



Q2 2023

Malcolm T. Smith News

MTS Local 152 Newsletter



APWU
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO





President's Report

by **Trina Wynn**

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy Ten Year Plan

The Postal Service is two years into DeJoy's ten-year Delivering for America plan. The service is moving forward with building Sorting and Delivery Centers (S&DCs).

The Sorting and Delivery Centers will be extensive facilities bringing mail processing and mail delivery operations under one roof. In a recent report, the USPS states the S&DC effort will not result in post office closures.

Our National APWU President, Mark Dimonstein, stated he is unsure if the S&DC efforts are going to improve or diminish the service. Dimonstein also stated that if they reduce service, we must unite with the country's people to say no. There are some S&DCs that are up and running, and National is monitoring these facilities and changes closely.

Many rumors have been circulating on the workroom floor concerning the future of our facility. There are many procedures in place that the Post Service is obligated to meet before making changes, such as taking mail out of the building, taking equipment out of the building, consolidating our facility, and excessing. The Postal Service must notify the APWU at the National level and the Local level before making changes. When we learn of any changes, we will notify you immediately. Management has a habit of attempting to put fear into the people to get employees to bid off specific jobs, telling them that the operation is leaving the building. I encourage people not to bid from a job prematurely. I am aware that changes to the Postal Service are coming, but I encourage you to trust the union as we have your best interest at heart, not management. Attend our monthly union meetings and speak to your shop stewards to find out the latest changes to our facility.

Discipline

I find myself talking about discipline at every union meeting. Some employees are still not responding to 5-day directives, not reporting for PDIs, and not grieving discipline. You must understand that discipline leads to the end of your career as a postal worker. If you receive a Letter of Warning, you must see the union to file a grievance within 14 days of receiving the discipline. If you receive a 7-day suspension, you must see the union to file a grievance within 14 days of receiving

the discipline. Many employees don't take discipline seriously and wait to file a grievance until they reach a 14-day suspension or removal. Please, it is imperative that you take all forms of written discipline seriously and file a grievance. Help us protect you; the union cannot care about your job more than you do. Again, it is worth saying that if your supervisor calls you into the office, you must request a shop steward. Do not allow management to take your rights away by telling you a shop steward is unnecessary. Know your rights!

Scheduled vs. Unscheduled Leave

A scheduled day off is when you submit a 3971 in advance requesting annual leave, which is approved by management. If you call out by phone using the IVR number or on liteblue using the eLRA app, this is unscheduled leave unless you have FMLA coverage. Arriving to work late (after your start time) is considered unscheduled leave from when you were scheduled to start until when you begin. Unscheduled leave will red flag your attendance and result in management addressing your attendance. Know the rules and what you can do to protect yourself from discipline. If unsure, please ask your steward or call the union office.

Thankful

I want to thank all our shop stewards and officers for all you do. Many people want to complain, some even enjoy it, but only some want to step up to become a problem solver. I also want to thank all who volunteer to help and get involved with helping our local. We are always looking for more shop stewards, especially in the maintenance and motor vehicle craft. If you are interested, please see me.

APWU MTS News

A word from the Vice President

by **Jacqueline Bishop**

May is Mental Health Awareness Month.

In the last two and half years, everyone has been through or is going through some Mental Health challenges, like being Stressed at work due to short staffing, long and heavy work assignments, being Bullied by a disrespectful supervisor, or taking care of a sick or elderly family member. All this can put a toll on any human person.

So let me tell you about a FREE Program called E.A.P.(Employees Assistance Program)

What is the Employees Assistance Program (EAP)?

A voluntary work-based program that offers FREE and CONFIDENTIAL short-term counseling to USPS employees and family members.

What type of assistance does EAP provide?

They offer counseling services for mental health problems, personal problems, work-related problems, and drug and alcohol problems.

New Direction Behavioral Health provides the counseling service. They are contracted through FOHS (Federal Occupational Health Service.)

EAP offers six counseling sessions per case. EAP may provide six additional sessions if you need more than six counseling sessions.

How much does this service cost?

This service is FREE to All Postal employees and family members (same household)

When is the best time to contact EAP?

The EAP hotline is open 24 hours a day and 365 days (12 months) a year.

How long does it take to get an appointment or to see a counselor?

Emergency counseling meetings should be seen within 24 hours. An urgent meeting should be seen in 48 hours (about two days) and should Never take more than five days to be seen by a counselor.

Can you visit an EAP counselor on the postal clock?

Yes, your first visit may be on the USPS clock. If you make your appointment on the clock, coordinate and inform your counselor and supervisor, or manager. Also, remember that all future visits may be scheduled during non-working hours, and you can use your leave to attend these meetings.

If EAP is confidential, voluntary, and non-disciplinary, why is participation in EAP sometimes included in “Last Chance Agreements”?

Unfortunately, there are occasions when a well-intentioned program is misused by supervisors; this misuse plays a part in undermining the program's effectiveness.

APWU's position is that if participation in EAP is included in a Last Chance Agreement, it should be a strong recommendation – not a requirement. In our opinion, any stipulation that requires EAP participation transforms EAP to a non-voluntary program (See ELM 871.31). The National EAP Committee agrees that failure to attend EAP sessions should not be the sole catalyst for disciplinary action.

(From the APWU (American Postal Workers Union) website)

There are 5 JCEAP (Joint Committees Employees Assistance Program)

They serve as the eyes and ears of the program from your local perspective. They are in Detroit, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Springfield, MA.

How to contact EAP?

Phone number- 1-800-EAP4YOU (1-800-327-4968) 1-877-482-7341 TTY

Website- www.EAP4YOU.com

Here is a list of some other independent organization

Alcoholics Anonymous- www.aa.org

Domestic Violence- www.thehotline.org

Gamblers Anonymous- www.gamblersanonymous.org

Narcotics Anonymous- www.na.org

APWU MTS News

Secretary-Treasurer's Words of Wisdom

by **Karen Jester-Witkowski**

While attending the Secretary Treasurers Training last month, the attendees heard from the Young Members Committee. The committee was formulated after the 23rd National Convention delegates gave their approval. It consists of 5 (five) members and 5 (five) attendees from the Central, Eastern, Southern, Western, and Northeast areas. They address issues that impact workers between the ages of 18-35. Please check out the APWU bulletin board in the employee's entrance hallway to learn more about the Young Members Committee.

If you have been watching the news, you have seen that our area has had some crazy weather, with tornados popping up from nowhere and causing severe damage. Our union has several resources for members affected by those and other incidents. The APWU Disaster/Hardship Relief Fund. This fund is there to help members who are victims of a natural disaster, medical condition, or other catastrophic event. It coordinates with the Postal Employees Relief Fund (PERF) and

pays from \$500 to \$2500 after insurance and other relief payments. To apply, fill out and submit the application along with supporting documentation to the APWU Disaster/Hardship Fund: APWU Secretary-Treasurer, 1300 L Street NW, Washington, DC. 20005. For additional information, go to the Secretary-Treasurer tab at apwu.org website. There you will also find information on the Postal Employees Relief Fund, which provides financial assistance for members/employees whose homes and property have been substantially damaged by fire and natural disasters.

Happy spring to everyone. I hope you have a safe and enjoyable summer.

APWU MTS News

Notes From the Legislative Director

by Rick Walker

Greetings, Brothers, and Sisters,

Legislatively we have many things happening the first I'd like to mention is the kick-off to the APWU's dignity and respect campaign. We have all felt the sting and powerlessness that comes with workplace disrespect, especially from those in positions of authority. So, I encourage all to participate in this time where we stand up for our rights as workers. See a union official to get a button or sticker to show your support.

On the national level, we as workers, members, and the nation as a whole, are being disrespected by the Post Master General. Louis DeJoy's 10-year plan is not being shared with the public for proper input and feedback, nor is it being discussed with the unions or even the Postal Regulatory Commission. This assault on the process that guarantees the sanctity of the mail is being bypassed to ram a plan down our collective throats that will serve no purpose but to damage our reputation as an organization. I encourage you to speak to friends, family, and representatives to add to the chorus of voices condemning his actions and plans.

APWU MTS News

Industrial Relations

by Deidre Kerr

There is a safety meeting coming up later this month. If you know of any safety issues, please complete a 1767 and give this to your supervisor.

There is a refrigerator on order. When it will come in, I am not sure. Two issues have been sent out to the district for approval. One is the sidewalk for the customers. The second one is where the floor is breaking up to have something else put down.

Another issue taken to step 2 was supervisors' parking in the north dock. This was not listed on the paper when management put out the parking areas.

If you experience harassment by management, report this to the union. If it is another employee, this must be reported to management. But let the union know as well.

If you go to the APWU health plan, some information about the postal service health benefits taking effect in 2025. There are no specifics on the plans, just general information. They say they will put out more information as it becomes available.

APWU MTS News

Clerk Craft Director

by **Charlie Phillips**

If you are injured or acquire an illness at work while performing your duties, you are covered under FECA (Federal Employee's Compensation Act), which the Department of Labor and OWCP administers. The USPS is required to provide the correct CA forms that you need. Instructions are included on the forms. The OWCP is responsible for making decisions regarding an injury compensation claim.

Medical care is provided, and you may select a local physician of your choice (within 25 miles).

Continuation of Pay (COP) is payable for traumatic injuries for up to 45 calendar days of medically supported disability. The USPS pays for it, which is the same as your regular check.

Wage loss compensation (not COP0 is paid by OWCP, Department of Labor, after a three-day waiting period. This doesn't apply if the disability is permanent or if the period of wage loss exceeds 14 days. This check comes from the OWCP, not the USPS.

Total disability wage loss is paid when you have no capacity to earn wages because you are unable to perform any work due to your accepted workplace injury. It is tax-free and paid at a rate of two-thirds of your earnings at the time of your injury or three-fourths if there are one or more dependents.

Partial disability wage loss is paid at a reduced rate because you can perform some work and only have a partial loss of wage earning capacity.

What to do if you have a traumatic injury:

1. Promptly notify your supervisor.
2. Receive and complete Form CA-1 (Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for COP).
3. Select “Continuation of Pay” (COP) unless there is some unusual reason causing you to use your leave. It is paid by the USPS, and it may be continued for up to 45 calendar days. COP is paid only for traumatic injuries, not occupational illnesses or injuries.

If you have chosen COP on the form CA-1 and you have provided the required medical documentation within ten days, then the USPS cannot refuse to pay COP unless one of the reasons for termination of COP found in section 545.51 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) applies.

Your CA-1 must be submitted within 30 days of your traumatic injury. If COP is denied because you did not file within 30 days, you may still claim compensation for wage loss from OWCP on Form CA-7 (Claim for Compensation).

APWU MTS News

Maintenance Craft Director

by **Sam Shockley**

Hello Brothers and Sisters.

I hope everyone is doing well and is getting ready for springtime weather. Management has continued slowly filling the vacant maintenance positions at the Delaware P&DC. This has been a four-year process, and the union is doing everything possible to fill these positions with current APWU members. One of the reasons this process has been slow is that employees on the in-service register declining the positions. We have four vacant custodial positions, and over 15 non-maintenance APWU employees have refused the offer. They have declined because

their current position is higher than a custodian, and they do not want to go back on the pay scale. I understand their reasoning for this. However, the quickest way to get into the maintenance craft is a custodian. Once you are in, you can take the test for mechanic multiple times a year, and you would have first grabs at vacant positions before non-facility maintenance and non-maintenance employees would have the opportunity to bid on said position. Please remember this if you are offered a custodial position in the maintenance craft.

On 4/28/2023, APWU locals and members around the country rallied in front of congressional buildings and post offices in a display of unity to protest the unfair treatment and abusive supervision and policies used by management in the post office. I'm sure everyone at the Delaware P&DC can agree that we have all dealt with an abusive supervisor or manager that has created a hostile work environment. Sadly, This issue will continue if we, as members, don't speak up. Dealing with an abusive supervisor is a process, a process that is mainly handled via witness statements and interviews. If you feel like a supervisor is mistreating or harassing you, you should come to the union and provide a witness statement. If we, as members, do not speak up about these supervisors, they will continue to abuse all employees. We must stand up together.

APWU MTS News

Motor Vehicle Craft

by **Glen Davis**

Importance of Pre/Post-Trip Inspection

All drivers with a commercial driver's license have been trained in accordance with CFR 49 to perform Pre/Post-Trip Inspections on motor vehicles and trailers. This is a requirement before and after operating motor equipment.

Delaware P&DC drivers use the (DVIR) Driver Vehicle Inspection Report to perform this requirement. All items listed must be inspected and confirmed operational and safe for use. Any major failures which would render the vehicle unsafe for use should be reported to the Vehicle Dispatch Clerk. Minor discrepancies which do not render the vehicle unsafe for use should be noted on the DVIR.

Failure to perform these inspections not only put the driver at risk but also the general public at large. Equipment failures could cause significant damage to the motor vehicle as well.

Lately, several drivers have been reporting issues with steering and suspension mechanisms and have found drive belts (fan hub) either missing or (accessory belt) beginning to shred.

APWU MTS News

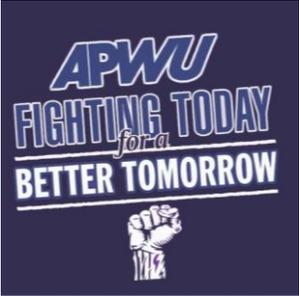
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Q2 2023 APWU MTS Newsletter