

APWU NEWS

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO CLIFF GUFFEY, President MYKE REID, Editor

Rep. Danny Davis:

If We Fight, We Win!

In an inspirational speech Aug. 19, Rep. Danny K. Davis (D-IL) urged union members to fight back against “evil-doers” who would destroy the Postal Service and send the nation back to a dark time when most workers had no rights and few prospects for achieving the American Dream.

Davis – a former clerk at the Chicago Post Office and a longtime friend of APWU – warned that there’s a stark choice facing voters this November, but said he was optimistic that if we stay positive and united, we will prevail in our struggle to preserve the USPS and protect our future.

“Our America is at a serious crossroads. And between now and November, we have some great decisions that we have to make. We can decide to go forward, or we can decide to go backward.”

“If we slip back,” he warned, “the rich will get richer while the poor get poorer and the middle class is squeezed practically out of existence – a world



Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL)

where our jobs are downsized, privatized, outsourced or outright eliminated. Where there is no collective bargaining, where workers have virtually no rights, and where even people’s pension funds are in jeopardy.” So we must go forward, he said, “with renewed energy, strength, and determination to make America the country that it has never been, and yet the country that we know that we can and must be.”

Davis implored union members not to become cynical and to remain committed to activism. “I believe that no matter how difficult things seem to be, there is a way out.” Quoting Frederick Douglass, Davis said, “‘If there is no struggle, there is no progress.’ And so any time somebody tells me that we have to save the Postal Service, I ask them what they are doing as a part of the struggle.”

In these challenging times, he said, “one thing we have is our voice and our vote. We have our voice to say to those who represent us, what it is that we want, and what it is that we need. But we also have our votes to determine whether they get there.”

“No matter what the pollsters and prognosticators say, between now and November, we can determine who becomes president of this nation of ours... I believe that the masses of people have far more power than the richest of people have money,” Davis added. “If we fight, we win, if we fight, we lose.”

Delegates Debate Bargaining Resolutions

Delegates to the APWU’s 21st Biennial National Convention got down to business on the convention’s opening day, debating and voting on a dozen resolutions that were submitted to the Labor-Management Committee. Among the most significant adopted by the delegates on the convention’s first day was a resolution that the APWU

negotiate to eliminate the use of all Non-traditional Full-Time (NTFT) jobs not approved by the local union.

Management’s implementation of the NTFT MOU is turning out to be one of the union’s greatest challenges, many delegates say, as the employer is not honoring existing contractual provisions such as creating desirable jobs, providing

relevant information to the union, or working with the local unions on the memo’s implementation.

Many local managers are using the MOU as an excuse to create less-than 40-hour-a-week non-traditional full-time positions where the work hours justify a traditional full-time job,

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MVS: ‘Fighting for Our Lives’

“We’re fighting for our lives,” Motor Vehicle Services Director Bob Pritchard declared Aug. 18 at the MVS Craft



**Motor Vehicle Services Director
Bob Pritchard**

Conference. “There are more conversions on the table today than in the last 17 years combined,” he said, referring to management proposals to contract out Postal Vehicle Service operations.

Of particular concern is the Postal Service’s plan to subcontract all MVS operations in California. “Management is using the California Resources Act

as an excuse to contract out,” said Joe Gill, of the Sacramento Local. The law requires vehicles to comply with strict limits on emissions. If management implements the plan it could result in the loss of 800 jobs, Gill said.

The USPS is also proposing to contract out MVS operations at approximately 30 other locations, Pritchard reported.

Management is “cooking the books” to sidestep stronger protections against subcontracting in the 2010-2015 Collective Bargaining Agreement, he said. Under the new provisions of the contract, the Postal Service must involve the union early in the process when it is considering subcontracting, and management must make a “fair cost comparison” between postal operations and subcontracting proposals. However, USPS cost comparisons are faulty, Pritchard said, because management overestimates PVS costs, while allowing contractors to submit “magically low” bids.

National officers are creating a template grievance to combat

management’s subcontracting efforts, but locals must help document and develop the grievances, he said. Local MVS officers must help gather data that can be used to challenge subcontracting decisions, he said. “We need to find the flaws,” he said, “such as improper mileage and work-hour estimates, and where management is subsidizing contractors by providing them with free fuel, offices, parking spaces and administrative services.”

“There’s a whole floor at USPS headquarters dedicated to contracting out MVS work,” Pritchard pointed out, “but those administrative costs aren’t on the ledger.”



Joe Gill

2012 St. Clair Darby Conference:

Delegates Debate Maintenance Issues



Maintenance Director Steve Raymer

Maintenance delegates gathered at a pre-convention conference to discuss changes to the Joint Contract Interpretation Manual (JCIM) affecting the craft, recent Step 4 settlements, the Maintenance Craft jobs memorandum of understanding (MOU) and saved

grade issues.

The day’s session also included an “open forum” discussion of resolutions.

“The delegates were fully engaged in spirited debates. Overall, it was a successful meeting,” said Steve Raymer, Maintenance Craft Director.

National officers reported on maintenance craft issues, and attendees received a CD containing updated training material to take home and share with other members.

Dexter Horton of the Jackson Mississippi Area Local shared his enthusiasm about the event. “This is my first National Convention. I just want to get all of the information I can to solve the problems I’m dealing with at my local post office,” Horton said.

The Maintenance delegates unanimously agreed to designate the division meetings the “2012 St. Clair Darby Maintenance Conference,” named for late Maintenance Craft Director St. Clair Darby (Chicago Region).



Dexter Horton

Excessing, Non-Traditional Full-Time Assignments Dominate Clerk Conference

Delegates to the 2012 Clerk Division Conference met on Aug. 18 to debate issues affecting the craft, from limits on Non-traditional Full-Time (NTFT) duty assignments to inadequate window staffing and problems with posting and bidding.

Clerk Division Director Rob Strunk reported that a large number of veteran USPS labor relations specialists retired shortly after the last contract was signed, and too many of their replacements have little or no labor-management experience.

“After the contract was signed, USPS management had the opportunity to post duty assignments with work schedules that fit the workload. Some postmasters posted assignments with

four 10-hour days, which were very popular,” Strunk said, referring to the new NTFT positions.

“Unfortunately, many small-minded postmasters posted duty assignments with 30-hour work weeks spanning five or six days, resulting in increased overtime, increased out-of-schedule pay, and an increase in the number of hours worked by PSEs.”

One resolution adopted at the conference calls on the national APWU to negotiate caps on NTFT positions in stations and area offices based on office size.

“We as a union must stay united in our struggles with management,” said Assistant Clerk Craft

Director Pat Williams. “We are only as strong as we are united,” she said.

Another resolution adopted by the conference asks APWU negotiators to seek to restrict the reposting of duty assignments in a section to no more

than once a year, unless approved by the local union.

Excessing has traditionally been a hot topic at the Clerk Division conference, but the 2010 contract includes a prohibition on excessing beyond 50 miles from an employee’s home installation, which has greatly reduced the disruption caused by excessing.

The Transfer Memo to Minimize Excessing was also strengthened and now allows clerks to voluntarily transfer into residual vacancies in the Clerk Craft in their USPS district or within a 100-mile radius of their installation in order to reduce or eliminate excessing. This Clerk Craft-to-Clerk Craft transfer right utilizes the eReassign system and works much like a bid, with the senior applicant awarded the transfer opportunity.

Assistant Clerk Division Director Lyle Krueth reported that 371 clerks have used the new 21-day eReassign option to voluntarily transfer in lieu of excessing, which avoided the excessing of 371 clerks.



Clerk Craft Director Rob Strunk addresses delegates during conference

Support Services Plans Contract, Organizing Efforts

Members of the Support Services Division discussed pending contract negotiations, job security, and private-sector organizing efforts at their pre-convention conference on Aug. 19.

Approximately 900 APWU members who work in USPS Information Technology and Accounting Services positions are attempting to overcome management delaying tactics in negotiations, explained Director Bill Manley. Their contract expired in January 2011, yet the USPS has failed to respond to union proposals, he noted.

“The main reason we don’t have a contract for IT/AS is that it takes two to

dance, and they don’t want to dance,” he said.

Contract negotiations are also going slowly for postal nurses, whose contract expired Aug. 10. A temporary extension runs out at the end of the month.

Preparing for contract negotiations for 800 private-sector APWU-represented truck drivers and mail equipment workers is also high on the agenda. Their contracts are set to expire in the next two years.

Private-sector organizing is also a high priority for the division, especially efforts to help 1,000 DHL workers form a union at a facility in Cincinnati, OH.

Despite strong opposition from DHL, the workers are expected to vote for a union later this year.



Support Services Director Bill Manley

Retirees Department Celebrates 20 Years



President Guffey and Retiree Director Beard congratulate new retiree chapter officers.

APWU Retirees celebrated their 20th year as a department to discuss a range of issues affecting senior citizens, such as Social Security Disability benefits, Medicare, and the importance of the senior vote in the upcoming 2012 elections.

Retirees Department Director Judy Beard led participants in a seminar on health and retirement security, and stressed the importance of staying involved with the union after retirement from the Postal Service.

Rich Fiesta, Director of Government and Political Affairs, Alliance for Retired Americans, and Steven Regenstreif,

American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees Retirees Director, spoke on the importance of the senior vote in the 2012 election.

Beard urged delegates to contact their U.S. representatives and emphasized the importance of voting in the upcoming 2012 elections.

Myke Reid, APWU Legislative and Political Director, spoke on postal legislation and labor issues. He also presented awards to retiree members who made the highest contributions to the Committee on Political Action (COPA).

Retirees were honored at the meeting

for their dedication to the APWU as well as the growth of the Retirees Department. Beard recognized members for supporting the goals of the Retiree Department and working to ensure the dignity of all retirees.

The Retirees Department also marked its 20th anniversary with an afternoon reception.



Judy Beard, Retirees Department Director

Delegates Debate Resolutions

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delegates said.

Other approved resolutions dealt with equalizing Postal Support Employee (PSE) hours, overtime for PSEs, and PTF reassignment and conversion opportunities in Level 20 and below offices.

Dena Briscoe, president of the Nation's Capital Southern Maryland Area Local and chairperson of the Labor Management Committee, reported that 73 resolutions were submitted to the committee by Monday, Aug. 20.

Debate on labor-management resolutions continued into the convention's second day.

The delegates had a spirited debate

on how best to maximize traditional full-time assignments.

Delegates also voted to encourage national negotiators to strive to achieve language that employees in NTFT duty assignments who are regularly scheduled over 8 hours per day be paid holiday pay for the number of hours they typically work.

The delegates also directed national negotiators to seek language that would provide a pathway for employees who are excessed from APWU crafts to return to the craft, either by enhanced retreat rights, or by granting retreat rights into their former craft in another installation.

Video Highlights

Videos of convention highlights are being broadcast each day in hotel rooms:

*Westin Bonaventure (Channel 45)
Sheraton (Channel 39)
JW Marriott (Channel 72)*

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Credentials Committee

As presented by Chairperson Geneva Greenlee of the Indiana APWU, the preliminary report of the APWU Credentials Committee for Tuesday, Aug. 21, is as follows:

The 21st Biennial Convention's 1969 delegates represent 324 locals, 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Also in attendance are 83 national officers and five Retirees Department delegates.