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## NEWS SERVICE

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# Arbitrator Explains Monetary Package

## Postal Workers Receive 'Wage Premium' Over Private Sector, He Concludes

In a supplemental opinion dated Jan. 11, 2002, Arbitrator Stephen B. Goldberg concluded that postal workers receive a "wage premium," earning greater wages and benefits than workers performing comparable work in the private sector.

The supplemental opinion explains the reasoning behind the neutral arbitrator's decision on the economic portions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the APWU and the US Postal Service, which he issued on Dec. 18, 2001. The supplemental opinion does not change any terms of the December decision, which granted upgrades to some positions, and across-the-board wage increases of 1.2 percent, 1.8 percent and 1.4 percent, plus cost-of-living allowances each year.

"In concluding that there exists a Postal Service wage premium, I join a long list of arbitrators in prior USPS interest arbitrations who have reached the same conclusion," he wrote. "The evidence relating to private sector comparability is both voluminous and contradictory," he said. "For each argument raised by one party, there is a counter-argument from the other party; for each data analysis, there is a counter-analysis," he said.

"When all is said and done, however, what stands out clearly . . . is that Postal Service jobs are highly sought after, and once obtained, are held onto. Applicant queues are long, and the quit rate is all but non-existent," he said. "Employees represented by APWU have total job security, an extraordinary benefit package, and wages that have fully kept up with inflation," he wrote.

Arbitrator Goldberg rejected the APWU's request for clerk parity with letter carriers, writing, "while internal comparability may be relevant to minimize workplace tensions, the Postal Reorganization Act requires that the panel focus on an external comparability — wages and benefits paid in the private sector — not on internal comparability or internal equity." The union argued strenuously in arbitration on this point.

### Terrorist Attacks, Financial Problems

Arbitrator Goldberg said that the economic aftermath of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 and the anthrax attacks influenced the ruling, especially for the first year, from November 2000 to November 2001. "Substantial increases in that year, if retroactive, would impose a major financial burden on the Postal Service right now, when it must deal with the extraordinary financial problems," he wrote.

On the other hand, although he found convincing evidence that the Postal Service is faced with a long-term structural deficit, he rejected the Postal Service's argument that it justifies reducing the wages and benefits of postal employees below those earned by employees doing comparable work in the private sector. The Postal Reorganization Act requires that interest arbitration decisions be based on principles of comparability of postal wages to private sector wages, he said.

APWU President Bill Burrus said, "It is very important that the arbitrator ruled that workers are not required to subsidize the Postal Service. We have never agreed with the way the Postal Service does its accounting, and we refuse to take responsibility for financial mismanagement of the Postal Service."

The full text of Arbitrator Goldberg's opinion is posted on the APWU web site, at [www.APWU.org](http://www.APWU.org).

## Discount to Mass Mailers Penalizes Public

# Union Attacks Postal Giveaway

The APWU lodged a formal objection to the Postal Service's rate increase proposal this week, saying it grants unfair discounts to large-volume mailers at the expense of the mailing public. The Postal Service admits that the discounts it is offering big businesses for pre-sorting their mail exceed the costs the Postal Service avoids.

In offering these giveaways to large-volume mailers, the Postal Service is attempting to increase postal rates sooner than ordinarily would be possible by avoiding lengthy hearings before the Postal Rate Commission. The major mailers — who traditionally oppose rate increases — have agreed not to oppose this one.

"The Postal Service is, in essence, buying off the major mailers and asking you and me to foot the bill," said APWU President Bill Burrus. "If adopted, the public would pay 37 cents for a first-class letter, while major mailers would pay as little as 27.5 cents."

In the long run, the inefficiencies resulting from the subsidies the Postal Service is proposing will increase costs to the mailing public and undermine the capacity of the Postal Service to survive, Burrus said.

Under procedures established by the Postal Rate Commission, objections by parties such as the APWU must be heard. If objections are too numerous or too difficult to resolve, the early rate hike proposed by the Postal Service may be delayed.

## 2002 STATE CONVENTIONS/CONFERENCES

STATE	DATE	CITY	HOTEL/SITE
Alabama	June 6-8	Huntsville	Marriott Hotel
Alaska		No convention in 2002	
Arizona	March 2-3	Flagstaff	Radisson Woodlands Hotel
Arkansas	June 6-8	Harrison	Days Inn
California	May 17-19	San Diego	Holiday Inn On The Bay
Colorado	May 2-5	Ft. Collins	Holiday Inn at University Park
Connecticut	April 5-7	Bridgeport	Holiday Inn Downtown
Delaware	April 27-28	Wilmington	Wyndham Gardens Hotel
Florida	May 9-11	Orlando	Information forthcoming
Georgia	May 2-4	Macon	Crowne Plaza Hotel
Hawaii		No convention in 2002	
Idaho	April 17-21	Seattle, WA	Doubletree Hotel at Sea Tac
Illinois	May 9-11	Arlington Heights	Sheraton Arlington Pk/Chicago NW
Indiana	May 15-19	Clarksville	Holiday Inn Lakeview
Iowa	May 3-4	Ft. Dodge	Best Western Starlight Village
Kansas	April 12-13	Topeka	Ramada Inn Downtown
Kentucky	May 11-12	Owensboro	Executive Inn
Louisiana	June 13-15	Information forthcoming	
Maine	April 19-21	Orono	Black Bear Inn
Maryland/DC	June 7-9	Ocean City	Carousel Hotel
Massachusetts	May 17-19	Plymouth	Sheraton Hotel
Michigan	April 3-5	Thompsonville	Crystal Mountain Resort
Minnesota	April 18-20	Detroit Lakes	Holiday Inn
Mississippi	May 2-4	Hattiesburg	Information forthcoming
Missouri		No convention in 2002	
Montana	April 17-21	Seattle, WA	Doubletree Hotel at Sea Tac
Nebraska	May 9-11	Grand Island	Mid-Town Holiday Inn
Nevada	April 20-21	Reno	Information forthcoming
New Hampshire	April 27-28	Meredith	Inns at Mills Falls
New Jersey	March 24-26	Atlantic City	Bally's Hotel & Casino
New Mexico	April 26-28	Gallup	El Rancho Hotel/Motel
New York	April 4-7	Liverpool	Holiday Inn
North Carolina	June 6-8	Kill Devil Hills	Ramada Inn
North Dakota	April 25-27	Bismarck	Kelly Inn
Ohio	April 25-28	Elyria	Holiday Inn
Oklahoma	April 5-6	Lawton	Howard Johnson Convention Center
Oregon	April 17-21	Seattle, WA	Doubletree Hotel at Sea Tac
Pennsylvania	April 25-27	Philadelphia	Wyndham Hotel-Franklin Plaza
South Carolina	June 7-8	Hilton Head	
South Dakota	April 5-6	Pierre	Best Western Ramkota
Tennessee	May 22-25	Nashville	Renaissance Hotel
Texas	June 19-22	Lubbock	Holiday Inn Hotel & Tower
Utah	Information forthcoming	St. George	Information forthcoming
Vermont	May 3-4	Killington	Cortina Inn
Virginia	June 20-23	Richmond	Omni Richmond Hotel
Washington	April 17-21	Seattle	Doubletree Hotel at Sea Tac
West Virginia	April 25-27	Wheeling	Oglebay Resort Park
Wisconsin	May 1-4	Oshkosh	Hilton Garden Inn
Wyoming	May 17-19	Casper	Information forthcoming

## Moe Biller Labor Issues Lecture Series Inaugurated Jan. 11-12

# Conference Examines Bioterrorism in the Workplace

APWU President William Burrus welcomed several hundred union members to Washington, DC, for the inaugural Moe Biller Labor Issues Lecture Series, an annual conference named in honor of the union's former president.

The two-day conference, Jan. 11-12, examined the lessons learned in the wake of the anthrax terrorism under the title, "New Safety and Health Issues — The Implications of Bioterrorism in the Workplace."

John Henshaw, assistant secretary of labor for occupational safety and health, and Dr. Jeffery P. Koplan, director of the Centers for Disease Control, gave the keynote speeches. Two panels composed of medical, scientific and labor experts led discussions about responsibilities for workplace safety, including testing and decontamination protocols. C-SPAN broadcast the Jan. 11 proceedings live, and repeated the broadcast throughout the weekend.



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APWU members from all across the country were joined by union representatives from Italy,

Canada and the United Kingdom. Workshops covered such issues as "Anthrax, Bioterrorism and the Postal Service," "Assessing Risks and Crisis Management" and "Bargaining for Health and Safety." District of Columbia congressional representative Eleanor Holmes Norton gave a moving tribute to Biller at a luncheon on Friday.

The annual lecture series is funded by the newly created Moe Biller Labor Issues Endowment Fund in partnership with Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations. It will continue to focus on current issues affecting the labor movement, especially issues pertinent to postal workers, and provide training and education for union members.

As part of the conference this year, APWU members attended a special session on the new Collective Bargaining Agreement. President Burrus outlined several aspects of the new agreement,

including the first upgrades ever negotiated for Mail Processors, Senior Mail Processors, BEM Mechanics, Grade 7, 9 and 10 Technicians, Tractor Trailer Operators and Motor Vehicle Operators. Other APWU officers addressed questions and comments from the audience, including Cliff Guffey, executive vice president, Greg Bell, director of industrial relations, James McCarthy, director of the clerk division, and Bobby Donelson, assistant director of the maintenance division.

At a farewell retirement dinner for Biller Saturday night, tributes came from many quarters of the labor movement, including Burrus, John Sweeney, AFL-CIO president, Morton Bahr, president of the Communications Workers of America, and Philip Bowyer, deputy general secretary of UNI, Union Network International, a global federation of unions that represents postal workers and other service workers.