

APWU, USPS Reach Tentative Agreement On New Contract

The American Postal Workers Union and the U.S. Postal Service have reached a tentative agreement on a new contract, union President Cliff Guffey announced today.

“Despite the fact that the Postal Service is on the edge of insolvency, the union and management have reached an agreement that is a ‘win-win,’ proposition,” he said.

“Throughout the bargaining process, the union has sought to negotiate a contract that would be fair to our members and that would enable the USPS to succeed in the future,” he said. “The tentative agreement accomplishes those goals.

“The new contract will safeguard jobs, protect retirement and healthcare benefits, and provide a 3.5 percent wage increase over the life of the contract. The first raise will be in November 2012,” Guffey said.

No Layoffs, Limits on Excessing

The new Collective Bargaining Agreement, which will expire on May 20, 2015, retains protection against layoffs for all career employees who were on the rolls as of Nov. 20, 2010, when the current contract was scheduled to expire.

“Avoiding layoffs was a top priority,” Guffey said, noting that more than 100,000 postal jobs have been eliminated in the last three years.

The contract also includes provisions that will return to postal employees a significant amount of work that had been outsourced or assigned to managerial personnel. “This will strengthen job security for our members while it saves the Postal Service money,” the union president said.

The agreement limits excessing outside of an installation or craft to no more than 40 miles from the installation in most cases and to no more than 50 miles in any case. If management cannot place employees

within 50 miles, the parties will jointly determine what steps may be taken.

“These restrictions will ease the hardship of excessing, which in recent years has forced thousands of APWU members to sell their homes, uproot their families, and move hundreds of miles away from their communities,” Guffey said.

“Despite the fact that the Postal Service is on the edge of insolvency, the union and management have reached an agreement that is a ‘win-win’ proposition.”

Cliff Guffey
APWU President

There will be no changes to the healthcare benefits of APWU members in 2012. Each year from 2013 through 2016 there will be a slight shift in employees’ share of contributions toward healthcare coverage. This will amount to an increase of several dollars per pay period each year. (Similar changes were made in the last contract.)

New Scales, New Category

A new, entry-level salary will be added to the pay scale for future employees in Levels 3 through 8.

Casuals and Transitional Employees will be eliminated as workforce categories. To provide the USPS with flexibility, the parties agreed to create a new position for Non-Career Assistants, who will comprise up to 20 percent of workforce in most functional areas in

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the Clerk Craft and up to 10 percent in both the Maintenance and Motor Vehicle Crafts.

These employees will be paid lower wages than career employees, but higher wages than Transitional Employees and Casuals. They will be part of the APWU bargaining unit and will receive raises, health benefits, and leave. Non-Career Assistants will have access to the grievance procedure, and they will have the opportunity to join the ranks of the permanent, career workforce by seniority.

“The Postal Service’s desperate financial situation made these negotiations especially hard,” Guffey said. “But we have reached a tentative agreement that will enable the USPS and its employees to get past these difficult days.

“The USPS economic crisis is caused by an unreasonable requirement that the agency pre-fund the healthcare benefits of future retirees – a burden no other private company or government agency bears,”

he continued. “Correcting that inequity is essential to restoring long-term stability to the Postal Service.

“I call on union members to join together to meet with their legislators and urge them to correct this inequity so that we are not forced to bargain under these circumstances again,” Guffey said.

“I want to thank the members of the union’s negotiating team for their outstanding work,” Guffey said, “and, most importantly, I want to thank the members of the APWU for their ongoing support.”

Member Ratification

In accordance with the union’s constitution, a majority of the members of the Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee must approve the agreement before it can be sent to union members for a ratification vote. The committee will supervise balloting.

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Highlights of the New Collective Bargaining Agreement

Below are key components of the tentative agreement between the U.S. Postal Service and the American Postal Workers Union for the 2010-2015 Collective Bargaining Agreement. The four-and-half year contract, which will expire at midnight on May 20, 2015, must be ratified by members of the APWU.

Wages

There will be across-the-board pay increases of 3.5 percent over the life of the contract.

- Nov. 17, 2012 – 1% increase
- Nov. 16, 2013 – 1.5% increase
- Nov. 15, 2014 – 1% increase

Cost-of-Living Adjustments

Cost-of-living increases will continue and will be “back-loaded.” COLAs for 2011 were waived, and COLAs for 2012 are deferred until 2013.

- A March 2012 COLA will become effective in March 2013, together with a March 2013 COLA.
- A September 2012 COLA will become effective in September 2013, together with a September 2013 COLA.

- Cost-of-Living Adjustments will be made in March and September 2013.
- Cost-of-Living Adjustments will be made in March and September 2014.
- A Cost-of-Living Adjustment will be made in March 2015.

New Entry-Level Steps

Additional steps will be added to the pay scale for new employees in Levels 3 through 8, with lower starting salaries. Future employees will progress through the new steps onto the current pay scale, but will not be eligible to progress to the current top step.

Health Benefits

There will be no changes to the healthcare benefits of APWU members in 2012. Each year from 2013

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through 2016 there will be a slight shift in employees' share of contributions toward healthcare coverage. This will amount to an increase of several dollars per pay period each year. (Similar changes were made in the last contract.)

Limits on Excessing

- The agreement limits excessing outside of an installation or craft to no more than 40 miles from the installation in most cases and to no more than 50 miles in any case. If management cannot place employees within 50 miles, the parties will jointly determine what steps may be taken.
- Employees will not be required to retreat to crafts they were excessed from if the crafts are represented by the APWU.
- There will be designated "moving days" no more frequently than once every three months for excessing from postal installations. This will strengthen seniority when excessing occurs in multiple installations within a geographic area.

Jobs and Job Security

- Protection against layoffs continues for all career employees who were on the rolls as of Nov. 20, 2010. The language of Article 6, which governs layoffs and reductions-in-force, remains unchanged.
- New provisions on subcontracting give the APWU the opportunity to develop proposals to compete with subcontractors for work, and stipulate that if APWU-represented employees can perform the work less expensively than the subcontractors, the work must be performed by APWU-represented employees.
- The tentative agreement protects jobs with a provision that stipulates that the APWU will retain jurisdiction if the duties of union members are moved to facilities that are not currently represented by the APWU.

Jobs in the Clerk Craft

- No fewer than 1,100 Call Center jobs that had been contracted out will be returned to the APWU bargaining unit. The Call Center locations will become part of the installation of the nearest Processing & Distribution Center, so that APWU members can bid on these positions.
- A minimum of 800 positions will be created in the Clerk Craft to perform administrative and technical duties that are currently performed by

EAS personnel.

- Lead Clerk, PS-7, positions will be created in mail processing and in retail to perform administrative duties.
 - At least one Lead Clerk position will be established in any office where there is no supervisor.
 - At least one Lead Clerk position will be established in any Customer Service office with five or more Clerk Craft employees.
 - Ratios for the establishment of Lead Clerk positions in mail processing will be as follows:

# Clerks	# Lead Clerks
5 - 49	1
50-99	2
100-199	3
200-499	4
500 or more	5, plus one for each 100 clerks

- 204Bs will be eliminated from offices with supervisors, except to fill absences of 14 days or more and vacant assignments of 14 days or more, not to exceed 90 days.
- The Part-Time Regular job title will be replaced with Non-Traditional Full-Time Employee. With this change will come expanded opportunities for these workers.

Jobs in the Maintenance Craft

- There will be a joint audit of maintenance work currently performed by contractors to identify duties that can be assigned to the Maintenance Craft where it is cost effective.
- Custodial staffing will be established on an installation-wide basis rather than on a facility-wide basis.
- Initially 1,500 custodial positions that were contracted out will be returned to the bargaining unit.
- Help Desk positions at the MTSC (Maintenance Technical Support Center) in Norman, OK, will be assigned to the bargaining unit.
- There will be an audit of EAS positions to determine if non-supervisory duties are being performed. Bargaining unit duties derived from the audit will be returned to the bargaining unit and a minimum of 60 bargaining unit positions will be established.
- All in-craft promotions will be on the basis of installation seniority within a "banded" score.

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Jobs in the Motor Vehicle Craft

- Approximately 740 Vehicle Maintenance Facility positions will be created to perform work that is currently performed by subcontractors. The jobs will be created as follows:

219 Level 8 Technicians
459 Level 9 Lead Technicians
62 Level 10 Lead Technicians

- A minimum of 600 Highway Contract Routes (HCRs) will be converted to Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) routes, with a minimum of 25% of the duty assignments given to career employees.
- The APWU will have the opportunity to review approximately 8,000 additional HCRs, and will have the opportunity to submit proposals for the work.
- There will be an audit of EAS positions to determine if non-supervisory duties are being performed. Bargaining unit duties derived from the audit will be returned to the bargaining unit and a minimum of 60 bargaining unit positions will be established.
- Part-Time Flexible and Part-Time Regular positions will be eliminated from the MVS Craft.

New, Non-Traditional Positions

- The tentative agreement changes the definition of “full-time” in a way that gives the Postal Service and our members greater flexibility.
 - The “full-time” designation will apply to any position of 30 or more hours per week and to any position of 48 hours or less per week.
 - No current employees can be forced into a full-time position of less than 40 hours per week or more than 44 hours per week.
 - These provisions will allow for the creation of many non-traditional full-time schedules, including four 10-hour days, three 12-hour days, and four 11-hour days.
 - There will be no mandatory overtime for employees in non-traditional assignments or in functional areas that utilize non-traditional full-time assignments.
- To provide the USPS with flexibility, the parties agreed to create a new position for Non-Career Assistants, who will comprise up to 20 percent of the workforce in most functional areas of the Clerk Craft and up to 10 percent in both the Maintenance and Motor Vehicle Crafts. These employees will

be paid lower wages than career employees, but higher wages than Transitional Employees and Casuals. They will be part of the APWU bargaining unit and will receive raises, health benefits, and leave. Non-Career Assistants will have access to the grievance procedure, and they will have the opportunity to join the ranks of the permanent, career workforce by seniority.

- Transitional Employees and Casuals will be eliminated as workforce categories. Employees who are currently serving as TEs or Casuals will be eligible for conversion to Non-Career Assistants if they have passed the appropriate tests.

Small Offices

- There will be no Part-Time Flexibles in Level 21 and above offices. Positions will be staffed with Full-Time Regulars (including non-traditional assignments) and Non-Career Assistants.
- In Level 20 and below offices, wherever the union can demonstrate the existence of 30-hour duty assignments, management must create them.
- Restrictions will be placed on the amount of bargaining unit work that may be performed by supervisory personnel in small offices. The formula is as follows:

Level 20 offices and above - No bargaining work by supervisors allowed
Level 18 offices - 15 hours per week
Level 15 and 16 offices - 25 hours per week

- Many Contract Postal Units (CPUs) will be returned to the APWU bargaining unit; others will be closed, and a system will be established to evaluate additional CPUs for return to the bargaining unit or closure.

Bidding

Employees will enjoy unlimited bidding on jobs that do not require training or a deferment period. Such bids will not count toward an employee’s allowed number of bids.

Light & Limited Duty

The union’s proposals regarding light- and limited-duty positions will proceed to arbitration. Our proposals are intended to protect seniority rights and to provide fair opportunities for accommodation for employees that need it.