

APWU NEWS/Service

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American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

Presidential Commission On USPS Takes Shape

President Bush is expected to sign an executive order this week establishing a presidential commission on postal reform.

According to a White House draft circulating on Capitol Hill, the nine-member commission would be charged with producing a report outlining its vision of the Postal Service's future and its recommendations for legislative and administrative reforms. The executive order would allow President Bush to name all nine members of the panel, which would deliver its report to him by July 31, 2003.

Among other issues, the commission would consider whether the USPS monopoly status remains in the public interest, or whether mailing services should be privatized.

It would also consider changing the Postal Service's universal service mandate and "unnecessary rigidities in cost or service" — the commission could produce recommendations for rolling back collective bargaining rights, ending six-day delivery, and closing postal facilities, particularly in rural and inner-city communities.

"This proposal for a presidential commission is all but guaranteed to produce a reform scheme that pleases major

mailers and conservative ideologues," said APWU President William Burrus.

"I expect that the commission will consider the interests of postal workers and ordinary customers expendable," he added. "We are highly doubtful that the commission will be asked to examine giveaway postage rate discounts that subsidize the mailing industry and rob the Postal Service of billions of dollars in annual revenue.

"These subsidies are the real problem, and ending them is essential to the long-term survival of the Postal Service."

The Commission comes in the wake of a failed seven-year effort in Congress to pass a postal reform bill. After a House committee rejected a bipartisan postal reform bill last June, the Direct Marketing Association and the Mailing Industry CEO Council began pressing the White House to name a reform commission.

President Bush presumably would use the commission's report to draft a new set of legislative reforms. The prestige of a presidential commission means that Congress would be expected to act on such legislation swiftly, and would boost its prospects for passage.

Don't Neglect Your Ballot

The ballots on the referendum on the tentative contract extension were mailed out to members Dec. 2 to Dec. 4. They will be picked up by the outside mailing-house on Thursday, Dec. 19. The count will take place immediately, with nationwide results on the single-question ballot to be released by the following day. Members who have not received a ballot should contact APWU headquarters at 202-842-8505.

"Regardless of where you stand on the contract extension, we urge you to vote," said APWU President William Burrus, "and we hope that you will urge your fellow members to vote on this important matter."

APWU Publishes 1st in Series of Briefing Papers

"Looking Back, Looking Forward: 30 Years of Postal Reform," the first in a series of APWU analytical papers on the Postal Service, was published Dec. 4. This document, like others to follow, can also be seen on the union Web site, www.apwu.org.

The papers are being distributed to key lawmakers and opinion leaders, as well as members of the national media. This first APWU paper presents a retrospective on the performance of the Postal Service in the 30 years since the passage of the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970.

The APWU view is that the USPS has been, by any objective measure other than its recent deficits, a great success. Postal rates have increased no more than inflation (less than service-industry prices in general), and customer satisfaction and on-time delivery performance are very high.

Subsequent briefing papers will cover:

- the impact of telephone deregulation and the emergence of the Internet;
- the unfunded liability of the Postal Service and what must be done to address it;
- the importance of capital investment programs that the USPS has deferred in order to show a "surplus";
- the importance of maintaining universal service at a uniform price, and whether businesses should continue to be required to share the costs of universal service;
- the fact that current postal policy favors business mailers at the expense of the financial health of the Postal Service; and
- the remarkable productivity gains in USPS mail processing operations and how they've offset the cost of serving 1.7 million new delivery addresses each year.

Ergonomics Update

APWU Safety Specialist Named To OSHA Advisory Committee

Corey Thompson, APWU's National Safety and Health Specialist, has been selected to serve on the 15-member National Advisory Committee on Ergonomics (NACE), a panel established to advise the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health on ergonomic guidelines, research, and outreach.

Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao in early December announced the selection of industry, academic, legal, medical, and labor experts that will meet four to eight times during the next two years.

"I'm confident that this committee of experts will help us reduce ergonomic-related injuries and illnesses suffered by thousands of workers each year," Chao said when she announced the composition of the committee.

"We are extremely pleased that Corey has been appointed," APWU President William Burrus said. "We know he will be an outstanding advocate for worker safety. His appointment is especially important in light of the Bush administration's ongoing efforts to undermine the ergonomics

standards that labor unions fought so hard to implement.

"Regrettably, the panel has many more representatives of industry than of labor," Burrus added. "The imbalance brings into question whether there is a commitment to serve corporate interests or to protect the safety of workers."

The NACE is chartered initially for two years and will consult and advise on a number of issues related to OSHA's four-pronged approach to reducing ergonomic-related injuries in the workplace: guidelines, research, outreach and assistance, and enforcement.

The committee's first meeting will cover information related to industry- or task-specific guidelines; identifying gaps in existing research on ergonomics in the workplace; research needs and efforts; outreach and assistance methods to communicate the value of ergonomics; and increasing communication among stakeholders.

Thompson has been at APWU for nearly five years and has worked in the industrial hygiene field since 1980.

2003 Craft Conference Alert

Motor Vehicle Directors' Conference

The following clarifies the dates listed in the last News Service Bulletin.

The Motor Vehicle Directors' Conference is set for April 24-26, 2003, in Philadelphia, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. Registration will begin Wednesday, April 23. The general session will convene on Thursday, April 24, and the conference will close Saturday, April 26, at 5 p.m.

Complete the registration form below and mail it to the Motor Vehicle Services Division (Att: Robert Pritchard) at the address given below. If you wish to attend the evening banquet on Friday, April 25, please include a check for \$40 with your registration form. The preregistration period closes March 22, 2003.

To make hotel reservations, contact the Crowne Plaza Hotel at 215-561-7500. Be sure to identify yourself as a participant in the APWU Motor Vehicle Directors' Conference. The room rates are \$118 per night for single or double occupancy, plus tax.

To guarantee the negotiated rate, be sure to make your reservations by April 17.

2003 MOTOR VEHICLE DIVISION CONFERENCE

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Philadelphia April 24-26, 2003

Name _____
Social Security No. _____
Address _____
City _____ State ____ Zip Code _____
Title _____
Local _____
Local Phone _____ Home Phone _____
E-mail _____ Banquet tickets _____ @ \$40 per person \$ _____

Send this completed form to: Robert Pritchard, Director
Motor Vehicle Services Division
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO
1300 L Street NW, Washington, DC 20005

Projections on Annual Pay for APWU-Covered Workers

1998-2000 Contract	Last Increase	Sept. 9, 2000	LEVEL 6, STEP 0***	INCREASE
2000-2003 Contract	First General Increase	Nov. 18, 2000	41,983	499
	Second General Increase	Nov. 17, 2001	42,725	742
	First COLA	March 9, 2002	42,725	0
	Second COLA	Sept. 7, 2002	43,037	312
	Third General Increase	Nov. 16, 2002	43,613	576
	Third COLA *	March 8, 2003	43,946	333
	Fourth COLA *	Sept. 6, 2003	44,258	312
Contract Extension (If approved)	Fourth General Increase**	Nov. 15, 2003	44,833	575
	Fifth COLA *	March 6, 2004	45,145	312
	Sixth COLA *	Sept. 4, 2004	45,561	416
	Fifth General Increase **	Nov. 27, 2004	46,136	575
	Seventh COLA *	March 5, 2005	46,448	312
	Eighth COLA *	Sept. 17, 2005	46,822	374

* Estimate based on a projection of the CPI-W index provided by Joel Popkin & Co., a firm that specializes in wage and price projections.

** Calculation based on the Sept. 6, 2003, wage, which includes estimations of COLA.

*** The figures shown here are correct. Due to a formatting error, the printed version of this News Service bulletin presented mislabeled salary levels.