APWU NEWS Bulletin
CLIFF GUFFEY, President GARY KLOEPFER, Editor Vol. 43, No. 14 • Aug. 16, 2013

First 399 Clerk Craft PSEs to be Converted to Career Status

In response to demands from the APWU, the Postal Service agreed on Aug. 14 to convert 399 Clerk Craft Postal Support Employees (PSEs) to career status. The conversions will be the first in mail processing.

The conversions will occur primarily in districts where the number of PSEs exceeds the 20 percent district-wide cap outlined in the 2010-2015 Collective Bargaining Agreement, and will take place within 60 days of the signing of the agreement. For a list of locations, visit *www.apwu.org.*

"This is an important breakthrough in our fight to enforce the contract and ensure that PSEs have a genuine path to career employment," said President Cliff Guffey. "After months of meetings, discussions, arguments and grievances, we have made progress.

"But this is just a first step," Clerk Craft Director Rob Strunk said. "Discussions will continue on several outstanding PSE issues, which we believe will result in many additional conversions."

The settlement agreement also stipulates that the union and management will explore ways to prevent the hiring of PSEs in excess of contractual limits.

In the meantime, Strunk notes that numerous installations are in violation of the installation-wide limits on the number of PSEs involved in retail and customer service operations.

Those violations must be monitored and addressed at the local level, he pointed out. "Locals should be diligent in reviewing PSE Compliance Reports and filing grievances where necessary," Strunk said. The reports are posted at *www.apwu.org/dept/ind-rel/iruspsreports.htm.*

More than 575 Motor Vehicle Service Craft PSEs have already become career employees.

Discussions are continuing on the conversion of PSEs in the Maintenance Craft and on additional conversions in the Motor Vehicle Service Craft.

Agreement Strengthens, Clarifies PSE Seniority

The APWU achieved a significant victory on Aug. 13, with the signing a Memorandum of Understanding that strengthens and clarifies the seniority rights of Postal Support Employees (PSEs), Industrial Relations Director Mike Morris has announced.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on PSE Reappointment stipulates that after their break in service, PSE reappointments must be based solely on the PSEs' relative standing – their seniority – on the installation's PSE rolls.

In some parts of the country, the USPS had claimed that PSEs who have completed a 360-day appointment had no contractual right to be reappointed based on their seniority. The Postal Service asserted that management was free to retain more junior PSEs – or even hire new PSEs – rather than reappointing more senior PSEs who had completed a term of appointment.

"This Memorandum of Understanding makes clear that PSEs enjoy protection against favoritism and arbitrary decisions by management," Morris said.

"PSEs may not be bypassed for reappointment as a substitute for discipline," he added. "They must be reappointed upon completion of their 360-day term based on their seniority."

The MOU clarifies several points:

- PSE separations due to lack of work must be implemented installation-wide by juniority.
- PSEs who are separated due to lack of work must be reappointed ahead of more junior PSEs.
- PSEs who are separated due to lack of work must be reappointed before the USPS hires new PSEs if the need for hiring arises within one year.
- When a PSE's five-day break occurs and the USPS determines there is a need to reduce the number of PSEs, the PSE with the most seniority must be reappointed and the most junior PSE in the installation must be separated instead.

"This agreement clarifies and cements the fact there is indeed a path for PSEs who wish to become career employees," Morris said. "Clearly, for PSEs as well as career employees, it pays to belong to APWU!"