

# Communities and Postal Workers United (CPWU)

June, 2013 -- *No Closures! No Cuts! No Delay of the Mail!* - [www.cpwunited.com](http://www.cpwunited.com)

## Five protestors arrested at Salem mail facility

by Jamie Partridge, retired letter carrier, Portland

“Save Salem’s mail, or go to jail,” was the chant from the crowd of forty protestors at the Salem mail plant at noon on April 17th. We came from Portland, Salem and across Oregon, concerned about the scheduled June closure of the facility. Five “occupiers” stepped inside the plant, unfurled our banners reading “No closures! No cuts!” and “Save Salem’s Mail!”, demanding that acting manager, Rick DeWolfe, suspend the closure and allow Congress to fix postal finances. DeWolfe said the closure was not his decision. When we five refused to leave until postal management agreed to keep the plant open, DeWolfe had us arrested for trespassing. The crowd outside cheered as we were led away in handcuffs.

This closure is unnecessary, unfair and unwise. About a hundred good paying, family supporting jobs will be lost. Mail for the mid-Willamette valley will be delayed and this delay will disproportionately affect small businesses, the elderly, rural communities, the one-half of the public that pays bills by mail and the many who lack access to reliable internet service. Beside myself, arrestees included elderly, minority, rural, and small business people -- those sectors hardest hit by this attack on our communities. Postal management needs to stop and reverse these closures and cuts which are sending our beloved postal service into a death spiral.

As part of the Communities and Postal Workers United, a national grassroots network, we five plan to plead not-guilty to the trespass charges. We had to occupy the plant to save it. We had to break the trespass law for a greater good – the preservation of our constitutionally mandated postal service. (*editor’s note: charges were dropped on May 15*)

Since July, the USPS has closed 114 mail sortation facilities, one third of the nation’s mail processing capacity. The agency announced last month that it was accelerating plans to close even more mail processing facilities. The USPS said it will consolidate 71 plants this year that were originally scheduled for possible closure in 2014.

The cuts in service by the U.S. Postal Service could result in a far-greater loss of mail volume—and thus of revenue—than postal authorities had previously disclosed. In fact, the losses—outlined in a preliminary study commissioned by the USPS but which the agency has since kept under wraps—could outweigh any savings realized by the cuts. The Postal Service has said that implementing



slower service standards for first-class mail would cause mail volume to decline by 1.7 percent. But at a 2012 hearing of the Postal Regulatory Commission, it was disclosed that market research done by the USPS on a number of its agenda items (ending Saturday delivery, closing small post offices, degrading first-class mail service standards) produced a preliminary estimate of a dramatic 10.3 percent drop in mail volume or \$5.2 billion in the first year.

### LOCAL CPWU ACTION to Save the USPS

**Orange County, CA — (Mar. 21—May 16)** CPWU staged protest rallies at seven post offices facing reduction of hours, one every week, in El Toro, Huntington Beach, Orange, Costa Mesa, Laguna Hills, Irvine Main and Irvine Harvest.

**Berkeley—(April 10)** Save the Berkeley Post Office group joined forces with the Save the Bronx General Post Office group to form the National Post Office Collaborate to halt the sales of historic post offices.

**Eugene—(April 13)** Fifty postal workers and allies, organized by the local APWU and Eugene/Springfield Solidarity Network (CPWU) rallied at the main post office. The mayor and a county commissioner spoke against closure of the Springfield plant.

**Salem—(April 17)** Five protestors were arrested for occupying the local mail processing plant. CPWU’s “Forever Five” were demanding that the plant remain open, saving jobs and service. State legislators spoke at a rally outside the plant.

**New York City —(May 1)** About fifty activists marched from Washington Square to the Peter Stuyvesant Post Office in the East Village, protesting the planned closing of the station, one of five the USPS plans to shutter in Manhattan and the Bronx. Led by the local APWU, Occupy Wall Street, and Community Labor United for Postal Jobs and Services (CPWU), the demonstrators occupied the post office and mailed four huge postcards to elected and postal officials.

**Mid-Hudson Valley—(May 9)** About forty demonstrators protested the closure of the local mail processing facility. U.S. Representative Sean Patrick Maloney had joined Mid-Hudson APWU & CPWU leaders in testifying before the Postal Regulatory Commission and meeting with local postal managers, demanding the USPS provide documentation of “overcapacity” and “cost savings.”

**Baltimore to DC—(May 11, 12)** CPWU joined the Southern Christian Leadership Conference for a Save the Postal Service contingent in the 45th anniversary Poor People’s March.

# Call for Bold Actions to Save the Postal Service \*

Passed May 8, by the Washington American Postal Workers Union in convention. Submitted by: Greater Seattle Area Local

To the national leadership of the  
**National Association of Letter Carriers, American Postal Workers Union, National Rural Letter Carriers Association & the National Postal Mail Handlers Union:**

WHEREAS: The Postmaster General has launched a massive assault on the postal service – closing and reducing hours in hundreds of mail processing and thousands of retail facilities, attempting to out-source trucking and degrading delivery standards, threatening six-day, curbside and door-to-door delivery; and

WHEREAS: The Postmaster General might reject congressional mandates to continue six day mail delivery and Congress might not act to effectively prevent and reverse postal closures and cuts; and

WHEREAS: The national postal unions have declared an all-out fight to stop this dismantling of the USPS; therefore be it

RESOLVED: That we call on national postal union leaders to continue the struggle by organizing a series of bold actions, in the great tradi-

tion of the labor and civil right movement, to pressure the USPS, Congress

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

& the President to prevent and reverse postal cuts and closures, such as – a national postal march on Washington DC, a rally at L'Enfant Plaza (USPS headquarters); encouraging regional and local actions, including actions on the work-room floor, cross-country postal “freedom rides” and walks, and non-violent civil disobedience, eg. sit-ins or occupations of congressional offices, USPS management offices, and other appropriate targets; and be it

RESOLVED: That we call on the national postal unions to build formal alliances with labor and community organizations, locally and nationally, dedicated to preserving the postal service; and be it further

RESOLVED: That, if the Postmaster General actually eliminates Saturday mail delivery, that we call on national postal union leaders to declare this unilateral action a “lock-out” and to organize highly publicized ‘work-ins’ where postal workers arrive ready to work on Saturday(s); and be it finally

RESOLVED: That we call on the postal unions to draw a line in the sand, to preserve next day first class delivery standards, and to protect mail processing plants from any further closure or consolidation.

**\*JOIN US in endorsing this call!** Send your name, affiliation (union or organization), city and state to [cpwunited1@gmail.com](mailto:cpwunited1@gmail.com) Ask your local, state, regional or national body to endorse.



## ***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](http://www.apwu.org)

## **TRUCKERS THREATENED AGAIN**

Despite winning a March 4th arbitration denying the USPS the opportunity to contract out postal trucking in the state of California (affecting other states as well) "...if the cost of keeping work in house would be less than contracting out..." postal management sent the American Postal Workers Union a letter on April 26th announcing it's considering subcontracting Postal Vehicle Services in 162 sites nationwide. The APWU has responded that union truckers must be allowed to show they can move the mail more "cost effectively."

The CPWU is planning direct actions to confront this latest USPS management outrage.

## **CONGRESS MEMBERS TELL PMG: "BACK OFF!"**

Forty-seven members of Congress sent a letter to Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe on May 20th, urging him to stand by his commitment to keep more than 70 mail processing facilities open until next spring.

## **STATES LEAD THE WAY**

**Oregon** — By near unanimous votes in both House and Senate, the legislature called on the US Congress to pass S 316 & HR 630.

**Arizona** — Five Congressmen, the state legislature, and the mayor called on the USPS to suspend closure of the Cherry Bell (Tucson) mail processing plant.

**California**— The city council and the state legislature called on the USPS to cancel the sale of the Berkeley Post Office.

## **Action Alert! July 1st**

The 150th anniversary of free city delivery (6 days) and the 50th anniversary of the zip code. Suggested actions in local areas — press releases, banner drops, leafleting, pickets, rallies, mock-ups of Congress "milking" the PO, Ben Franklin "rolling in his grave", etc.

## **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](mailto:cpwunited1@gmail.com)