

Communities and Postal Workers United (CPWU)

Oct—Nov, 2013 -- *No Closures! No Cuts! No Delay of the Mail!* - www.cpwunited.com

Bronx General Post Office Not for Sale

Excerpts from Labor Press article by Steven Wishnia

Chanting “Keep the Post Office in the Bronx,” about 75 people rallied Sept. 21 to protest the U.S. Postal Service’s plans to sell the Bronx General Post Office.

The New Deal-era building, is one of about 500 post offices the Postal Service has put up for sale, says Jacquelyn McCormick of the National Post Office Collaborate.

In New York City, the Postal Service recently put plans to close 34 post offices on hold, says Chuck Zlatkin, political director of the New York Area Metro local of the American Postal Workers Union. It’s now planning to “relocate” them, he explains, because it can do that without holding hearings.

Nationally, the Postal Service has hired the CBRE Group to handle sales, and its chair is Richard C. Blum, husband of Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA). In what McCormick calls a “total sweetheart deal,” it’s about to sell the Stamford, Connecticut, post office to a developer for \$2 million less than a local arts group offered.

Metro APWU President Jonathan Smith accuses the Postal Service of “a strategy to discourage the public from coming in” and create resentment of union workers, such as by reducing the number of windows open and thus making the lines longer. In 2011, it moved mail processing for the Bronx to its main facility in Manhattan. The Bronx had to start mail carriers’ shifts an hour later to try to compensate for the late deliveries from Manhattan, says APWU assistant director Genevieve Gardner.

Most of the post offices being sold have historic value, says McCormick, from both their architecture and their New Deal murals depicting local history and labor.



September 21st protest at Bronx GPO

Berkeley Post Office Defenders Swept Off Steps after 31 Day Occupation

by Dave Welsh of Berkeley Post Office Defenders

The Tent City on the steps of Berkeley’s historic post office lasted 33 days, until broken up by police. Two dozen campers slept in tents for a month to rally opposition to the theft of the people’s Post Office being engineered by Postmaster General Donahoe and his collaborators in Congress. “These post offices were paid for by our grandparents,” said one camper. “Why should they be sold off to enrich some greedy private investors?”

Postal inspectors/police periodically threatened to remove the camp and its banners and arrest everyone. But the Tent City, calling itself Berkeley Post Office Defense (BPOD), stood firm. Their message: “Our Post Office is open – Let’s keep it that way.”

Those living in the tents included a minister, graphic artist, retired letter carrier, builder, gardener and livestreamer. Some campers had no fixed place of residence. A support group organized hot food, flyers, supplies, Saturday concerts and nightly movies on the P.O. steps.

The Encampment got great media. Every day dozens signed up to help halt the sale of the building and support the occupation. It’s like the entire city wanted to keep the P.O. as a public institution, stop it from being privatized, and preserve living-wage postal jobs. “Young people today are being robbed of future employment,” said one passerby. “What jobs will be left for my young son and daughter?”

Committees are working on legal action to stop the sale, and a plan to rezone the P.O. as part of a historic district, so it can’t be sold to private investors. California’s legislature and the entire City Council voted that Berkeley’s Post Office is “not for sale.”

Be thinking about unconventional, creative strategies – like Berkeley’s encampment on the P.O. steps, or Portland’s deployment of a swarm of bicycles to block & delay scab mail trucks.*

APWU National Presidents Conference
Nov. 2,3, Las Vegas
(followed by All-Crafts Conf. Nov. 4—7)

PLANT CLOSURE THREATENED?
Come to a Special Meeting to
Plan Our Fightback!

time, place TBA contact Clint Burelson 360-970-2965

“Members First” slate sweeps top APWU offices

A diverse slate of local officers, pledging collaboration with other postal unions and community groups, has just won national leadership of the American Postal Workers Union. President-elect Mark Dimondstein helped found a local chapter of Communities and Postal Workers United. Executive VP-elect Debby Szeredy and Clerk Craft Director-elect Clint Burelson participated in the 2012 CPWU hunger strike to save the post office.



** Occupy Portland’s “bike swarm” blocks scab mail truck (Aug. 31, 2013)*

DID YOU KNOW THAT YOUR MAIL SERVICE HAS BEEN DISRUPTED?

As of September 7, 2013, your mail, instead of being processed at the Mid-Hudson Plant in Newburgh, has been going to Albany to be cancelled! It is then brought back to the Mid-Hudson Plant for distribution.

This maneuver is based on an obsolete 2-year old "study" that does not work in reality. It has cost over \$15 million so far, not a cost savings.

Because of this, and other factors, your Mail Service may be delayed. You may no longer receive the Overnight Delivery you have been promised!

What can you do about it? If you have any documentation which shows that your mail within the 124, 125, 126, and 127 zip code was delayed and delivered past the One-Day Delivery Date, let your Congressional Members know by providing a copy of the piece of mail and a statement regarding the delay.



This cannot be allowed to continue as standard procedure! Postal Workers need your help to protect our Service Standards! Report the delays to get our mail service back to Mid-Hudson.

CONGRESSMAN MALONEY
845-561-1259
123 Grand St Newburgh 12550

SENATOR SCHUMER
914-734-1532
One Park Place Suite 100
Peekskill, NY 10566
OIG Hotline 1-888-877-7644
Misconduct and waste complaints

Paid for by Mid-Hudson Area Local

Does Your Newspaper Take Forever to Arrive?

Excerpts from a Labor Notes article by Al Bradbury, October, 2013

"Seriously, we're as frustrated as you are – and so are postal workers. Closures of mail processing plants have hit small newspapers hard. Take *The Bullard Banner News* in Texas. After the nearest USPS plant closed in June, the weekly paper's route to local mailboxes now detours through a plant 120 miles away. One subscriber reported getting no paper for weeks – then three in a day.

"I can't begin to count how many have said 'if you can't fix it, just cancel my subscription and I'll read it online,'" said publisher Bill Woodall, who predicted the paper will soon have to charge for web access.

After the plant in Grenada, Mississippi, closed in June, *The Calhoun County Journal* reported 15-20 calls a day complaining about delivery. In Cape Girardeau, Missouri, not only newspapers are late – water bills are, too, so shut-offs are up, said *The Southeast Missourian*.

The list goes on. Half the subscribers to some West Virginia newspapers aren't receiving them, an irate Congressperson found.

Multiply by this year's 166 mail plant closings.

To get away with slow delivery, last year USPS lowered its service standards for first-class mail and periodicals. A newspaper mailed from Detroit is supposed to take three days to reach Chicago; seven to San Francisco.

But with plants swamped, even those goals sound optimistic.

Why the delays? It's not just the time it takes to truck mail further, explains Baltimore postal driver Tom Dodge on the Communities and Postal Workers United website, where he's collected many of these stories.

The "consolidated" plants are deluged by extreme volumes of mail. There just isn't enough space, says Dodge.

"So then the facility reloads the mail onto trailers," he reports. "and stores the mail at a satellite location until volume drops to the point at which it can be sorted and delivered."

Since USPS closed 10 Pennsylvania plants and pulled processing out of two more—killing or maiming 2,520 jobs – it's sending all that mail to one Harrisburg plant (which added just 87 jobs). The scheme was to save millions.

But in the chaotic new normal, mail backs up in Harrisburg, leaving letter carriers "standing around for hours at a time, doing nothing," local Letter Carriers President Jared Bowes told the *Williamsport Sun-Gazette*.

The union's members clocked 800 hours of wait time in June—up from 20 minutes in May, when Williamsport's plant was still open, *The Patriot-News* reported. The waiting compounds into overtime when the mail finally does arrive: carriers were out till 9pm delivering it. Local businesses complain they're getting orders and payments late...."

Tell Congress: Continue door-to-door and six-day mail delivery. Oppose cuts, closures, and attacks on workers rights. Repeat the pre-fund mandate. Refund the pension surplus. Oppose HR 2748 (Issa). Co-sponsor S316 (Sanders) and HR 630 (DeFazio) – the Postal Service Protection Act of 2013.

Postal Workers Have the Right to Speak Out Against Closures

"... As long as postal workers are acting on their own time and are not using postal funds, however, they can speak against and actively oppose facility closures without violating the Anti-Lobbying Act." www.apwu.org

NALC Committee of Presidents Meeting Oct. 19-20, Orlando

CONGRESS IS STUCK! How Do We Save the Postal Service?

* What about a mass mobilization of letter carriers, going door-to-door to save door-to-door delivery (on a Sunday, with allies) ?

* What other "bold action" is possible? Visit www.CPWUnited.com

Keep up on the latest fightback!

www.cpwunited.com

www.savethepostoffice.com

www.apwu.org

www.nalc.org

www.npmhu.org

www.nrlca.org

MAIL BEING DELAYED? POSTAL WORK BEING "SUBCONTRACTED"? TELL US ABOUT IT

Over 100 mail processing facilities were "consolidated" this summer, fall & winter. We're seeking documentation about delay of the mail and subcontracting of postal work, especially trucking, mail handling and mail processing. Contact us, cpwunited1@gmail.com