

# APWU NEWS

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO



WILLIAM BURRUS, President MYKE REID, Editor

## Delegates Debate, Approve Resolutions In Preparation for USPS Contract Talks

APWU members at the 18th Biennial National Convention displayed overwhelming unity Tuesday in approving resolutions intended to guide the union's negotiators in collective bargaining this year. Negotiations for a new contract begin Aug. 29.



Mike Dennehy

"Delegates made several motions for change," said Mike Dennehy, president of the Bridgeport (CT) Area Local and chairperson of the Labor-Man-

agement Committee, which reported on resolutions calling for improvements to contract language.

"The delegates have a clear vision of where they want to go," Dennehy said. "The convention wants to see more effort made toward going to an all-career workforce."

"When resolutions came forward that didn't properly address the needs of the membership, delegates made amendments that I thought perfected them," said Dennehy. As an example, he cited the issue of benefits for Transitional Employees (TEs). "The delegates didn't just want to improve benefits for TEs, but to get them made career employees."

"The delegates seem to be unified in favor of most of the proposed resolutions," Dennehy said. "We're just not seeing a lot of division."

The Labor-Management Committee

chair expressed surprise at the amount of debate on a resolution to provide for before- and after-tour Overtime Desired Lists. "I thought the resolution would be more universally accepted," he said. "It did pass, but it was debated more vigorously than I expected."

Debate on resolutions making the Mail Handlers Union a department of the APWU (Resolution #5) and nullifying the RI-399 Agreement (Resolution #89) were postponed pending a meeting on those issues by members on Tuesday night. (See below.)

Delegates expressed a strong desire to eliminate the Postal Service's Voice of the Employee (VOE) surveys (Resolutions #1 and #115), seeing them as an attempt by management to infringe on the union's role as the exclusive bargaining representative.

### *Jurisdictional Process Sparks Debate*

At a standing-room-only meeting after the close of convention business on Tuesday, delegates expressed serious concern about the craft jurisdictional process.

More than 300 delegates participated in a lengthy debate about RI-399, a three-party procedure involving the USPS, APWU and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union, which was intended to resolve disputes over which craft should perform work.

Frustrated by the ability of one party



Delegates discuss a resolution before lining up at a floor microphone to take part in the debate.

The convention adopted Resolution #59, which seeks payment to employees covered by the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) for unused sick leave upon retirement. The resolution is intended to address an inequity between FERS employees and Civil Service Retirement System employees (the CSRS computations give credit for unused sick leave).

A resolution that would establish priorities for the upcoming contract negotiations with the Postal Service will be acted upon when delegates revisit the Labor-Management Committee Report on Wednesday.



Delegates pack the "RI-399 Meeting" room.

in a three-party procedure to delay the resolution of disputes, delegates sent a message: *We want action!*

# APWU Friends Call for Increased Activism

Rep. Neil Abercrombie (D-HI) delivered a fiery sermon about the importance of the labor movement taking the lead in helping to control the direction of our government. The first of a series of prominent members of Congress to address the conven-



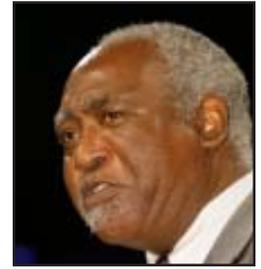
William Lacy Clay



Neil Abercrombie



Edward G. Rendell



Danny Davis

tion on Monday, he urged APWU members to “put their money on the table” by giving to COPA to ensure solid backing for candidates who will represent the interests of working families.

“Stand up for your rights,” the congressman said, “and for the rights of every single working family in the country that needs your help.”

Echoing Abercrombie’s call for political action, Pennsylvania Gov. Edward G. Rendell (D) said union members can help return control of state governments to politicians who will listen to workers. He noted that since Congress and the Bush Administration have rejected minimum-wage increase, his state and 18 others have acted on their own to raise hourly minimums.

Rendell said he was proud to have worked with the APWU to keep thousands of postal jobs in Philadelphia, and

he criticized the president and conservatives in Congress for supporting postal reform proposals that would achieve “short-run savings, even if it costs more in the long run and eliminates good jobs.”

Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL), a former clerk at a Chicago post office, was warmly received when he told delegates: “As one who has been where you are, and who recognizes where you come from, I am proud to be here with you.”

A leader of the House Government Reform committee and an important ally, Davis called for removing the unfair workers’ compensation provision contained in the Senate version of pending postal reform legislation. He condemned those “who would outsource, downsize and privatize postal operations.”

Rep. William Lacy Clay (D-MO), also a member of the House policy-making panel, attacked USPS consolidation

efforts head-on. “It’s outrageous that the postmaster general wants to eliminate 139 facilities. You did the country an amazing public service by opposing the [USPS] plot to consolidate.”

Clay’s father, former Congressman William L. Clay Sr., also addressed the convention. As chairman of the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee in the 1980s and 1990s, Clay fought for and won passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act. He also helped pass legislation that allows postal and most federal employees to have an active voice in politics.

Wrapping up Monday’s proceedings, Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-NY) in videotaped remarks paid tribute to the APWU crafts that make the U.S. postal system work. “I will stand with you,” she said, “as you continue to make sure the mail is delivered.”

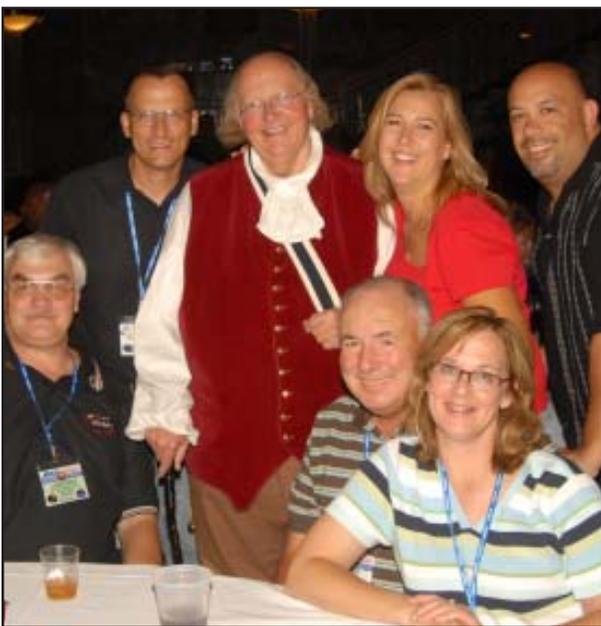
## Spotlighting Union Human Relations Activities



A Human Relations Department conference participant, above, views an Employee Assistance Program exhibit. APWU family members killed recently in military actions overseas were memorialized at a prayer service on Sunday morning. Above right, conference participants listen to one of many distinguished speakers at a Human Relations conference session. At right are department award winners Emma Springs (South Suburban IL Area Local) and Hal Koster (a sponsor of APWU’s “Gratitude Dinners” for soldiers wounded in action).



## ‘COPA Patriots Night’ Red, White, Blue – and Green



APWU members put on their patriotic best and joined Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Betsy Ross, to celebrate contributions to the union’s Committee on Political Action (COPA), which helps support candidates who stand up for postal workers and working families. The APWU has raised more than \$1 million annually since 2003, and should easily surpass that mark before the fall elections roll around, according to Myke Reid, Legislative Department director.

### *TOP PER CAPITA COPA CONTRIBUTORS*

**1,000-Plus Members**

- Greater Kansas City Metro Area Local
- Greater Connecticut Area Local
- Phoenix Metro Area Local
- St. Paul Area Local

**500-999 Members**

- Lehigh Valley (PA) Area Local
- Tucson Area Local
- Rochester SCF Area Local
- Trenton Metro Area Local
- Norfolk Local

**300-499 Members**

- Heart of Illinois Area Local
- Montgomery (AL) Area Local
- Reno Local
- Charleston (WV) Area Local
- Philadelphia BMC Area Local

**100-299 Members**

- Mansfield (OH) Area Local
- Kokomo (IN) Area Local
- Muncie (IN) Area Local
- Terre Haute (IN) Area Local
- Scranton (PA) Local

# Organizing Called Crucial to APWU Future

During a presentation about the APWU Finance Committee's report to the convention, Chairperson Paul E. Delaine stressed how the union's bottom line is dependent on not just maintaining, but increasing the union's numbers.

"Organizing is everyone's responsibility," he said. "We must impress upon the entire membership the importance of adding to our ranks more of the 61,000 non-members we represent."

"We must come up with strategies to lower that num-

ber," Delaine added. He noted that the number of non-members is being reduced, but that the union membership also continues to decline due to attrition, consolidation, and downsizing.

"The organizing budget needs to be increased in order to allow the department to develop a program with a more hands-on approach with the locals and with emphasis placed on improving the capacity to accurately measure the effects of any campaign."

The Finance Committee chair emphasized the need for



**Paul Delaine chairs the APWU Finance Committee**

more external organizing. "Increasing dues-paying private-sector workers can offset the

decline in the postal workforce. Ongoing organizing drives have the potential of increasing our membership by more than 3,000 members. We are encouraged by this, and we urge the membership to support these efforts whole-heartedly."

Delaine asked for special recognition for the Detroit District Area Local and the Pittsburgh Metro Area Local, who achieved "closed shops" at Mail Transportation Equipment Service Centers (MTESCs) owned by SERCO, Inc.

## Having a Ball at Day Care



### Workshop Registration

The APWU Research and Education Department is offering 30 workshops on Saturday, and it is not too late to register for many of them.

You can register for the Post-Convention Workshops today, Thursday, and Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### On Thursday, Wear 'APWU Blue'

In keeping with tradition, delegates to the 18th Biennial National Convention are asked to wear their blue union T-shirts tomorrow in a visual display of solidarity. Thursday is also the day that APWU members will rally at the local post office to protest USPS consolidation plans and to let the public know that "network realignment" will lead to a dramatic deterioration in mail service.

### APWU Leadership Training Seminar

The Research and Education Department, in partnership with Wayne State University, is offering "Leadership Training for APWU Presidents," a weeklong conference in Detroit, Oct. 2-7.

Registration forms can be picked up at the Post-Convention Workshop booth. The forms also are available at [www.apwu.org](http://www.apwu.org), in the "On the Calendar" section on the home page.

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### Credentials Committee

As presented by Chairperson Geneva Greenlee of the Muncie (IN) Area Local, the preliminary report of the APWU Credentials Committee for Tuesday, Aug. 15, is as follows:

The 18th Biennial Convention's 2,787 delegates represent 400 locals, 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Also in attendance are 84 national officers and four Retirees Department delegates.