

Contract Extension Proposal Goes Before the Members

Ballot Mailing Starts July 18; Vote Count Set for Aug. 5

With a mailing that began July 18, the contract-extension referendum process has begun. More than 220,000 ballots are being distributed to union members covered by the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the APWU and the Postal Service.

The single-question ballot offers a choice of 'Yes' or 'No' on extending the National Agreement one year, to Nov. 20, 2006. Completed ballots must be received by Friday, Aug. 5, when the vote count will take place.

The ratification mailing includes a summary of the agreement, the exact wording of each proposed contract change, a ballot, a return envelope, a statement by the Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee on the contract extension, and a letter from APWU President William Burrus. Advance copies of the tentative agreement were sent to local and state presidents.

The Rank and File committee voted on July 7 to approve the tentative agreement. The advisory committee first met in Washington on June 22 and began deliberations there on July 6. In accordance with Article 13.9.C of the APWU Constitution, the committee must approve a tentative agreement before members are given the opportunity to vote on it. The panel is also responsible for supervising the vote.

Talks were initiated by the Postal Service this spring and Burrus announced on June 20 that a framework for the agreement had been reached. On June 28, he announced that a tentative agreement was finalized. With several board members participating by telephone, the union's National Execu-

tive Board voted unanimously that day to endorse the contract extension.

In addition to their discussions on the main accord, the APWU and USPS management also reached tentative agreement on contract extensions for employees covered by the IT/Accounting Service Centers Collective Bargaining Agreement and the Operating Services Agreement.

The IT/ASC and OS agreements mirror the National Agreement, though the IT/ASC agreement expires two months later (Jan. 20, 2006). APWU members covered by these contracts will vote in separate referendums on whether to extend these agreements by one year.

The full text of a statement by the Rank and File committee explaining the reasons for its decision appeared in a July 8 *APWU News Bulletin* and can be viewed online at www.apwu.org/issues-contract/index.htm.

If You Don't Receive a Ballot ...

The referendum mailing to active APWU members is taking place July 18-20. Returned ballots will be picked up by the independent mailing-house on Friday, Aug. 5; the vote-count will begin immediately.

If you have not received a ballot by July 25, contact APWU headquarters at 202-842-8505 and request a duplicate (you may request via fax at 202-216-2650). Provide your name, address, craft, and Social Security number or employee identification number.

USPS Publicity Campaign to Spotlight Retail Clerks

The next phase of a year-old Postal Service publicity campaign will feature Retail Sales Associates.

Taking a prominent role in marketing USPS products and services, select retail clerks will "become champions for the benefits of upgrading the lobby environment," and will appear in internal promotions and local publicity events.

The participation of clerks is due in part to APWU efforts last summer when the program was initially announced. "It appeared to shine the spotlight only on letter carriers," said APWU President William Burrus. "Our members perform the widest range of essential services in the nation's mail system, and I demanded and received assurances that we

would be included in the campaign."

Agreement has been reached with postal management that APWU local unions in each District will nominate five associates, and management will nominate an additional five. The 80 nationwide finalists will go to Dallas Aug. 30 for a day of training, followed by a day of auditions for selection as one of the nine Area representatives in the program.

Locals within Districts are asked to communicate among themselves to determine the selection process and to apportion the choices according to size. Local officers should contact their respective District managers regarding the timing for making the selections.