

continued from page 8

and funding to allow the Postal Service to invest in the people and infrastructure needed to improve and expand postal services for generations to come. The last year has emphasized the vital role of reliable, speedy and universal postal services for all communities. Congress has an important role to ensure the Postal Service and postal workers have the resources needed to deliver on our promise to the public.

The American Postal Workers Union will continue to advocate for postal workers and the people of the country who rely on the essential service we proudly provide each and every day.

the member is to think of those dues as job assurance.

Union dues protect the wages and benefits you receive in your paycheck. The APWU uses union dues to negotiate with the USPS to prove we are entitled to regular wage increases, cost-of-living increases, health insurance, annual/sick leave, FMLA protection, paid holidays, no lay-off protection, pension plan, TSP (thrift savings), EAP and many other benefits regarding work place safety, uniform/work clothes allowance and due process/grievance rights.

Just as you would buy insurance to protect your house, vehicles or life, paying union dues is a small price to protect these guarantees for you and your family.

During contract negotiations the APWU utilizes our dues for lawyers, craft witnesses, economic experts to testify in front of an arbitration panel to convince them we are dedicated, essential, loyal employees and worthy of the benefits. Another use of dues money is for the training of our officers and stewards; to educate them on contract language. We are able to use local dues contributing to community service projects, scholarship programs and national campaigns to save the Postal Service from privatization.

Paying union dues isn't just about filing grievances. We enforce, apply and hold postal management accountable to the agreement they made or what an arbitrator awarded to the membership. ALL MEMBERS have

that responsibility to protect and uphold the contract, not just the officers and stewards.

My union struggles are from a different era. The new employees are enjoying the rewards from our fight. PMG DeJoy will be revealing a 10-year business plan and there will be new challenges to confront. A new approach with fresh ideas will be needed. Union leadership will be asking the members to be part of the solution. Members need to ask what THEY can do instead of waiting for someone else to fix everything for them. The job insurance you invest in now will reap union dividends throughout your postal career.

The Struggle Continues.

— Ohio Postal Worker

LOCAL 44 NEWS

DES MOINES IOWA AREA LOCAL –APWU

March 29, 2021

Notice of Local Elections Results

Vice President

- * Mike Gillespie - 115
- Bobbie Maxwell - 36

State Delegate

- * Robin Arnold - 123
- * Dan Ramirez - 120
- * Cindy Randolph - 114
- * Christine Sarcone - 113
- * Bobbie Maxwell- 93
- * Wendy Fowler - 77
- * Misty Bass - 74
- Kassandra McDermott - 69
- Jesi Bass - 63

National Delegate

- * Mike Gillespie - 106
- * Robin Arnold - 102
- * Cindy Randolph - 93
- * Christine Sarcone - 89
- * Bobbie Maxwell - 72
- Kassandra McDermott - 43
- Iren Nakato - 35
- Misty Bass - 33
- Jesi Bass - 27
- Wendy Fowler - 27
- Kathy Bunda - 19
- Sid Afanou - 18
- H William DeZeade - 16

**Asterisk denotes elected candidate/delegate.*

Congratulations to those who were elected and thanks to those who participated in the democratic election process.

As certified by:


Bernita Jones, Chairperson, Local Election Committee



Alleviating Stress During The COVID-19 Pandemic

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

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on postal employees. Many are working longer hours with a reduced workforce and are required to listen to customer complaints about bad service and slow delivery of mail.

This, along with the loss of family members, close friends and/or co-workers can be stressful and overwhelming. Data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) revealed that symptoms of anxiety and depressive disorder increased in the United States last year and that stress, substance abuse and mental illness are on the rise.

Learning To Cope With The Stress Of COVID-19

Although it is necessary during this pandemic to practice social distancing, this leads to isolation and loneliness for many people. In order to maintain our mental stability, we must find healthy ways to cope. When faced with a highly stressful event in your life, use these methods to help you cope:

Keep a stable home environment – Avoid making major changes in your home and schedule so you can focus on any stressors caused by the pandemic.

Clear your mind – Use meditation, deep breathing and other calming exercises to clear your mind of negative thoughts.

Focus on the present – The past

is gone and the future will take care of itself. Focus on how to make things better today.

Return to other successful coping methods – If you've successfully dealt with stress from other causes in your life, use the methods from that situation in dealing with your current one.

Take action – Promise to yourself to deal with what is causing stress in a reasonable way. Action can be an effective way to reduce stress. Do not fear taking an action because you may make the wrong decision.

Value yourself – You are somebody. Respect your abilities and forgive your errors.

Limit projects – Stop trying to accomplish everything. Finish one task before starting another.

Delegate Authority – No one person can do it all. Utilize others who are willing to help.

Maintain a positive attitude – Avoid relationships with negative thinking people.

Take time to relax – Music, exercise and other activities can help calm the mind.

Learn to compromise – Find alternative solutions to handling incidents; stop arguing or fighting.

See your doctor regularly – Assuring that you are in good health aids stress reduction.

Know when to walk away – Avoid prolonged bad relationships and friendships.

In closing, never be ashamed to seek help.

If you are or someone in your family is suffering from severe depression, anxiety or if you have or suspect they have suicidal thoughts, contact the USPS Employee's Assistance Program (EAP) toll-free hotline: 1-800-327-4968 or TTY: 1-877-492-7341. Counselors provide confidential emergency, urgent care intervention for Postal employees and family members.

Also, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline, 1-800-662-4357 or TTY: 1-800-487-1889, is a confidential, free, 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year, information service, in English and Spanish.

Resources: The USPS Employee's Assistance Program, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, "How to Beat Serious Stress," via Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts.

– apwu.org

USPS
EAP
SERVICES

Say Hello

Employee Assistance Program Services:

- Face to Face Counseling
- Telephonic Counseling
- Web-based Tools (myStrength)
- Text Therapy (Talkspace)
- Video Counseling
- "In the Moment" Support
- EAP Orientations
- Consultations
- Promotions
- Coaching & Training
- Work/Life Balance
- Critical Incident Response
- Health & Wellness
- Suicide Awareness & Prevention
- Preparing for Retirement
- Elder & Childcare





USPS
Employee
Assistance
Program

CALL US TODAY: 800-327-4968
 800-EAP-4YOU | TTY: 877-492-7341
 WWW.EAP4YOU.COM

Submit A Campaign Slogan

continued from page 3

letter addressed to:

APWU Contract 2021
National Campaign Committee
1300 L. Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

Include in the letter your name, address, phone number, email, local/state/chapter name, and union position (if applicable).

By entering the contest, participants agree to grant the APWU exclusive rights to use the chosen entry.

The winning entry will be determined by the APWU National Executive Board. The Board reserves the right to pick a second and third place entry to be used as a secondary slogan.

Remember to keep the suggestions focused and short – it will need to fit on T-shirts, buttons and stickers. The winner will be featured online and in The American Postal Worker.

SENATE GOES BLUE – \$10 Billion In Pandemic Relief But DeJoy Still In Charge

The fortunes of postal workers and communities just got brighter, as the run-off election in Georgia gave the U.S. Senate a Democratic majority, paired with a Democratic majority in the House and a Democrat president.

The Democratic Party platform includes this statement on the US Postal Service: “Strengthening the U.S. Postal Service: The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) is the world’s most efficient mail carrier, and Democrats are wholly committed to supporting a public USPS. We will fight all efforts to privatize the USPS and will work to ensure the USPS is financially sustainable, including by repealing the mandate that the agency “pre-fund” retiree health costs. Democrats will protect the Postal Service’s universal service obligation as a core American value and maintain six-day and doorstep mail delivery, which is a lifeline for rural Americans. And we will work to restore service to appropriate levels, including overnight delivery of first-class mail and periodicals within the same metropolitan area, maintaining six-day and door-to-door delivery, and appointing members to the Board of Governors and the Postal Regulatory Commission who champion a strong public Postal Service. We will also support new revenue streams for the USPS, including allowing secure shipping of alcoholic beverages by mail and exploring options to enable unbanked and underbanked Americans to access financial services through the Postal Service.

Paired with the recent \$10 Billion Congressional funding for “operational expenses” related to Covid relief, and a USPS report of \$14 Billion “cash on hand” at the end of fiscal year 2020, the possibilities for significant reversals of past decades cuts, closures and mail delays look good. Even the possibility of improvements such as electric vehicles and postal banking.

However, Louis DeJoy, the Trump mega-donor crony, the cruel, corrupt and criminal Postmaster General is still in charge. DeJoy can only be removed or reined in by the Postal Board of Governors, which is all made up of Trump appointees (4 Republicans, 2 Democrats), whose terms expire in a year to nine years. Although Congress (first the House and now the Senate) can and should certainly continue its pressure on and investigations of

DeJoy — the last House sub-poena of DeJoy’s calendar turned up a totally redacted version – the removal of DeJoy is up to the Postal Board of Governors (PBOG).

The American Postal Workers Union has launched a petition — <https://www.apwu.org/petition> — to President Biden and the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders to quickly fill the vacancies on the PBOG with members who will rein in DeJoy and his destructive policies.

“... We call on you to quickly fill

the four vacancies of the Postal Board of Governors with diverse and community-based members who will build back better the Postal Service, serve our communities and help heal our economy.

*To: President Biden, Senate Majority Leader, Senate Minority Leader
From: [Your Name]*

We call on you to quickly fill the four vacancies of the Postal Board of Governors with diverse and community-based members who:

- Are fully committed to vibrant,

public and universal postal services

- Reject the Postmaster General’s agenda of cutting service and slowing the mail

- Will champion emergency COVID-relief for USPS

- Will support an agenda of expanding the role of the USPS in serving our communities

Filling the vacancies on the postal board is essential to build back better the Postal Service and to serve our communities and to help heal our economy.” *apwu.org/petition*

THE POSTAL SERVICE: WHAT NOW?

(created by rank-and-file postal organizers who have a facebook page, Save Our Postal Service)

	Postmaster General Louis DeJoy’s vision:	A public vision:
Delivery	Reduce door-to-door delivery. 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.
Post offices	Reduce window hours at post offices, 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.
Postage	Charge higher prices for postage to Hawaii, Alaska, and Puerto Rico. 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.
Banking	Do nothing about “banking deserts” 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.
Network	Close and consolidate post offices and mail plants, 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.
Jobs	Cut jobs and services. Expand the lower-paid part-time workforce. Bust the postal unions. Disregard worker safety. 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. Defend good jobs in every neighborhood. 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).
COVID	Make no serious plan for the coronavirus surge. 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.
Climate	Ignore climate concerns. 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.
Finances	Cut costs to maximize profits. 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.
Accountability	Answer to no one. 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.
Trust	Sabotage the Postal Service from within. 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.

Turning Our Attention To The 117th Congress

by Judy Beard

APWU members have so much to be proud of right now. With the fate of USPS and our union jobs hanging in the balance, we gave the Georgia runoff election our all.

Together, we elected Reverend Raphael Warnock (D) and Jon Ossoff (D) as Georgia's newest senators, helping secure a pro-worker, pro-Postal Service majority in the Senate.

We registered people to vote, made sure voters requested and returned their mail-in ballots, helped people find their polling locations, and had meaningful conversations with our fellow union co-workers, family members, and neighbors about the issues at stake. You spent significant time and energy making phone calls, sending texts and emails, and knocking on doors. When the people's right to the public Postal Service and our democracy are under attack, APWU members always show up.

Our fight to pass crucial legislation continues. Now we have the

opportunity to strengthen our union jobs, secure concrete victories for working people, and win additional funding for the USPS. To make that a reality, we must press on and keep holding our elected officials accountable. As we enter into the 117th Congress, and President Joe Biden and U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris begin their first 100 days in office, we must turn our attention to crucial legislative fights ahead.

I am proud of you for the energy and courage you brought to the challenges we have faced. Together, amid the coronavirus pandemic and attacks on our public Postal Service, we secured \$10 billion emergency funding via H.R. 133, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, which passed in late December. Unlike previous COVID-19 packages, this funding will be available at the Postal Service's request and will not need to be paid back.

Immediately after the November 3 election, your Legislative & Po-

litical department began laying the groundwork for much needed legislative reforms to ensure that the Postal Service may continue serving the American public. We now have a window of opportunity to make real changes in this 117th Congress, as well as advocate for the appointment of individuals to the USPS Board of Governors who support a vibrant, public Postal Service.

As always, we will continue to fight for the issues that are important to us, including:

- Removing the unfair pre-funding requirement by passing the USPS Fairness Act. The pre-funding mandate makes up 88 percent of USPS financial losses. While the House of Representatives passed the USPS Fairness Act in the last Congress, it never made it to the Senate floor for a vote.
- Investing in USPS infrastructure. In the last Congress, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 2, providing USPS with \$25 billion to

invest in a new electric fleet and rebuild its infrastructure. With a new Senate and White House, we will fight even harder to make sure USPS has the resources it needs to better serve the American public.

- Providing needed sick leave for workers. On December 31, 2020, public health emergency leave to employees affected by the virus under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act expired. We will fight to have this leave reinstated.
- Ensuring adequate access to the postal services. APWU will continue fighting to prevent mail slowdowns and post office and facility closures. Access to a local post office and reliable services are rights!
- Diversifying the products and services the Postal Service can offer. Current law restricts the United States Postal Service from offering new non-postal products and services. They should be free to innovate and provide needed, dynamic services to the public.

— apwu.org

APRIL SUICIDE ALERT:

EAP And You To The Rescue

by Debby Szeredy, National APWU Executive Vice-President

What is Next?

Each year, the rate of suicide attempts and deaths peaks in the spring. The USPS Employee Assistance Program (EAP) published a list of suicidal signs you might notice from your co-workers.

The following are just a few signs you may observe:

- Talking, discussing, fixating on death or suicide
- Giving away valuable or meaningful possessions
- Having reckless and dangerous behavior
- Increasing the use of alcohol and/or drugs
- Sleep issues, too much or too little
- Not taking basic care of self
- Having a history of suicide attempts
- Putting personal business in order
- Neglecting doctor's orders
- Increased anger & intensified mood swings
- Withdrawing, isolating and disconnecting from others

The EAP notes that suicidal signs may reveal themselves in conversation, through actions or even social media posts. APWU members are

encouraged to recognize the above signs, reach out and speak up.

Remember that our EAP program

is here to help. Utilize the tools at www.EAP4YOU.com or call 800-327-4968, TTY 877-492-7341. Turn

on the light for someone else, and with love and persistence we can make a difference.

45,000 PEOPLE DIE BY SUICIDE EVERY YEAR

10th LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH

The facts about suicide

1 MILLION SUICIDE ATTEMPTS ARE MADE EVERY YEAR

\$70B ANNUAL COST OF SUICIDE

SUICIDE CAN BE PREVENTED
It's up to everyone to learn the warning signs and reach out and help those with suicidal thoughts and feelings.

EAP USPS Employee Assistance Program

CALL US TODAY: 800-327-4968
800-EAP-4YOU | TTY: 877-492-7341
WWW.EAP4YOU.COM

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Des Moines BMC APWU

Local 7027 Meeting Minutes

March 16th - 17th, 2021

Call to Order: Tuesday March 16th, 2021, 1:30 pm - 4:00 pm; Wednesday March 17th, 2021, 08:00 President Rob Moyer presiding.

Roll Call: Members signed in.

Membership: Ray Pudans retired; R. Mark Clifford retired. Congratulations to them!

Financial Statement: The January Financial Report was prepared by Local Treasurer Teresa Daleske. Monthly office expenses, utilities, taxes, and officer salaries were the normal amounts; IFL per capita for 3 months. Balance designations were cumulatively reported.

Officers Reports: President Rob Moyer reported the National Officers had nominated the Rank and File Committee to be seated for the upcoming National APWU Contract Negotiation Proposal Recommendations. Rob discussed the committee appointments of Scott Hoffman, Javier Piñeres and Yared Wonde with National Maintenance Division Director Idowu Balogun. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 also known as the 2021 stimulus check legislation has a provision for paid leave for COVID 19 symptom and/or illness, care for family with the illness, absences requiring quarantines for exposure, for children with disabilities whose day care is unavailable due to COVID, care for minor children whose schools are closed or reduced, time spent for inoculations. The leave will not pay towards retirement or for earned leave balances, or FMLA qualification minimum work hour balances.

Rob Moyer reported on the 1st COLA of 2021 on pay checks for the pay week of February 27th. \$416.00 per year. President Biden has nominated 3 candidates to US Postal Service Board Of Governors including APWU General Counselor Anton Hajar lately of Anderson – Murphy that Rob had worked with at the National Level on Maintenance Arbitration Staffing/MS-1 cases. Rob said he was impressed with Mr. Hajar's abilities and dedication to the working class. The Hawkeye District for management has been combined with districts in Nebraska and South Da-

kota. Little has been settled on how the current Hawkeye district management staff will be redirected. Management employees have an early retirement opportunity with no incentive, and with 20 years' service age 55, or 25 or more years of service at any age. Apparently management plans to assign fewer management personnel at the current district level.

Maintenance Craft Report & Discussion: Rob Moyer discussed Maintenance Training Course Assignments. Rob had gotten more settlements on cardboard craft work violations. There were new Maintenance Bid Awards. Rob reminded members to have their Preferred Assignment Register Sheets completed prior to the Maintenance Notice of Intent closing date and time. Rob related how the Rank and File Committee had turned down the USPS management Contract Proposal which resulted in arbitrating the National Bargaining Agreement. Rob addressed the Arbitrators award had improved some Line H and Staffing impacts over what the management proposal had offered. A BEM reversal case was appealed to step 3.

Clerk Craft Report & Discussion: Dock Clerks had been umbrella'd

into the new MVS finance number and had then improperly been taken off the BMC Clerk seniority ranking which appears to have improperly but technically made BMC Local Clerk bidding subject to potentially improper bid awards. The NDC mail processing MDOs are having a barrier to paying Dock Clerk grievance settlements on GATS due to the change in Dock Clerk finance number assignment. As it is, the bids will probably be funneled through WEBCoins which would expect to be affected by finance number.

MVS Craft Report & Discussion: Rumors were 1 or more Operation Support Specialist would be moved from NDC MIPS to assist the MVS department.

January Drawing

T-Shirt Winners: Dan Stamper and Jeff Shook

Meeting Cup Winners: Tabbatha Bailey and Rob Moyer

Plant Cup Winner: Michael Christian

\$300.00 Door Prize: Not won as the following names drawn were members who were too busy to attend the meeting.

Kosi Kogue, Yesica Madison,

Frank Garcia, Darin Roberts, Brian Heim

February Drawing

T-Shirt Winners: Rob Anderson and Julie Mclain

Meeting Cup Winners: Cyndi Miller and Frank Sample

Plant Cup Winner: Mikealjohn Ashby

\$300.00 Door Prize: Not won as the following names drawn were members who were too busy to attend the meeting.

Lori Meugniot, Marquis Veasley, Edwin Mann, Calista Bates, Peter Saiid, Brian Suchanek

March Drawing

T-Shirt Winners: Nick Sharp and Rob Moyer

Meeting Cup Winners: Nick Sharp and Rob Moyer

Plant Cup Winner: Sue Seo

\$300.00 Door Prize: Not won as the following names drawn were members who were too busy to attend the meeting.

Komlavi Awoesso, Jordan Byerly, Julie Valderrama, Troy King, Liz Scott, Richard Nelson, Kevin Baughman.

Recess: 14:30 pm, 4:35 pm.

Adjournment: Wednesday 8:50 am

Is Your Job In The Robot Kill Path?



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 – consumers, working families, environmentalists, small businesses, and just-plain-folks.

by **Jim Hightower**

Hunters have come up with euphemisms to make what they do sound... well, less unpleasant. For example, animals aren't killed, they're "harvested."

Corporate America is now adopting this verbal ploy, for CEOs urgently need to soften the image of their constant hunt for ways to kill jobs. Their urgency is that they're now pushing a huge new surge in cuts – this time targeting college-educated, white-collar professionals. Their weapon is the same sort of

neutron bomb they've used to dispatch millions of blue-collar workers: Robots.

But robot is a negative term, so it's been replaced with a nondescript acronym: RPAs – "Robotic Process Automation." These sophisticated automatons are armed with artificial intelligence, enabling them to take over cognitive work that had been the niche of such highly-paid humans as financial analysts, lawyers, engineers, managers, and doctors.

More than just an incremental extension of a long, slow automation process, this is a Big Bang. It's presently ripping through the workforce at warp speed and most of America's vulnerable employees have no idea of what's coming. In a survey of corporate executives last year, nearly 80 percent of them had already put

some forms of RPA in place, with an additional 16 percent planning to do so within three years. That's 96 percent of corporate employers! McKinsey, the world's biggest corporate strategy consultant, had calculated in 2019 that the thinking robotics would displace 37 million US workers by 2030. Now, seeing the current corporate stampede to impose RPAs on US workplaces, McKinsey has upped its projection to 45 million job losses in this decade.

Returning to the hunting analogy, professional jobs requiring human-level judgement have been presumed to be beyond the range of robotic firepower. But, as one labor economist now notes, with the mass deployment of RPA technology, "that type of work is much more in the kill path."



Des Moines Bulk Mail Center Local 7027 APWU

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Robert D. Moyer

VICE-PRESIDENT

Steve Allen

SECRETARY

Frank Sample

TREASURER

Teresa Daleske

CLERK CRAFT DIRECTOR

Cyndi Miller

MAINTENANCE CRAFT DIRECTOR

acting Rob Moyer

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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

April 20, 2021

1:30 PM & 4:00 PM

Wednesday

April 21, 2021

8:00 AM

Tuesday

May 18, 2021

1:30 PM & 4:00 PM

Wednesday

May 19, 2021

8:00 AM

Tuesday

June 15, 2021

1:30 PM & 4:00 PM

Wednesday

June 16, 2021

8:00 AM

August Door Prize Amount: \$300

LOCATION

8435 University Boulevard

Suite 1

Clive, IA 50325

The Merger Guidelines: What Are Our Options?

by Elizabeth Powell, National APWU Secretary-Treasurer

When locals are faced with circumstances whether foreseen or unforeseen that result in the local being unable to provide the representation it was chartered to provide and comply with LMRDA provisions, the procedures provided in the Merger Guidelines would need to be considered and administratively fulfilled.

The merger guidelines outline the steps and documents locals considering a merger would need to follow and submit to the Secretary-Treasurer's office. Upon receipt the documents are reviewed to ensure the criteria for the type of merger requested is met and documented. The merger guidelines stipulate that members must vote to approve a merger and set the terms of the merger. There are three guidelines to consider depending on the local's status.

Local/Area Local Merging with

a Local/Area Local: Merging with an existing local is usually the best option for a local that wants to maintain a locally negotiated contract, but does not have the dues structure, officers, or stewards to represent local members. Locals that merge into existing locals become members of that local and often can negotiate specific terms for the merger that ensure a voice in local affairs.

Member-at Large (MAL) Merger with a Local or Area Local: A Member-At-Large (MAL) merger is between a MAL office and a Local or Area Local, so long as the requesting MAL office is within the jurisdiction of the gaining Local or Area Local.

Dissolve the local and become Members-at-Large: If a merger is not an option because of location or membership choice, local members can choose to dissolve their local and become members of the state APWU. In these cases, the state's union representative serves as stew-

ard and chief negotiator. If the local is dissolved, the members of the defunct local become Members-at-Large (MALs).

A copy of the Merger Guidelines can be obtained from the Secretary-Treasurer's page on apwu.org. Local officers can also request a copy by emailing Annette August-Taylor, Executive Assistant to the Secretary-Treasurer, at aaugust@apwu.org.

Schedule a Virtual Finance Training

During the month of January and February, the Secretary-Treasurer's department provided training on covering important information that will assist in keeping local finances in compliance with their legal requirements. Local officers, either newly-elected or looking to schedule a refresher training for executive board members, can schedule a specific local training utilizing Zoom. Please contact Annette August-Taylor to schedule your request.

USPS And APWU Reach Function 1 And 4 Staffing Increase Agreement – Over 1,000 PSEs To Be Converted

Postal Management and the American Postal Workers Union signed another Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to continue to address the significant understaffing at mail processing facilities and post offices throughout the country.

Under the terms of the new agreement, 874 Postal Support Employees will be converted to career status in 37 facilities to be identified by the Postal Service. These positions will be an in-

crease to the current workforce.

In addition, the Postal Service will convert no less than 200 PSEs currently in Function 4 to career status.

These conversions will occur no later than May 22, 2021.

As a transition to the creation of the new career positions and PSE conversions, combined with continued COVID-related absences and a backlog of mail and packages, the APWU has agreed to extend the period where management

can retain PSEs above the PSE cap.

"This is the second staffing increase by the Postal Service in three months, totaling over 6,500 new workers into to the APWU bargaining unit," said President Dimondstein. "Management is starting to address the severe staffing shortages that the union has been raising. In addition to bettering the lives of over 1,000 PSEs, this agreement will benefit our postal customers, who expect timely, reliable postal services."



MILESTONES IN LABOR HISTORY — April —

4

1968 - Martin Luther King, Jr. assassinated while helping striking sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee.

15

1889 - Birthdate of A. Philip Randolph, an African-American union organizer and civil rights leader. Founder and first president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in 1925, he took on the powerful Pullman Company forcing them to bargain with his union. In the 1940s, he showed the same determination in pressuring two presidents to integrate the defense industries and armed forces. A decade later, he led civil rights demonstrations culminating in the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

16

1970 - Post Office and leaders of seven exclusively recognized postal unions announce agreement on a plan for Postal Reorganization, leading to creation of the U.S. Postal Service.

20

1914 - Company gunmen attacked a tent colony of striking mine workers and their families in Colorado, setting it ablaze and killing 19 men, women and children in what is remembered as the Ludlow Massacre.

25

1917 - Charter granted by the American Federation of Labor to "National Federation of Postal Employees," a product of the merger of the National Federation of Post Office Clerks and the Brotherhood of Railway Postal Clerks.

27

1825 - Carpenters strike for 10-hour day.

28

1989 - Workers' Memorial Day established to remember all workers killed or injured on the job.

29

1979 - APWU POWER (Post Office Women For Equal Rights) founded in Saint Louis, Missouri.

Postal Service Should Nix Plan To Further Slow Mail Delivery

The Poor, Elderly, and Rural Americans Will Be Hit Hardest

The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) is reportedly considering a strategic plan that would severely erode the quality of first-class mail delivery, its most popular product with the American people. According to a February 12 article in The Washington Post, USPS wants to eliminate the two-day standard for delivering first-class mail to a local address and instead lump it into a three- to five-day delivery window.

The American people deserve much better. And for decades they had much better.

From 1971-2012 USPS had a one-day delivery standard for first-class mail. USPS delivered 42 percent of first-class mail in one day in 2011, 57 percent in two to three days, and the remaining one percent in four to five days.

Mail delivery standards were previously degraded in 2012. Starting then, USPS had at least two days to make first-class mail delivery. USPS never met these new, lower standards. In six of the past eight years, service declined further culminating in the currently abysmal service levels.

Despite all this, first-class mail is alive and well in the United States as USPS's most profitable business line. For fiscal year 2020, USPS reported 52.6 billion pieces of first-class mail were sent, resulting in revenues of \$23.8 billion.

While the Internet has reduced first-class mail volume by 32 percent over the past 10 years, many Americans either must, or want to, use first-class mail.

Tens of millions of Americans do not have high-speed Internet service. According to the Federal Communications Commission, in 2018 18.3 million Americans lacked access to fixed-terrestrial high-speed Internet. Most of these were people in rural areas. Even with access, high-speed Internet is still not affordable to many.

Other Americans, including many senior citizens, simply prefer to use the mail and they should not be penalized. Many choose to pay their bills by mail

because of identity theft, or concerns about cyberattacks make them wary of using the Internet for financial transactions.

In 2011, Fredric Rolando, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers, raised prophetic concerns about USPS's plans to significantly lower its first-class mail standard. "High-quality service is essential to preserving the value of our networks and to any future growth strategy. Degrading standards not only hurts the public and the businesses we service, it is also coun-

terproductive for the Postal Service because it will drive more people away from using the mail," Rolando said to *The New York Times*.

He was right. It would be tragic for USPS to repeat the same mistake twice.

A better course is for USPS to establish a business plan which will provide high-quality first-class mail service that preserves this \$23 billion a year business. To get there it should clearly separate mail from package operations, including having a separate balance sheet for its mail business

so that costs and pricing are clear.

Americans are willing to pay a few cents more for higher postage and guaranteed delivery times. For many, this is a better deal than assorted costs, such as credit card penalties for "late" bill payments and the cost of high-speed Internet.

Regulators at the Postal Regulatory Commission and Congress should demand that USPS fix its current deficiencies in service and advocate for the American people to have a truly first-class mail program.

First Class Community Credit Union

Providing First Class Service since 1925



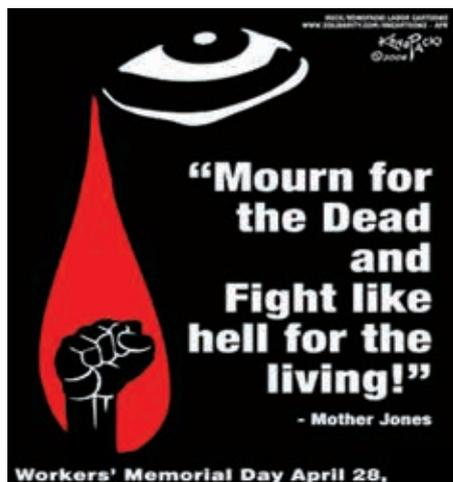
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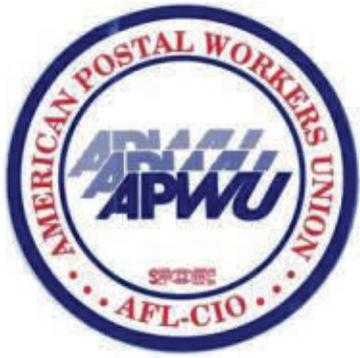


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WEDNESDAY APRIL 21

9:00-11:00 AM-

THE POWER OF THE INTERVIEW- Lock down the facts in management's own words. Get tips and best practices for how to ask questions that give you the best evidence in a grievance. Presented by APWU NBA Jeff Beaton and Dan Skemp.

BREAK 11:00-12:00

12PM-4PM

RECOGNIZING RACISM & DISCRIMINATION As our nation wrestles with addressing systemic racism, taking ownership of the important and unique role we play, as union leaders, to decrease racial bias in our workplaces is key. The first step is recognizing our own implicit biases related to race. This session heightens our awareness of our own perceptions, helps us lead from a place of understanding and appreciation for diversity, identifies potential instances of discrimination, and expands our ability to engage in important conversations about racial equity in the workplace. Presented by Guillermo Morales- Labor Educator at the University of Iowa Labor Center

THURSDAY APRIL 22

8AM-12PM

ENGAGING MEMBERS APRIL -As generational demographics within the workforce quickly change, we must endeavor to understand how to energize and engage new and young members. Identifying what moves them and learning how to talk to them in effective ways is essential. This session provides insight regarding differences and similarities in generational values and behaviors, highlights elements of effective intergenerational communication, and outlines the importance of mentorship in succession planning, so we can mentor the next generation of leaders from a place of understanding. Presented by Robin Clark-Bennett, Director of the University of Iowa Labor Center

BREAK 12:00-1:00

1PM-4PM

STEWARDS SUPERPOWER- Understanding your rights and limitations as a steward. Use your Power to get released on union time for grievance investigation; best practices for requesting information and much, much more.

JCIM Changes- Discussing the changes and how it may affect grievances.

STUMP THE NBA- Your time to ask difficult questions and tackle unique problems in your work unit.

THIS TRAINING IS BEING CONDUCTED ONLINE VIA ZOOM

**This training is presented by the Iowa Postal Workers Union,
 Registration is FREE to members, stewards, & officers**

Register at APWUIOWA.COM