

USPS Announces Moratorium On Post Office, Plant Closures

The Postal Service has announced a five-month moratorium on the closure of post offices and mail processing facilities, in response to a request from 22 senators.

The delay until May 15, 2012, is intended to give Congress more time to adopt legislation that would address the USPS financial crisis without drastic cuts in service.

“This is a victory for the American people and for postal workers,” said APWU President Cliff Guffey. “It is a direct result of the protests by postal employees, small business owners and community leaders,” he said.

“But make no mistake: This is a temporary reprieve. Postal executives have made clear that they intend to proceed with studies and plans to close thousands of post offices and more than half of the nation’s mail processing centers.”

“We will have to remain vigilant,” the union president said. “APWU members must continue to contact their senators and representatives and urge them to pass legislation to correct the underlying cause of the USPS financial difficulties. Several bills are pending in the

House and Senate, he noted. “Some would go a long way toward returning the Postal Service to stability and growth, and others would lead to disaster.”

APWU President Cliff Guffey praised the senators’ effort. “We have been very concerned that USPS management would implement irreversible changes before Congress has a chance to act,” he said. The union president encouraged union members to thank the senators that played such an important role in postponing the closures and consolidations. They are (alphabetically by state):

Sen. Begich (D-AK)	Sen. Nelson (D-NE)
Sen. Bennet (D-CO)	Sen. Shaheen (D-NH)
Sen. Udall (D-CO)	Sen. Udall (D-NM)
Sen. Harkin (D-IA)	Sen. Gillibrand (D-NY)
Sen. Landrieu (D-LA)	Sen. Schumer (D-NY)
Sen. Kerry (D-MA)	Sen. Merkley (D-OR)
Sen. Franken (D-MN)	Sen. Wyden (D-OR.)
Sen. Klobuchar (D-MN)	Sen. Johnson (D-SD)
Sen. Baucus (D-MT)	Sen. Sanders (I-VT)
Sen. Tester (D-MT)	Sen. Leahy (D-VT)
Sen. McCaskill (D-MO)	Sen. Rockefeller (D-WV)

For more information, visit www.apwu.org.

Arbitration Hearing Begins on Schedules of New Full-Timers

An arbitration hearing began on Dec. 13, 2011, on the first two of several disputes that arose when management incorrectly implemented new provisions of the 2010-2015 Collective Bargaining Agreement. The disputes involve the placement of newly converted full-time employees into non-traditional schedules, and the denial of retreats rights to Clerk Craft employees on posted Non-Traditional Full-Time (NTFT) duty assignments in their former installations.

The contract, which was ratified by union members in May, required the Postal Service to convert to full time all Clerk Craft part-time flexibles in Level 21-and-above offices and all part-time regulars, regardless of the size of their office. It also required management to convert all part-time flexibles and part-time regulars in the Motor Vehicle Craft, effective Aug. 27, 2011.

In accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the newly converted regulars should have been placed in residual vacancies or given schedules of five 8-hour days. Instead, management placed most of the employees into newly-created NTFT assignments, many of them with just 30 hours of work per week. This was

improper, because the NTFT positions had not been posted for bid, so they were not residual vacancies. Residual vacancies are positions that remain vacant after the completion of a voluntary bidding cycle.

The union is asking the arbitrator to correct the contract violations by making all affected employees “whole” and instructing management to assign affected unencumbered/unassigned workers to schedules of five 8-hour days. We will report on the arbitrator’s decision as soon as we receive it.

A Holiday Message

As the holiday season approaches, the officers and staff of the APWU send best wishes to you and your loved ones. At this time of reflection, it is appropriate to note that this has been a year of upheaval for postal workers and our families – and that more uncertainty is expected in the coming year. But we have much to be thankful for: Our spirits are strong, our unity is great, and we are determined to continue to work for fairness and justice.

— Cliff Guffey, President