

Postmaster General Declares War on Service

APWU to Launch Vigorous Campaign Against Plant Closures, Consolidations

On June 30, the APWU denounced plans by the Postal Service to resume the closure and consolidation of up to 82 mail processing plants beginning in January 2015.

“This is a direct assault on service to the people of the country, on postal workers and on the Postal Service’s own network,” said union President Mark Dimondstein. The closure of the plants will require the USPS to degrade service standards and delay mail.

“We need a Postmaster General who will champion the Postal Service. Instead, PMG Donahoe is on a rampage to destroy it,” he said.

Employees who are reassigned outside their installation are expected to move on Jan. 10, 2015, the USPS said in a June 30 letter to the APWU. Union leaders received the USPS letter via fax, just minutes before employees were informed of management’s plans.

Muster a Fight-Back

The APWU president vowed to work with other postal unions and the public “to muster a fight-back similar to our campaign to *Stop Staples* and the recent campaign to protect six-day mail delivery.” The House Appropriations Committee voted on June 25 to reinstate a provision requiring six-day mail delivery in a funding bill. A week earlier a House subcommittee had approved a bill that dropped – for the first time in more than three decades – the six-day delivery requirement.

The 82 facilities were among 242 sites targeted for closure in September 2011 and February 2012, and most of them were partially consolidated in 2012 and 2013.

“These plants are suffering from last year’s hit,” said Executive Vice President Debby Szeredy. “Now the delays in mail delivery will become even longer, damaging service to individuals, small businesses, and mailers.”

Ignoring the Possibilities

The Postal Service claims the plant closures will generate \$750 million in annual savings. “Yet he is ignoring a report by the USPS Office of Inspector General that says the Postal Service could generate \$9 billion by offering basic financial services without any cuts to traditional postal service,” Szeredy said. “Something is wrong with this mentality.”

“The Postmaster General also neglects to mention that the USPS earned a profit from operations in fiscal year 2013 and in the first two quarters of 2014,” she added.

Donahoe claims that there have been steep declines in first-class mail, Szeredy pointed out, “yet he fails to tell the public that the USPS has already given away 60 percent of first-class mail processing to Pitney Bowes and other pre-sort houses.”

“The APWU headquarters will release a major battle plan to stop the consolidations and the attack on service because the future of the USPS depends on it,” the union vice president said. “We will make this fight a nationwide campaign and ask all Americans to stand up and fight back.”

“Get ready for the crusade. We cannot sit back and let the PMG destroy our Postal Service,” she said.

Arbitrator: Excessed Employees Must Meet Minimum Qualifications Before Reassignment

The APWU won an important arbitration award on June 24, when Arbitrator Stephen B. Goldberg ruled that the Postal Service must determine – prior to excessing employees across craft lines – that the employees meet the minimum qualifications for the new position.

The union filed a national-level grievance on July 24, 2012, because the USPS was reassigning excess APWU-craft employees who were unable to carry mail or walk a route into Letter Carrier positions. The USPS also was placing workers without driver’s licenses into positions that require them.

The arbitrator ordered the USPS to make whole all employees and former employees adversely affected by the violations. He retained jurisdiction to resolve any questions related to the remedy that the parties are unable to resolve.

For more information visit www.apwu.org.