

# ***Top Flight***

Summer Edition

2013

## **Representation**

I have noticed over the years as a Union Official that there is a misconception in the Local as well as in the State that the Union leader whether it be a local or state President have all the information on what the Postal Service is about to do.

I'm here to tell you that this is not the case. Many Union leaders only find out about things that are about to change, by way of the rumor mill. Anyone who's been with the Postal Service for any length of time knows that the rumor mill is alive and well on almost any subject.

The Postal Service "should" inform Union Leaders as to what they are about to do as a professional courtesy, but that rarely happens. Normally they make a decision and move on it with total disregard to the consequences.

So, that being said, don't take it for granted that the Local or State union knows that they are about to put your station under PostPlan or DUO. Please contact your local or state representative when you hear of such a move.

I realize that many stations have numerous contractual violations that everyone in the station ignores. The problem is, someone at Region or National Headquarters is sitting at a desk looking at nothing but numbers, if the numbers show that the Postmaster is doing all the work or an RCA or City Carrier is doing the work and it's not showing up in the numbers game. Guess who will have their hours cut.

It is up to us all to police the contract, regardless of who is violating it. Your sweet deals with the local postmaster might suit your needs, but what happens then that postmaster is no longer there, or an injured carrier is assigned to your station, or someone is excessed into your building.

It is the Unions job to protect jobs. It is really difficult to do that job when the employees turn a blind eye to the violation the same way that management turns a blind eye on safety issues. Sooner or later, it will catch up to you.

Mark Cunningham – President  
Mississippi Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

## 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.



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2013-2015

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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.

## Delegates at the 2013 State Convention



Above:  
Delegates working hard.

Left:  
Mark Cunningham,  
President

Right:  
Pat Lampley, Sec.,  
Treasurer



The Election Committee  
giving their report.  
Chairman Lewis gives  
the report.



# 2013 State Convention

As some of you know, our 2013 State Convention was held at the Hollywood Resorts in Bay St Louis on June 14th and 15th.

I hope that everyone who attended had a pleasant stay. Attendance at this convention was down 9 delegates over the previous year when it was held in Jackson. This has become a trend as we loose more and more members to retirement. We really need each local throughout the state to send at least one delegate. As one of the delegates pointed out, not all the small locals were present. This is a valid point because it impacts the way we conduct the business of the State Organization, and every voice has a right to be heard.

During the Convention the body passed two Constitutional changes that will impact future conventions and Tri-State. The body voted unanimously to join our State Convention with the Tri-State convention which means that our next State Convention will be held in conjunction with the Tri-State hosted by the Memphis TN Local. No dates have been set as of this date. Since no Local volunteered to host the next State Convention, the State will host the next convention.

The other change was the creation of a Legislative Director. This is a position that is needed to help get the word out to our membership in small offices about issues that are going on in Congress and to educate our elected officials on what we need in legislation to ensure the survival of the Postal Service. Also, the Legislative Director will be in charge of the State's COPA drive throughout the state. This does not mean you can not continue to conduct your own local COPA drives.

*Mark Cunningham, President*

## President's \$52 Copa Club

This is a club EVERYBODY should belong to because it's so easy to join; it only costs a person \$1 per week!

The proceeds go towards COPA, a political action committee that supports electing politicians who fight for the causes we support.

The corporations have their PAC's lobbying Congress everyday on their behalf. We all know what that means. It means they are lobbying Congress to cut you out of your job, your pension, your health benefits and your right to work and form a union.

## President's \$52 COPA Club

Sandra Spencer	52.00
Mark Cunningham	52.00
Anthony Puckett	52.00
Sunny Thigpen	104.00
Dianna Blackwell	52.00
Kenneth Owens	52.00
George Collins	52.00
Patricia Lampley	65.00
Jerry McIlvain	52.00
Reco Colebrooke	52.00
James Dawson	52.00
Lewis Johnson, Sr	52.00
Jerry Moore	52.00
Joe Miller	52.00
Timothy Eaton	52.00

Who do you have lobbying for you on your behalf?

**COPA!**

The **TOP FLIGHT** is the official publication of the Mississippi Postal Workers Union. The opinions and views expressed in this publication are those of the writer, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Editor or the Executive Board of the MPWU.

All submissions are welcome, but may be edited, when necessary, for space or clarity.

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On Facebook  
**Mississippi Postal Workers Union**



## From the MS FEDS Director

Brothers and Sisters:

How would you like to belong to a great organization? This organization was created to show empathy for families of our fellow co-workers who have died because of illness, accidents or just old age.

When a loved one dies emergency situations arises and the insurance plans have not had the time to pay for the necessary expenses. A group of employees thought highly enough of their co-workers that they wanted to do something to help the families in emergencies. This, the death of a co-worker, counts as an emergency.

Believe me, some things the family is never prepared for and these funds come to be very useful in the event of death of a family member.

I, a member of the MS-FEDS, am asking that we as a Union come together and support the Fund that would help our fellow co-workers should the need arise. Please join this wonderful organization and show some support for the families.

**PLEASE SIGN UP AND JOIN THE MS FEDS BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION!**

## Limiting Excessing: A Top Priority

One of the chief goals of the union during last year's contract negotiations was to alleviate the problems imposed upon our members by excessing. Given the business climate we find ourselves in today, with the Postal Service attempting to close hundreds of post offices, stations, branches and mail processing operations, this was a paramount issue.

We successfully negotiated several changes to Article 12, which governs excessing, and to related Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) that improve the rights of union members.

One of the cornerstones of our new contract is an MOU on Minimizing Excessing, which remains in force for the duration of the 2010-2015 Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The most important new right gained in the MOU is the prohibition on excessing beyond 50 miles from an employee's home installation. The 50-mile driving-distance radius is measured from the plant, where one exists, and from the main office where there is no plant. The same rules apply to the gaining installation.

The APWU also successfully negotiated several alternatives to excessing. Before employees are excessed outside the craft or installation, the Postal Service must review its operations to create more efficient duty assignments within the installation. The USPS must also look for scheduling opportunities to offer duty assignments that are consistent with local operational needs in order to reduce or eliminate the need to excess employees. For instance, management could create Non-Traditional Full-Time (NTFT) duty assignments, consider work that had previously been contracted out, or return work improperly being performed by EAS personnel, etc.

In the Clerk Craft, we negotiated changes to the Transfer Opportunities to Minimize Excessing MOU. Clerks in impacted installations are now permitted to voluntarily transfer (based on seniority) into residual Clerk Craft vacancies within 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, which utilizes the eReassign system, works much like a bid, with the senior applicant awarded the transfer opportunity.

Management's obligation to separate PSEs or minimize the use of PSEs prior to excessing career employees from the craft or installation continues, as was previously required for casuals. In addition, Article 12 was amended to require the Postal Service to identify duty assignments currently held by PSEs in nearby installations within the appropriate radius.

Perhaps the most important protection for our membership is the extension of the no-layoff clause in Article 6 of the contract. Members who have six years of continuous service with at least 20 pay periods in each of the six years are protected. Additionally, we negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding that provides no-layoff protection for the life of the contract to anyone hired before Nov. 21, 2010.

As is true for all of our contractual rights, the vigilance of our members is what prevented Congress from taking them away, and is what will ultimately preserve these rights.

*Read more about excessing at [APWU.org](http://APWU.org).*



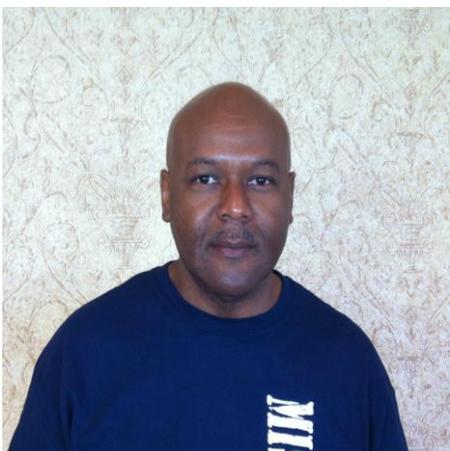
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Director

Reco  
Colebrooke

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District 2  
Director

Joe Miller



District 3 Director

Jerry Moore

\*\*\*\*\*

District 4 Director

Roger Stuckey



Legislative  
Director  
Shawn  
M. Page

APWU  
Auxiliary



## Postal Unions Write Joint Letter to Reid Against Carper-Coburn Postal Bill

*The presidents of the four postal employee unions—the National Association of Letter Carriers, the American Postal Workers Union, the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union—sent a letter to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) "to express our utter dismay with the introduction of S. 1486 on August 1," a postal bill introduced by Sens. Tom Carper (D-DE) and Tom Coburn (R-OK) that "renews a commitment to the disastrous Bush administration policy to mandate massive pre-funding of future retiree health benefits and provides for major downsizing measures to pay for it."*

August 5, 2013

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Senate Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Reid:

Over the years you have been a tireless defender of working people and their families as well as a staunch supporter of a strong labor movement. Your recent skillful work to secure the appointment of Labor Secretary Tom Perez and to revive the NLRB in support of decent living standards in America is the latest evidence of this. Unfortunately, we must alert you to a serious threat coming from the Senate to these standards, S. 1486, the Postal Reform Act of 2013.

On behalf of 500,000 employees of the U.S. Postal Service, who live and work in all 50 states (as well as in D.C., Puerto Rico and other jurisdictions), we wish to express our utter dismay with the introduction of S. 1486 on August 1st, just minutes before the summer recess. The bill was co-authored by Sen. Tom Carper and Sen. Tom Coburn, the chair and ranking member of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. It renews a commitment to the disastrous Bush administration policy to mandate massive prefunding of future retiree health benefits and provides for major downsizing measures to pay for it.

The relief provided by its three-year moratorium on pre-funding payments is more apparent than real since the USPS has not been able to make the unaffordable payments in recent years; it won't be able to do so in the future when the pre-funding mandate is re-imposed with both normal cost and amortization payments that other businesses do not have to make into retiree health funds.

In order to allegedly give the Postal Service the ability to afford future pre-funding costs, and to add insult to injury, the Carper-Coburn bill would give USPS tools to slash postal employees' pension and health benefits by making these federal employee benefits subject to interest arbitration. No other federal employees face such a burden – including Members of Congress and their staffers. Our unions were not consulted about these proposed major changes to our rights as federal employees or to our collective bargaining process.

S. 1486 would facilitate the dismantling of the Postal Service's mail processing and delivery networks, weakening both our first-mile (post office) and last-mile (delivery) capacity, in order to preserve a pre-funding policy that makes no sense. This would seriously harm the 7.5 million Americans who work in private companies that rely on the USPS. The bill would:

- destroy 80,000 full- and part-time jobs in both cities and rural areas, after a one-year delay, by eliminating Saturday mail delivery (harming millions of businesses who want it) and give the Postmaster General authority to eliminate additional days of delivery in the future;
- slash tens of thousands of additional jobs, after a two-year delay, by allowing USPS to reduce service and delivery standards and to close hundreds of mail processing facilities and thousands of post offices;
- mandate the elimination of door-to-door delivery of mail for all business and new households, and call for the phase out of door delivery to millions of established households – threatening at least 16,500 additional jobs; and
- impose cruel and discriminatory reforms to the FECA workers compensation program that would leave injured federal workers with the worst long-term injuries vulnerable to impoverishment when they reach their Social Security retirement ages.

This massive downsizing and the bill's assault on postal employee benefits are not necessary. They are being driven by the irrational retiree health financing policy that no other business or agency would adopt. The Postal Service has already pre-funded decades of retiree health premiums, more than any other enterprise in America. Indeed, USPS has already set aside an estimated \$49 billion for such premiums, approximately 50% of total expected costs over the next 90+ years.

*Continued next page...*

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The Postal Service had been making great progress over the past year – it has earned an operating profit so far this year, its package business is booming, and commercial mail is recovering as the housing market and the national economy show signs of revival. It should not be forced to forgo new vehicles and investments in new technology, new innovations and new products in order to put even more money into the PSRHB. Just as the budget sequester has thwarted a strong economic recovery, the adoption of more misguided austerity through a bad postal reform bill would make things worse, not better.

We hope that you will actively work to promote postal reform that will create jobs and innovation, not more job cuts and reduced service for the American people. The 30 members of the Senate who have co-sponsored S.316, the Postal Service Protection Act of 2013, have taken the right approach. That bill would strengthen the Postal Service, promote innovation and, most importantly, resolve the retiree health and pension policies that have crippled the Postal Service in recent years.

There are many policy alternatives to the negative proposals in S. 1486 – measures to increase postal revenues, cut costs and cover future retiree health liabilities without massive service and job cuts. We pledge to work with the Senate to define and develop workable, bi-partisan alternatives.

Thanks again for your commitment to America's hard working postal employees who serve the nation and our economy with the most efficient and most affordable postal services in the world.

Sincerely,

Cliff Guffey, President  
APWU Fredric V. Rolando, President  
NALC

John F. Hegarty, President  
NPMHU  
Jeanette Dwyer, President  
NRLCA

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