

Burrus: Agreement is Not Fair. April 22, 2011.

Postal Service Offers Big Savings in Small Package Shipping. April 21, 2011.

1. Burrus: Agreement is Not Fair

April 22, 2011 by Lu · 60 Comments

Filed under: APWU, postal, postal news

As you are aware, I have expressed my opinion that the tentative agreement is not fair to employees who will be hired in the future because it dramatically reduces their income and they are denied an opportunity to make a decision if the contractual changes are of equal value to the more than \$200,000 in wage and retirement losses that they will each experience. Notwithstanding my reservations, I expect the agreement to be ratified and I choose not to express an opinion of the reasons. Each member casting a ballot is entitled to apply his/her individual decision and I do not pass judgment on their reasons. As a retiree, I will not personally be affected by the new agreement and those that will follow but it is my firm opinion that this contract will begin a new era of postal employment in the crafts represented by APWU.

The agreement will permanently reduce the wages of APWU represented employees to a level in existence prior to the 1971 Postal Reorganization Act when collective bargaining was afforded postal employees. The standard for the work performed by clerks, lower level maintenance and motor vehicle employees will be reduced to the new levels established in this agreement. As current employees leave postal employment, the compensation level for work performed will be set at the lowest level applicable. Postal management will refuse to pay \$28.00 per hour for work that the union has agreed can be performed by the 2nd tier work force at \$16.00 for new hires and at \$12.00 per hour by casuals who have been integrated into the regular work force.

In addition, the 40 hour guaranteed work week will not automatically apply to all full time employees and over time, fewer and fewer employees will enjoy the standard work week that has been integral to postal employment.

Keep Our Standards

Over my entire career as a union representative, I have not experienced a union converting employment from middle class to working poor with the objective of expanding the bargaining unit. The cry of “we want our work” is consistent with APWU goals, only if the work can be returned at APWU standards as opposed to reducing our standards to the level of the outsourced work.

Organizing the unorganized is a continuing objective of the labor movement but it is contrary to the basic principle of union collective bargaining for a union to exchange full

time, good paying opportunities for wages and careers resembling retail and fast food employers.

40 Years of Progress

There are examples in the food and banking industries where jobs have been transformed from modest income and benefits when unionized, to transitional employment for new entrants in the labor market. But postal employment, through aggressive union representation broke through the barriers of “service” employment and set new standards. This agreement will erase 40 years of progress.

Race to The Bottom

Optimistic projections that this bad agreement will be used as a springboard for future corrections is optimistic at best and a foolish promise. Militant statements of future corrections will meet the reality of the marketplace. The entire trend in workplace justice is downward pressure on non professional employment as being played out in Wisconsin, Ohio and several other states where collective bargaining rights are under attack. To believe that a conservative Congress or the Board of Governors will permit contractual improvements equal to the losses embedded in this contract is a pipe dream and will never happen. These major concessions will serve as a springboard in a race to the bottom.

APWU members can expect a series of future national conventions attended by a mixture of members governed by three distinct wage scales where delegates demand the unification of all rights and benefits at the higher level. Resolutions will be overwhelmingly adopted directing the negotiators to achieve that which will not be possible at the bargaining table leading to a series of interest arbitration decisions. No relief will be forthcoming. Postal management having achieved their 40 year priority to reduce wages will not relent to an agreement that restores lost ground. Arbitration will become the norm.

In the five (5) prior contracts decided by arbitrators, each decided that APWU represented employees compensation exceeded the legal standard of comparability and awarded the Postal Service moderate restraint. The union has now agreed to voluntary restraint and future arbitrators will not serve as vehicles to return to previous conditions that had been consistently found to be excessive.

This For That

This agreement is in fact “out of the box” and will usher in a new day for postal employees. The strategy applied was to exchange the wages of future employees for immediate contractual improvements, “this for that.” In addition to the unfairness of denying the affected employees a voice in the debate over the changes, this strategy has limited continuing applicability for future gains. What is to be traded in future

negotiations, COLA – No Lay Off – Health Benefits? And how does the union make improvements if every step forward is balanced against a step backward?

Change

We have been provided a preview of tomorrow and it has no semblance to yesterday. The security of full time employment, middle class wages and the satisfaction of knowing that you are compensated for the work performed will cycle with history to be recalled in interesting discussions. Change is inevitable, but this change is self-induced and it will be negative.

In solidarity,
Bill Burrus

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2. Postal Service Offers Big Savings in Small Package Shipping

April 21, 2011 by Lu · 2 Comments

Filed under: mailers, postal, postal news, press releases, usps

New Regional Ground Service for Commercial Shippers

WASHINGTON — Commercial shippers seeking an economical solution for delivery of small packages now have a new service available from the U.S. Postal Service. Introduced April 17, Parcel Select Regional Ground offers competitive pricing for high-volume business-to-consumer shippers. With an attractive value proposition for delivery of small packages within short-range destinations, Parcel Select Regional Ground can provide big savings for qualified commercial shippers.

“This new service is designed as a solution for e-commerce merchants looking to boost sales by offering free or discounted shipping charges for online purchases,” said Gary Reblin, vice president, Domestic Products. “It has tremendous appeal for commercial shippers requiring a cost-effective ground service for delivery of packages over shorter distances.”

Shippers choosing Parcel Select Regional Ground must have a customer commitment agreement with the Postal Service and meet annual volume commitments of 10,000 mailpieces. Mailpieces must weigh 5 pounds or less and measure 0.35 cubic foot or less. Packages must be machinable and use an Intelligent Mail package barcode or Confirmation Services barcode.

Delivery Confirmation service is included at no additional cost. Insurance, Signature Confirmation and Hold For Pickup services also are available.

Pricing is based on entry at designated Postal Service Sectional Center Facilities or Network Distribution Centers . Parcel Select Regional Ground is available for commercial customers who use electronic manifesting and pay postage through permit imprint.

Additional details and pricing for Parcel Select Regional Ground are available at usps.com/parcelselectregionalground. Commercial customers also can contact their Postal Service account manager or the Office of Commercial Pricing at commercialpricing@usps.gov.

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