

APWU, USPS Announce Tentative Agreement On Contract Extension

Rank and File Bargaining Committee to Study Proposal

APWU President William Burrus announced Nov. 12 that the union and the Postal Service have reached a tentative agreement on a two-year extension of the National Agreement, which is due to expire Nov. 20, 2003.

"This is a tremendous opportunity for our members," Burrus said.

"A year from now, the economy may still be soft, mail volume is likely to be low, and postal debt will remain high. By then, President Bush's appointees to the USPS Board of Governors will be in place." The new board members favor privatization, Burrus noted, and "It's the Board of Governors that determines management's negotiating strategies."

"The recently announced overpayments to the Civil Service Retirement System don't add a dime of revenue to Postal Service coffers," Burrus added.

"The tentative agreement secures wage and cost-of-living increases, and maintains members' current share of health-care costs. We believe it provides needed stability for our members during a time of severe financial difficulty and turmoil for the Postal Service.

"This agreement must be compared to the uncertainty of negotiating – and perhaps arbitrating a contract – under less favorable conditions. But the final decision belongs to the members of the APWU."

The extension proposal will be presented to the Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee, which is convening in Washington on Nov. 13. The committee will decide whether to send the tentative agreement to the full APWU membership for a ratification vote. If an extension is agreed upon, it would be the first of its kind in APWU history.

The contract extension preserves the terms of the current National Agreement (Nov. 21, 2000 - Nov. 20, 2003), with the following modifications.

Two General Salary Increases, Four Cost-of-Living Increases

■ A 1.3 percent wage increase will take effect Nov. 15, 2003, based on the wages in effect on Sept. 6, 2003. This percentage increase is equal to those granted to other postal bargaining units covering approximately the same period. Because it is based on the higher wages of September 2003 (rather than September 2000) the dollar value of our wage increase is greater;

■ A 1.3 percent wage increase will take effect Nov. 27, 2004, based on the wages in effect on Sept. 6, 2003. As with the 2003 increase, the percentage is equal to that granted to other bargaining units covering approximately the same period, but the dollar value is greater;

■ Wage increases at the same percent and under the same terms will be granted to Transitional Employees (TEs);

■ COLA (cost-of-living allowance) increases will be granted in March and September 2004, and March and September 2005. A contract extension will enable our members to enjoy the full benefit of the six-month COLA increase that accrues between August 2003 (after the final COLA measuring period of the 2000 agreement) and January 2004. Economic consultants advise us that each member would lose about \$180 if the COLA were negotiated under the usual bargaining schedule because of the three-month lag between August and the beginning of a new contract.

Upgrades

■ Effective Nov. 29, 2003, Level 10 and 11 ETs (Electronic Technicians) will be upgraded to Level 11 and 12, respectively. For the purpose of implementing this agreement, and on a non-precedential basis, the upgrades will be based on a step-to-step upgrade mechanism, including credit for waiting period time already served. (This mechanism is identical to the one that will be used to implement the Nov. 16, 2002, upgrades for these positions.);

■ Effective Nov. 13, 2004, Level 4 CFS (Computer Forwarding System) Clerks will be upgraded to Level 5. For the purpose of implementing this agreement, and on a non-precedential basis, the upgrades will be based on a step-to-step upgrade mechanism, including credit for waiting period time already served.

Job Security

■ No later than Feb. 1, 2003, the USPS will petition the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), requesting voluntary early retirement opportunities for all eligible employees represented by the APWU, which, if approved, would allow employees to retire before they reach 55 years of age and/or 30 years of service;

■ There will be a temporary moratorium on excessing and the reassignment of employees through May 15, 2003. The moratorium will not apply to current or future excessings and reassignments where the reassignments are within the local commuting area of the installation (a 50-mile radius);

■ The parties will establish a joint task force to explore methods of repositioning the workforce, with the goals of minimizing employee dislocation, maximizing customer service, and maintaining efficient operations. The task force will also compile existing contractual provisions, arbitration awards, Step 4 agreements and mutually agreed to national-level interpretations regarding excessing into a single document to avoid disputes at the local level regarding the procedures to be followed when excessing occurs;

■ A comprehensive developmental training program will be created to provide career APWU bargaining unit employees opportunities to qualify for placement in skilled positions in the Maintenance and Motor Vehicle crafts. Interested employees will be provided extensive on-the-clock training for highly-skilled positions;

■ The agreement extends no-layoff protection to all career employees who were on the rolls as of Nov. 20, 2000, for an additional two years.

Other Changes

The contract extension proposal also provides APWU-covered employees with:

■ Two additional opportunities to be declared a successful bidder, increasing the total to seven times during the 2000-2005 agreement;

■ Annual increases in allowances for uniforms and work clothes that will be proportional to the increases in the current National Agreement;

■ A two-year extension of the memorandum of understanding that provides career opportunities for TEs.

The contract proposal would extend the National Agreement to Nov. 20, 2005. If an extension is not ratified, full-scale negotiations on a new contract will begin next August.

Advisory Panel to Meet Nov. 13

Rank and File Committee To Convene in Washington

The Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee has been called to Washington to review the contract extension proposal. The committee will first meet on Nov. 13.

The names of the committee members appear below, alongside the officer who selected them. Twelve members

of the committee are appointed by a member of the APWU National Executive Board, in accordance with Article 13.9 of the APWU Constitution. An amendment passed at the 2002 National Convention adds a 13th member to the committee, a representative from the APWU Deaf/Hard of Hearing Task Force.

OFFICER	RANK & FILE MEMBER
William Burrus, <i>President</i>	Terry Grant, <i>President, Ohio Postal Workers Union</i>
Cliff Guffley, <i>Executive Vice President</i>	Tom Maier, <i>Member, Tulsa Area Local</i>
Robert L. Tunstall, <i>Secretary-Treasurer</i>	Darrell Strobel, <i>Vice President, Portland Area Local</i>
Greg Bell, <i>Director, Industrial Relations</i>	Art Doherty, <i>President, Philadelphia Area Local</i>
Jim McCarthy, <i>Director, Clerk Division</i>	Moe Lepore, <i>President, Boston Metro Area Local</i>
Steven G. Raymer, <i>Director, Maintenance Division</i>	Greg See, <i>President, Mansfield Area Local</i>
Bob Pritchard, <i>Director, Motor Vehicle Service Division</i>	W. Paul Jones, <i>MVS Director, Greater L.A. Area Local</i>
Sharyn M. Stone, <i>Central Region Coordinator</i>	Duron Marshall, <i>President, Detroit District Area Local</i>
Jim Burke, <i>Eastern Region Coordinator</i>	Jim Bertolone, <i>President, Rochester SCF Area Local</i>
Liz Powell, <i>Northeast Region Coordinator</i>	Bobby Daulton, <i>Pres., Western Nassau (NY) Area Local</i>
Terry R. Stapleton, <i>Southern Region Coordinator</i>	Morline Moore, <i>Pres., Texas Postal Workers Union</i>
Omar M. Gonzalez, <i>Western Region Coordinator</i>	Isabelle Bailey, <i>President, APWU of California</i>
Deaf/Hard of Hearing Task Force Representative	Ron Harbeson, <i>Eastern Region Rep., D/HH Task Force</i>

Contract-Update Teleconference

APWU state and local presidents are invited to take part in a teleconference Nov. 14 to discuss the tentative agreement to extend the contract.

President Burrus plans to brief local and state

leaders at 2:45 Eastern Standard Time. He will then take questions.

If you're interested in participating, please call 202-842-4250 to make arrangements.

Penalty Overtime Exclusion Period Set

There are four consecutive service weeks each year during which penalty overtime regulations are not applicable.

This four-week period is referenced in Article 8 (Sections 4 and 5) of the National Agreement. This year, the time period during which penalty overtime regulations are not applicable begins with Pay Period 26-2002, week 1 (Nov. 30), and ends with Pay Period 01-2003, week 2 (Dec. 27).

2003 Conference Alert

Maintenance Craft Conference

The Maintenance Division Conference is set for May 18-20, 2003, in Philadelphia.

The conference will be held at the Wyndham Philadelphia at Franklin Plaza.

The general session will convene on Sunday, May 18, at 9 a.m. The closing session will be Tuesday, May 20, and last until 5 p.m.

To pre-register, complete the form below and mail it to the Maintenance Division (ATTN: Steven G. Raymer), at the address given. The pre-registration process closes April 17, 2003.

To make hotel reservations, contact the Wyndham Philadelphia, through its Reservation Office (800-996-3426 or 215-448-2000). Be sure to identify yourself as a participant in the APWU Maintenance Conference. The room rates are \$139 per night for single or double occupancy. To guarantee the negotiated rate, make reservations by April 17.

2003 MAINTENANCE DIVISION CONFERENCE

Wyndham Hotel at Franklin Plaza, Philadelphia May 18-20, 2003

Name _____ Social Security No. _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Title (if officer/steward) _____

Local _____

Local Phone _____ Home Phone _____

Email _____

Special Needs _____

Send this completed form to:
Steven G. Raymer
Director, Maintenance Division
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO
1300 L Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20005