

USPS Briefs APWU on Plans To Realign Postal Network

The Postal Service provided a long-awaited outline of the Evolutionary Network Development (END) program in a meeting with APWU officers Feb. 14, 2006 – the same day it submitted the plan to the Postal Rate Commission (PRC) for evaluation. The Postal Service is required by law to seek an advisory opinion from the commission when it proposes to make changes in service that are national in scope.

Under the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the Postal Service is also required to notify the union when a major relocation of employees is planned “due to the implementation of national postal mail networks.”

The APWU filed a Notice of Intervention with the PRC Feb. 15, advising the agency of the union’s intent to participate in any proceedings that occur as a result of the USPS submission.

The USPS plans to replace the nine existing facility-types with the following five processing facility-types:

- **Regional Distribution Centers (RDCs)**, which will process all classes of parcels and bundles and serve as Surface Transfer Centers;
- **Local Processing Centers (LPCs)**, which will process single-piece letters and flats and will cancel mail;
- **Destination Processing Centers (DPC)**, which will process single-piece letters and flats;
- **Airport Transfer Centers (ATCs)**, which will serve as transfer points only; and
- **Remote Encoding Centers (RECs)**.

Over a period of years, these facilities are expected to replace Processing & Distribution Centers, Customer Service Facilities, Bulk Mail Centers, Logistic and Distribution Centers, annexes, the Hub and Spoke Program, Air Mail Centers, Remote Encoding Centers, and International Service Centers.

The network must change, according to USPS representatives, due to declining volumes of single-piece first-class mail, population shifts, the increase in drop shipments by advertising mailers at destinating postal facilities,

advancements in equipment and technology, redundancies in the existing network, and the need for operational flexibility.

Tentative Agreements

In accordance with Article 12.4.B. of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, postal management must meet with the union at the national level “at least 90 days in advance of implementation” of a network realignment plan to fully advise the union.

The Feb. 14 presentation will serve as official notice to the national union that management intends to restructure

The APWU has notified the Postal Rate Commission that the union intends to participate in any proceedings that occur as a result of the USPS network realignment plan.

the national postal mail network. It also satisfies the requirement of the 2003 contract extension to provide the union with notice of the USPS plan to “consolidate installations.” (A PDF of the presentation can be viewed on the union’s Web site, at www.apwu.org.)

Article 12.4.B. also requires management to meet with regional union officials in advance of the reassignment of employees – as much as six months, whenever possible. Tentative agreement was reached at the meeting that management would adhere to this requirement at the conclusion of the 90-day notice to the national union.

The union and management also agreed to establish a dispute-resolution process dedicated to resolving issues that arise out of the network redevelopment plan. The parties at the national level will determine the specifics of the process.

Attending the briefing at the union’s national office were APWU President William Burrus, Industrial Relations Director Greg Bell, Clerk Craft Director Jim McCarthy, Maintenance Craft Director Steve Raymer, Motor Vehicle Services Craft Director Bob Pritchard, Northeast Regional Coordinator Liz Powell, Central Regional Coordinator Sharyn Stone, Legislative Director Myke Reid, and the union’s legal counsel. National Business Agent Eric Wilson attended on behalf of Eastern Regional Coordinator Jim Burke, who was unable to participate.