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WILLIAM BURRUS, President MYKE REID, Editor Vol. 36, No. 7 • July 10, 2006

Union President Condemns USPS Plans to Privatize AMCs

APWU President William Burrus has denounced Postal Service plans to subcontract work currently performed by bargaining unit employees at more than half of the nation's Air Mail Centers. "This ill-advised adventure would privatize an important and sensitive sector of the United States Postal Service, slashing the postal workforce and jeopardizing security and service to ordinary citizens," he said. "Once again, management is succumbing to the demands of the big advertising mailers."

The USPS notified the union in a July 3 letter that it is "considering subcontracting the tender and receipt of mail" at 43 AMCs. The letter noted that a determination on the impact on bargaining unit employees has not yet been made.

Article 32 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the APWU and USPS, which governs subcontracting, requires the Postal Service to provide advance notification to the union at the national level "when subcontracting which will have a significant impact on bargaining unit work is being considered." The contract also says management must give "due consideration to public interest, cost, efficiency, availability of equipment, and qualification of employees when evaluating the need to subcontract."

The Postal Service is required to meet with the union while developing the initial "Comparative Analysis Report," which is used to evaluate the criteria outlined in Article 32. No final decision on whether such work will be contracted out can be made until the matter has been discussed.

"In these days of heightened attention to our nation's security, it is unconscionable for the Postal Service to even consider replacing career postal workers – who have undergone extensive background checks – with employees hired by subcontractors," Burrus said. "The Postal Service should be reminded of the Emery debacle."

In 1997, after conducting a three-year study, the USPS reached an agreement with Emery Worldwide to process and transport Priority Mail. In 1999 and 2001, the Postal Service's Inspector General's office audited the contract and concluded that mail processed through Emery's network cost 23 percent more than mail processed by the Postal Service, and that the contractor "was not meeting overall delivery goals." The reports also found that Emery had failed to perform the security screenings required by the contract.

In November 2000, the Postal Service and Emery agreed to an early termination of the contract after the private company tried to charge 40 percent more than the USPS had been expecting to pay. Cost to the Postal Service: $66 million in termination fees and $235 million to settle Emery's claims of underpayment.

"The union will take all appropriate action to ensure that this work remains within the Postal Service," the union president said. The union is also contesting management's decision in August 2005 to subcontract work at the Boston AMC and its November 2005 plans to subcontract work at six other AMCs: Grand Rapids, MI; Kansas City, MO; Phoenix; Pittsburgh; St. Louis; and Miami. There are 79 Air Mail Centers in the USPS network of 672 facilities.

For updates on this and related issues, visit the union's Web site, *www.apwu.org*.

Targeted Air Mail Centers

Albuquerque, NM (ABQ)
Arlington, VA (DCA)
Baltimore, MD (BWI)
Birmingham, AL (BHM)
Boise, ID (BOI)
Charlotte, NC (CLT)
Cincinnati, OH (CVG)
City of Industry (ONT)
Cleveland, OH (CLE)
Columbus, OH (CMH)
Dayton, OH (DAY)
Denver, CO (DEN)
Des Moines, IA (DSM)
Detroit, MI (DTW)
Dulles, VA (IAD)
Flushing, NY (LGA)
Greensboro, NC (GSO)
Greenville, SC (GSP)
Hartford, CT (BDL)
Humble/Houston, TX (IAH)
Indianapolis, IN (IND)
Jacksonville, FL (JAX)
Las Vegas, NV (LAS)
Los Angeles, CA (LAX)
Louisville, KY (SDF)
Memphis, TN (MEM)
Milwaukee, WI (MKE)
Nashville, TN (BNA)
Norfolk, VA (ORF)
Oakland, CA (OAK)
Oklahoma City (OKA)
Omaha, NE (OMA)
Portland, OR (PDX)
Raleigh, NC (RDU)
Reno, NV (RNO)
Richmond, VA (RIC)
Salt Lake City (SLC)
San Antonio, TX (SAT)
San Diego, CA (SAN)
Seattle, WA (SEA)
St. Paul, MN (MSP)
Tulsa, OK (TUL)
West Columbia, SC (CAE)