

## Postal Commission Holds First Session

Meeting for the first time Jan. 8, the nine-member President's Commission on the United States Postal Service gave some indication about how it plans to craft a "fresh business model" for the nation's mail delivery system.

"Everything is on the table," said Peter Fisher, Undersecretary of the Treasury for Domestic Finance, except for continuing the status quo and "rolling up all the costs either on the taxpayer or the ratepayer." President Bush created the panel last month, giving it broad discretion. The Treasury Department is providing staffing and funding.

Following Fisher's opening remarks, Postmaster General John E. Potter and USPS Chief Financial Officer Richard J. Strasser discussed the Postal Service's current financial situation and outlined its Transformation Plan, which calls for many administrative and legislative reforms.

"The key question is: 'How can we provide universal service to all Americans and still make it affordable in the face of potentially declining mail volume?' That is the central public policy issue facing this commission," Potter said.

The panel must determine "the appropriate meaning of 'universal service,'" Potter said.

The commission also focused on labor costs. Yale University President Richard C. Levin, embroiled in a lingering labor dispute with clerical and technical employees on his own campus, urged fellow panel members to consider "a unique feature" of the Postal Service. "To my knowledge," Levin said, "this is the only government entity required to go to binding arbitration to determine wages and benefits in labor contracts."

Four subcommittees were created to concentrate on specific sets of issues:

- The *Business Model Subcommittee* will examine the Postal Service's universal service obligation, delivery infrastructure, the current rate regulation system, and the "Commercial Government Enterprise" model proposed in the Transformation Plan.

- The *Private Sector Partnership Subcommittee* will analyze the current role of the private sector in the mail delivery system, including negotiated service agreements, outsourcing, and work-sharing.

- The *Technology Challenges Subcommittee* will assess the impact of new technologies, such as online bill paying and e-mail, and consider how these advances erode the USPS market share. USPS technological initiatives and their impact on productivity also will be assessed.

- The *Workforce Subcommittee* will assess "the Postal service's current collective bargaining and dispute resolution procedures as well as review alternate models. It will review employee pay and other associated labor costs; productivity; employee recruitment, training and development; and workers' compensation. The Workforce Subcommittee will also review the status of the Postal Service's unfunded pension and retiree health-care liabilities."

The panel's next meeting will be held Feb. 20 in Washington. Other one-day public hearings will be held in Illinois, Texas and California. Citizens groups and other interested parties have until Feb. 12 to comment on postal issues and the commission's activities.

With its report to President Bush due July 31, the panel has less than seven months to do its work. APWU President William Burrus expressed his concern regarding the broad mandate before the committee: "I question whether conservative right-wing philosophy will dictate the panel's final recommendations."

## Contract-Extension Ratification Results

### Local-by-Local Vote Counts Available at [www.APWU.org](http://www.APWU.org)

The official results of the contract-extension ratification vote were posted to the APWU Web site on Jan. 3.

"No." These numbers differ slightly from those reported following the preliminary count Dec. 19.

The Local-by-Local results are listed alphabetically by state. Within each state, the Locals are also listed alphabetically.

In addition to the 90,826 ballots that were tabulated, 334 returned ballots were declared "void" for the following reasons:

Results were certified by Merkle Data Technologies, Inc., which conducted the balloting under the supervision of a subcommittee of the Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee.

- 232 "No" votes were voided because the identification number was removed from the ballot.

- 53 "Yes" votes were voided because the identification number was removed from the ballot.

- 49 votes were voided because both the "Yes" and "No" portions of the ballot were returned.

Ballots were mailed to 248,053 active-duty APWU members covered by the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Postal Service. This is consistent with the APWU's long-standing policy of permitting only those members who will work under the terms of a Collective Bargaining Agreement to vote on its ratification. Retired APWU members, whose income and benefits are determined by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and are not affected by contract changes, did not receive ballots.

The identification numbers enabled Merkle to separate ballots by local and by "Yes" or "No." Random numbers were assigned to members within the locals to prevent individuals from voting more than once, but votes could not be linked to individuals.

Likewise, private-sector APWU members, whose wages and benefits must be negotiated with their private-sector employers, did not receive ballots.

Ballots were mailed to members Dec. 2 to Dec. 4, with returns due Dec. 19. The envelopes were picked up at 2 p.m. (E.S.T.) and the count began immediately. The unofficial nationwide "Yes" and "No" totals – based on a hand-count – were announced on the union's Web site at approximately 9:30 p.m. Dec. 19.

The contract extension was approved by 88 percent of those voting, with 80,041 voting "Yes," and 10,785 voting

## Conference Alert

### Secretary-Treasurer Seminars

Presidents, vice presidents, secretary-treasurers, treasurers, executive board members, trustees, and any other officers with fiduciary responsibilities are invited to attend Secretary-Treasurer seminars, during which presentations will be made on preparation of reports required by the IRS and the Department of Labor.

Each three-day session will begin at 8 a.m. on Thursday and end at 2 p.m. on Saturday. On the Friday of each seminar, from 4 to 7 p.m., there will be a special LM-4 workshop for locals that receive \$10,000 or less annually. There will be a \$10 registration fee for those who attend only this workshop during the seminar.

The registration fee for the Basic and Advanced courses is \$50; Computer courses cost \$100. Fees should be included with the registration form. The forms should be received by the Secretary-Treasurer's office no later than 15 days prior to the opening date of the selected seminar.

The first seminar is being held Feb. 13-15 at the Palm Springs Riviera Resort and Racquet Club, 1600 N. Indian Canyon Dr., Palm Springs, CA 92262. The room rate for single or double occupancy is \$135. To make reservations, call 800-444-8311 or 760-327-8311. To guarantee the negotiated rate, you must reserve a room by Jan. 23.

The next Secretary-Treasurer's seminar, in Boston, is scheduled for March 6-8. It will be held at the Sheraton Boston Hotel, 39 Dalton St., Boston, MA 02199. The room rate for single or double occupancy is \$139. To make reservations, call 800-325-3535 or 617-236-2000. To ensure the negotiated rate, you must reserve a room by Feb. 6.

The third seminar of the year, in Hershey, PA, is scheduled for March 20-22. The session will be held at the Hershey Lodge & Convention Center, West Chocolate Avenue and University Drive, Hershey, PA 17035. The room rate for single or double occupancy is \$109. To make reservations, call 800-HERSHEY (800-437-7439). To ensure the negotiated rate, you must reserve by Feb. 19.

The last Secretary-Treasurer's seminar of early 2003 is in the Chicago area, March 27-29. The session will be held at the Pheasant Run Resort & Spa, 4051 E. Main St., St. Charles, IL 60174. The room rate for single or double occupancy is \$102. To make reservations, call 800 474-3272. To ensure the negotiated rate, you must reserve by Feb. 27.

The above room rates do not include taxes, which range from 9 to 12.55 percent. The room block is limited in each location. Rooms will be filled by each hotel on a first-come basis. So, make your reservations early.

If you have any questions, please contact the Secretary-Treasurer's office at 202-842-4215, or by fax at 202-842-8530.

## Deaf/Hard of Hearing Conference

The APWU Deaf/Hard of Hearing 2003 National Conference is scheduled for **May 14 to May 17** at the Westin Galleria and Westin Oaks Hotel, 511 Westheimer Blvd., Houston, TX 77056.

The first general session will convene Wednesday, May 14, at 7 p.m. The closing general session will be Saturday, May 17, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., followed by a dinner at 7 p.m.

To preregister for this seminar, complete the form below and mail it to the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Task Force at the address given. Preregistration closes **April 12**.

To make hotel reservations, contact the Westin Galleria at 800-228-3000 or 713-960-8100. Be sure to identify yourself as a participant in the APWU Deaf/Hard of Hearing Conference. Room rates are \$89 for single or double occupancy. To guarantee the negotiated rate, make reservations by **April 12**.

### Deaf/Hard of Hearing Task Force Conference Westin Oaks Hotel, Houston — May 14-17, 2003

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security No. \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Local \_\_\_\_\_ Local Phone \_\_\_\_\_

TTY Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**DINNER TICKET ORDER:** I wish to purchase \_\_\_\_\_ dinner tickets @ \$45 per ticket. Enclosed is my check/money order in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

**SPECIAL NEEDS:** Sign language interpreters will be provided; please describe other special needs:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Send this completed form by April 12 to: Deaf/Hard of Hearing Task Force,  
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO  
1300 L St. NW, Washington, DC 20005

### Spring 2003 Secretary-Treasurer Seminars

Palm Springs, CA – Feb. 13-15     Boston – March 6-8  
 Hershey, PA – March 20-22     Chicago – March 27-29

Basic Accounting \_\_\_\_\_ Advanced Accounting \_\_\_\_\_ Computerized Systems \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security No. \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Local/State \_\_\_\_\_ Union Office Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Fee Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Send this completed form to: Secretary-Treasurer  
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO  
1300 L St. NW, Washington, DC 20005