

## National Officers Installed

Acknowledging deep disappointment in one national election and great satisfaction with another, APWU President William Burrus expressed confidence to the newly elected national union officers that “our future has been made much more difficult as a result of the Nov. 2 vote, but we are up to the task.”

Speaking to the newly elected national union officers at their swearing-in ceremony in Washington on Nov. 13, Burrus said that the unity shown by the membership in the recent union election was unprecedented. “This is the first time in the history of APWU that not a single resident officer or regional coordinator was defeated in the election.”

Burrus explained why he was disappointed in the results of the presidential election.

“I sincerely believe that a Kerry administration would be more responsive to the needs of working people, and it is my responsibility, and that of our union, to better the conditions of workers. That task will be extremely difficult with every branch of government opposing a progressive agenda and in fact under the impression that they have been given a mandate to advance a regressive agenda.”

“But as we analyze the results of this election, we must guard against applying a broad brush,” Burrus said. “We turned out our base and energized new voters. The election results do not represent a failure of our strategy or our efforts. Contrary to the media message, the race for president did not turn on culturally divisive issues.”

The APWU president, starting his second term, said that “Government should represent all of the people. All citizens are entitled to health care, and the safety net should not be shredded so that Wall Street can increase its profit. Our military should not be used to advance a narrow agenda.”

“We must not sacrifice our principles for political gain,” Burrus said.

Burrus told the assembled officers that with the election over, the APWU leadership must focus on other priorities, most notably the representation of postal employees. After the 2001 installation, he said, the union focused on the unresolved 2000 negotiations, the subsequent contract extension, the presidential commission, and the invigoration of our political action fund. “In each of these endeavors,” Burrus said, “we achieved the required objective, protecting the economic and job security of our membership.”

“Postal reform will certainly be on our agenda again. The major mailers began advancing their cause the day after the election, suggesting that the pending bills be dropped and that new bills be drafted. In 2005 they will once again seek to make deep cuts into *our* collective bargaining rights to enhance *their* profitability.”

“The grievance backlog, the safety of postal employment, upward mobility, transfer opportunities, and securing APWU work will become the priority issues of the future, and I pledge the full attention of every officer to achieve these objectives,” Burrus said.

“In the coming year we return to the bargaining table to achieve a new national agreement. Negotiations are always difficult, and 2005 will not be an exception. Postal management is expected to once again attempt to roll back pay and benefits, with special attention to the growing cost of health care. I expect a major effort on the part of postal management to shift the cost of health benefits from the Postal Service to the employees.”

“We will face the challenges before us with vigor and determination,” Burrus said. “It shall take the efforts of all officers assembled in this room, in concert with local and state officials, and most importantly, the entire membership.

“Our future has been made much more difficult as a result of the Nov. 2 vote, but we are up to the task. So I ask all assembled, roll up your sleeves, we have serious work ahead.”



**APWU President William Burrus (in front of podium) and more than 80 union officers are sworn in to new three-year terms on Nov. 13 in Washington, DC.**