

## APWU, Postal Service Announce Tentative Agreement On Contract Extension

### *Rank & File Bargaining Committee to Review Proposal*

APWU President William Burrus announced June 28 that the union and the USPS have reached a tentative agreement on a one-year extension of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, which is due to expire Nov. 20.

The extension agreement provides for a 1.6 percent across-the-board wage increase, to take effect March 18, 2006, and two cost-of-living adjustments, one in March 2006, and one in September 2006. It also calls for upgrades of 14 duty assignments in the clerk, maintenance, and motor vehicle crafts.

The agreement extends no-layoff protection and leaves the employee share of contributions to health benefit costs unchanged.

"I believe this is an outstanding agreement that will serve the members of the American Postal Workers Union and the American public," Burrus said.

"Throughout this process, my criteria has been consistent: Will the extension provide more to APWU members than we can expect to achieve in full-scale negotiations or arbitration? This tentative agreement passes that test.

"With this one-year extension we will accomplish what we are unlikely to win through negotiation or arbitration of a three-year or four-year agreement.

"And, while negotiations and arbitration drag on, as they inevitably do, raises are postponed and cost-of-living increases are delayed – and often times lost entirely," he said.

The extension proposal will be presented to the Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee when it meets in Washington on July 6. After studying details of the tentative extension agreement, the committee will decide whether to send it to the full APWU membership for a ratification vote.

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**- APWU President William Burrus**

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The proposed agreement would extend the Collective Bargaining Agreement to Nov. 20, 2006. If an extension is not ratified, full-scale negotiations will begin Aug. 29.

In addition to the main accord, the union and management also reached tentative agreement on a contract extension for employees covered by the IT/ASC Collective Bargaining Agreement and the Operating Services Agreement. (These agreements cover employees who work at the four Accounting Service Centers and Operating Services employees at USPS Headquarters and in Merrifield, VA.)

*(See next page for agreement details)*

### What Happens Next?

When the Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee reconvenes in Washington, DC, July 6, the first order of business will be to evaluate the tentative contract extension agreement. Committee members will have the opportunity to meet with national officers, ask questions, and discuss any concerns they may have.

Next, the committee will vote on the tentative agreement. If the committee approves the agreement, it will be mailed to APWU members for a ratification vote. In accordance with the APWU Constitution, the Rank and File Committee is responsible for supervising the vote.

*For the latest contract news, visit [www.apwu.org](http://www.apwu.org).*

## ...Tentative Contract Extension

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The contract extension preserves the terms of the current Collective Bargaining Agreement (Nov. 21, 2000-Nov. 20, 2005), with the following modifications:

### Salary Increases, COLAs

- A 1.6 percent wage increase will take effect March 18, 2006, based on the wages in effect following the September 2005 cost-of-living increase. This percentage increase exceeds the 1.3 percent that will be granted to other postal unions in November. Because it is based on the higher wages of September 2005, the dollar value is enhanced.
- Wage increases at the same percent and under the same terms will be granted to Transitional Employees (TEs).
- Cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) will be granted in March and September 2006. The contract extension will enable members to enjoy the full benefit of the six-month COLA increase that accrues between August 2005 (after the final measuring period of the current agreement) and January 2006. Typically, when a contract is negotiated, the COLA base measuring period is moved, and three months worth of COLA is lost. When contracts are arbitrated, usually at least one cost-of-living adjustment is lost entirely.
- The estimated annual values of the increases are expected to be as follows:
  - March 2006 COLA: Approximately \$208
  - March 2006 1.6 percent increase for a Level 5, Step O, employee: Approximately \$728
  - September 2006 COLA: Approximately \$437

### Upgrades

- Effective March 18, 2006, pay levels for the following duty assignments will be upgraded one level:
  - CLERK CRAFT: Air Records Processor, PS-5; TACS Time and Attendance Clerk, PS-5; Bulk Mail Clerk, PS-5; Ramp Clerk AMF, PS-6;
  - MAINTENANCE CRAFT: Maintenance Mechanic, PS-5; Welder, PS-6; Carpenter, PS-6; Letter Box Mechanic, PS-6; Maintenance Electrician, PS-6; Painter, PS-6; Plumber, PS-6;
  - MOTOR VEHICLE SERVICES CRAFT: Automotive Painter, PS-6; Vehicle Operations Assistant, Bulk Mails, PS-6; Body and Fender Repairman, PS-7.
- The upgrades will be based on a step-to-step upgrade, including credit for waiting period time already served.
- As Maintenance Mechanic, PS-4, positions become vacant, if the Postal Service fills the vacancies, they will be as Maintenance Mechanic, PS-5, positions.

### Other Provisions

- No-layoff protection will be extended to all career employees who were on the rolls as of Nov. 20, 2000, for an additional year.
- Transfer requests by employees from "impacted

installations" (where employees will be excessed from the craft or installation) will be given priority consideration.

- A minimum of 18 Modified Work Week pilot programs will be established during the term of the extension.
- Employees will be granted an additional opportunity to be declared a successful bidder during the extension.
- Uniform and work clothes allowances will be increased.
- The memorandum of understanding that provides career opportunities to TEs will be extended.
- To resolve an outstanding dispute, USPS will seek OPM authority to grant early retirement opportunities to eligible employees whose names were provided by the union between Jan. 9, 2004, and June 1, 2005.
- The USPS will increase the maximum number of voluntary payroll allotments (from two to three).
- The USPS will provide information to the APWU at the national level regarding consolidation of installations.

### Union Rights

- The union and management will each be granted the opportunity to advance two cases to the top of the national arbitration docket during the period of the extension.
- In the 60-day period following ratification, the parties at the local level will be granted an opportunity to engage in local negotiations.
- The union will be provided all current handbooks, manuals, and published regulations that are on the USPS intranet in an electronic format on a semi-annual basis; reports that are currently provided to the union in hard copy will be transmitted electronically when possible.

### Retail Sales Assistants

No agreement was reached regarding the establishment of Retail Sales Assistant positions at grocery stores, malls, and other venues that are easily accessible to the public. The concept of allowing retired postal workers to fill such positions while collecting their retirement annuities was rejected by OPM. Discussions with the Postal Service continue.

### IT/ASC & OS Agreements

Under the tentative proposal, employees covered by the IT/ASC and OS Agreements will receive the same wage increases and cost-of-living adjustments as the employees covered by the main agreement. An additional voluntary payroll allotment will be granted to these employees as well.

The IT/ASC tentative agreement provides for a one-level upgrade of the Computer Systems Analyst/Programmer, Level 18, position. It also extends until Jan. 20, 2007, the IT Casuals Memorandum of Understanding, which governs the number of skilled casuals and provides training opportunities for APWU members.

The tentative extension agreement for Operating Services employees extends their protection against layoffs and increases uniform and work clothes allowances.