

Communities and Postal Workers United (CPWU)

Winter, 2016 -- *No Closures! No Cuts! No Delay of the Mail!* - www.cpwunited.com

WHEN WILL MORATORIUM ON PLANT CLOSURES EXPIRE? NEW ROUND OF CONSOLIDATIONS AS SOON AS APRIL?

On May 22, 2015, the US Postal Service released an update on “network consolidation” which postponed the closure date of 50 plants, originally set to close that July, to a time “to be determined.” That time could begin as soon as April or as late as October, 2016, according to what postal news websites were saying last May (*postal-reporter.com* & *postandparcel.info*).

Nearly half – 141 -- of the nation’s USPS mail processing and distribution centers were closed in 2012 – 2013 and another 30 closed in April of 2015, following a “moratorium” during 2014.

Activists are demanding that closed plants be re-opened and that service standards be reinstated. As of January 5, 2015, the delivery of overnight, in-town first class mail has been eliminated nationwide. Two-to-three day service has become three-to-five day service. According to the USPS’ own data, even these new standards were only being met approximately 63% of the time (prior standards were being met 98%).

“These cuts cause hardships for customers – especially the elderly, disabled, rural, and small business customers-- drive away business, and cause irreparable harm to the U. S. Postal Service,” said Rev. John Schwiebert, a leader of Portland Communities and Postal Workers United. He called the changes part of USPS management’s “flawed” strategy to sacrifice service without addressing the Postal Service’s manufactured debt crisis.

Postal management says these cuts and closures are necessary because the USPS is losing money. Critics claim that a 2006 Congressional mandate, which forces the U.S. Postal Service to pre-fund retiree health benefits 75 years in advance, has created a phony financial crisis. Although the USPS has claimed a “loss” every year since 2006, due primarily to the pre-fund mandate, the postal service has not made an actual payment toward prefunding since 2011. The USPS has generated an operating profit for the last six quarters.

The “moratorium”, which management says was only to allow the newly consolidated network time to adjust, was imposed after a series of actions which shook the resolve of postal management.

On May 14th, a national day of action called by the postal unions to stop the delay of mail and keep plants open included activities in over fifty cities. At the urging of postal unions, retiree associations, rural organizations, and small business interests, the entire Oregon congressional delegation demanded a face-to-face meeting with upper USPS administrators about mail plant closures and mail delay. That meeting took place on May 13th in Washington, DC. May 15th saw a march and rally of hundreds of postal supporters at the Eugene/Springfield plant. On May 22nd, the USPS backed off its scheduled closures.

The previous, 2014 moratorium on consolidations was also imposed after a series of national actions and local rallies, marches, occupations and sit-ins. Direct pressure on postal management has been necessary to stall their “shrink to survive” strategy.



THURSDAY IS WEAR YOUR UNION GEAR DAY !
Central Arkansas Area Local Members Stand Up for a Good Contract



DIRECT PRESSURE ON POSTAL MANAGEMENT

On August 13, a delegation representing six signatories to A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service met with the Postmaster General, Megan Brennan at Postal Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The Grand Alliance delegates represented the National Council of Churches, the Alliance of Retired Americans, Public Citizen, the Center for Effective Government, the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, and National Active and Retired Federal Employees. For more info on the Grand Alliance, go to agrandalliance.org. Individuals, local, regional and national groups are encouraged to join.

Local government officials have been key in turning up the heat on postal management. Our fall newsletter featured a story about the Tucson City Council sponsoring a customer survey regarding mail delay, which was delivered to the Postmaster General by their U.S. Representatives.

In October, the

mayors of Pocatello and Chubbuck, Idaho got a tour of a closed processing plant and then traveled with other local officials to Washington DC to meet with postal officials, demanding it be re-opened.

In November, nearly 900 absentee ballots in Summit County, Ohio were thrown out for lack of a postmark. The local elections board held a hearing to question postal officials. The board members think the snafu was caused by the closure of Akron’s mail processing center earlier in 2015, which results in mail sent locally going to Cleveland before coming back to Akron.

FIGHTING CONSOLIDATION

The American Postal Workers Union is encouraging its members, other postal workers, local unions, businesses, veterans, seniors, rural communities, elected officials and all who depend on the timely delivery of the US mail to organize pressure on local, district and national postal officials ...see apwu.org/sites/apwu/files/resource-files/OrganizersToolkit-Consolidation.pdf



KEEP UP ON THE LATEST FIGHTBACK!

CPWUNITED.COM

SAVETHEPOSTOFFICE.COM

21CPW.COM

APWU.ORG

NALC.ORG

NPMHU.ORG

NRLCA.ORG

Long Island Area APWU Local, November 1st

CONGRESS FAILS ON DELAYED MAIL

(excerpted from APWU Web News, 12/18/15)

Congress approved an appropriations bill on Dec. 18 to fund the government through 2016, but failed to include a measure that would have restored postal service standards to their pre-January 2015 levels.

The primary purpose of an appropriations bill is to fund the government, but budget bills are often amended to include policy provisions, also known as “riders.” Congressional Republicans added several riders to the spending bill, including a measure lifting a ban on oil exports and a rule repealing country-of-origin meat labeling. What the bill fails to address, however, is America’s growing epidemic of delayed mail.

Since the Postal Service cut service standards in January 2015, America’s once prompt mail delivery has fallen off a cliff. Citizens and businesses alike are feeling the sting as bill payments, medicine, newspapers and absentee ballots have been significantly delayed. Even the Postal Service’s own performance data shows the same sad truth. Degrading service standards has virtually eliminated overnight mail delivery and has resulted in a dramatic increase in delays to America’s mail.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) and the USPS Office of Inspector General have all raised serious concerns about the negative impact on postal customers and on postal revenue. Congress’s failure to include language in the appropriations bill to ensure prompt reliable mail service threatens the future of America’s public Postal Service and is a dereliction of its duty to the American people.

Over the course of the year, many in Congress have taken a stand against delayed mail. By a vote of 85-11 in April, the Senate approved a non-binding resolution by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) that called for a halt to the closure of mail processing plants, restoration of overnight mail standards, and protection of rural services. A majority of House members – 226 representatives – co-sponsored House Resolution 54, which calls on the Postal Service to restore overnight mail standards. The non-binding resolution, which was introduced by Rep. David McKinley (R-WV) and Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY), enjoys bipartisan support. The House Appropriations Committee approved a bipartisan amendment to the bill that would have restored the mail service standards that were in effect before the January 2015 cuts. When drafting the final bill, however, congressional leaders failed to include it.

ASK YOUR REPRESENTATIVE:

Co-sponsor HR 784 & H.Res 54 for recovery of delivery standards, H.Res. 28, which supports retaining door delivery for businesses and residents, and H.Res. 12 which backs 6-day delivery.

STAPLES BOYCOTT WORKING

The USPS has reduced union-staffed post office hours while outsourcing postal retail services to knock-off post offices in Staples Office Supply stores, staffed by low-wage, high-turnover, non-union, non-postal employees.

After unsuccessfully attempting to persuade the USPS to assign APWU-represented postal workers to staff the Staples counters, the American Postal Workers Union called for a boycott of Staples in 2014.

Staples stock lost around half of its value in 2015. An end of the year headline in the investor’s magazine, FORTUNE, read “**Staples Stock is Getting Destroyed.**”

A Staples attempt to merge with Office Depot was recently quashed by the Federal Trade Commission.

Keep the pressure on Staples! The boycott is working !

COME TO THE LABOR NOTES CONFERENCE !

APRIL 1–3, 2016 IN CHICAGO

POSTAL WORKERS MEET-UP (ALL UNIONS)

Worker activists from across the country and around the world will gather to share tactics, swap notes, and help put the movement back in the labor movement. - See more at: labornotes.org/conference

IMPLEMENT POSTAL BANKING NOW !

(excerpted from APWU Web News 12/17/15)

Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) joined members of the Campaign for Postal Banking on Dec. 17 to make a special delivery to the biggest delivery organization of all – the U.S. Postal Service.

Norton and a coalition of 29 consumer, labor and civic organizations ... presented more than 150,000 signatures on a petition urging the agency to implement postal banking. Deputy Postmaster General Ronald A. Stroman accepted the signatures in the lobby of USPS headquarters in Washington, DC.

The petition calls on the Postmaster General to take immediate action to establish low-cost financial services in the nation’s post offices. Norton praised the groups for pursuing postal banking, saying they had “done more for the Postal Service than the Congress of the United States.”

“Nearly 28 percent of U.S. households are underserved by traditional banks and are forced to turn to payday lenders, check cashers, and other financial predators, spending on average 10 percent of their income on fees and services,” the petition says.

“The figure is a shocking 53.6 percent among African-American households,” said Melanie Campbell, president and CEO, National Coalition on Black Civic Participation. “These petitions are a down payment on what’s to come. We will continue to fight for new and expanded service and our public Postal Service,” she said.