


# DISPATCH

Celebrating Over 100 Years  
of Representing Postal Workers

San Antonio Alamo Area Local #195  
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO



VOLUME 69 NO. 4

SAN ANTONIO ALAMO AREA LOCAL



JULY / AUGUST 2023

**PRESIDENT**

**ALEX ALEMAN**

## Triumphant Convention



The San Antonio Alamo Area Local (SAAAL) hosted the Texas Postal Workers Union (TPWU) State Convention and I am proud to report the State Convention was a success. The state convention was held from June 29 - July 1, 2023, at La Quinta Hotel River walk. On June 28, pre-convention

I want to thank Secretary-Treasurer Jeff Greenlee, spearheading the effort as the convention committee chairperson. Thank committee members, Vice-President David Hernandez, Recording Secretary, Celeste Orneles, Clerk Craft Director "A" Carlos Barrios, Maintenance Craft Director Robert Proo, Clerk Member Yolanda De Leon, Clerk Steward Araceli Reyes, Maintenance Steward Tony Ramon Jr., Retiree Chapter Vice-President David Estrada, MVS Driver Ron Maner and for any one I left out, thank you too!

I want to thank the National Officers who attended the TPWU Convention in San Antonio, Debbie Szeredy, APWU Vice-President, Anna Smith, APWU Organization Director, Daleo Freeman, APWU Human Relations Director. The following National Officers address the delegates by zoom; Mark Dimondstein, APWU President, Elizabeth "Liz" Powell, Secretary-Treasurer, Lamont Brooks,

workshops were held. The local took advantage of the opportunity to send our stewards for the educational workshops. Our stewards from all crafts attended the workshops to learn more about their respective craft issues. The workshops were conducted by our National Business Agents (NBA's) from all crafts. I want to thank the stewards who attended the workshops, educating our stewards to better serve our members is a continual process. The workshops allowed the stewards an opportunity to meet the NBA's. The NBA's are the union officials who conduct the Step 3 meetings and who review all of the grievances at Step 3 and Appeal to Arbitration. Their knowledge and experience are of the utmost importance.

*"I want to thank the stewards who attended the workshops, educating our stewards to better serve our members is a continual process. The workshops allowed the stewards an opportunity to meet the NBA's. The NBA's are the union officials who conduct the Step 3 meetings and who review all of the grievances at Step 3 and Appeal to Arbitration. Their knowledge and experience are of the utmost importance."*

APWU Clerk Division Director, Idowu Balogun, APWU Maintenance Division Director and Michael Foster, APWU MVS Division Director.

I want to thank the National Business Agents representing Texas for conducting the pre-convention workshops and for being in attendance at the TPWU Convention. NBA Jack Crawford, Clerk Division, NBA Charles Tillman, Clerk Division, NBA Diann Scurlark, Clerk Division, NBA John Gearhard, Maintenance Division, NBA Carlos Paz, Maintenance Division, NBA Dyrke Shaw, MVS Division.

I would like to thank our local convention committee members who were responsible for the registration, hospitality, transportation, convention booklet, stuffing the convention bags, contacting the guest speaker, contacting a high school ROTC for the presentation of the colors, DJ, banquet, COPA, ensuring the vendors had their table, ensuring Elvis had a guitar, taking pictures and so many other things to have a successful convention. We should all be proud of the local committee members for the effort and the work they performed in hosting the TPWU convention.

The opening session of the TPWU convention was Thursday, June 29, 2023, and consisted of the presentation of the colors, pledge of allegiance and the national anthem, which was played by former APWU/USPS employee Richard Fuentes who played the saxophone. Overall the business of the Texas Postal Workers Union was conducted and completed on Friday of the convention.

*continued on page 12*

**ALAMO AREA LOCAL DISPATCH**

Carlos Barrios .....Editor  
Alex Aleman ..... Associate Editor

This is the Official Publication of the  
San Antonio Alamo Area Local,

American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

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Texas Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

San Antonio AFL-CIO Council

Public Employees Council, AFL-CIO

APWU Postal Press Association

Texas Postal Press Association

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Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual writer and not necessarily those of the Editor or the Executive Board. Articles submitted for publication must not contain negative or derogatory comments about members or the union in articles or letters to the editor. Deadline for articles to appear in the upcoming issue of the

Dispatch will be advertised in the Dispatch.

All articles should be presented in MS Word format and email using Arial and Font 10 to:

[saaaldispatch195@yahoo.com](mailto:saaaldispatch195@yahoo.com)

**PHONE NUMBERS**

**UNION OFFICE (210) 271-0853**

**FAX (210) 224- 6221**

**STEWARDS OFFICE GMF (210) 967-4729**

# THANK YOUR UNION!

- 1 Weekends
- 2 Paid Vacation
- 3 FMLA
- 4 Paid Sick Leave
- 5 Child Labor Laws
- 6 Social Security
- 7 Min Wage
- 8 8 hour day or less
- 9 Overtime pay
- 10 Health and Safety
- 11 Health Care
- 12 Dental
- 13 Vision
- 14 Collective Bargaining
- 15 Breaks
- 16 Wrongful Termination Laws
- 17 Age Discrimination Laws
- 18 Raises
- 19 Sexual Harassment Laws
- 20 American Disabilities Act
- 21 Holiday Pay
- 22 Military Leave
- 23 Equal Pay Act
- 24 Civil Rights
- 25 Workers Comp
- 26 Dispute Mediation
- 27 Work-related trainings
- 28 Vocational Certifications



VICE PRESIDENT

DAVID Z. HERNANDEZ

## Time to Work Together to Survive!



### Hello Brothers and Sisters

Hopefully this finds you all in good health and prayers as always, the summer is here, and you know what that means. WATER, WATER, and plenty of it so please stay hydrated and take care of your loved ones.

As we are in the peak of the Summer months, the city once again is experiencing considerably high temperatures and humidity. Many of our Seniors are living in homes without air conditioning or any type of circulating air. This places them in danger of heat-related fatalities, so if you can help with [Project Cool](#) it would be well needed. Help by Purchasing a new 20-inch electric box fan and you can drop them off at either St. Stephen's CARE Center, 2127 S. Zarzamora Street or San Antonio Fire Department Stations, except Station 23 at the Airport.

### TPWU Convention

Our State Convention held in San Antonio was a remarkable event. I would like to personally thank everyone who

worked behind the scenes and who assisted in the planning of this event. Also, many thanks for all the delegates, National Officers, National Business Agents (NBA's), and Retired APWU that came and supported the efforts of our State Convention. I have attended conventions in the past, however, this was the first I participated and witnessed all the work that goes into making everything certain was in place.

A Convention of this magnitude takes many hours, and commitment to ensure for a successful event. From the meetings, visiting hotels, food selections, sponsors, phone calls, the list goes on even to the smallest details. Jeff Greenlee made certain that all those details were taken care of. I am very thankful to Jeff Greenlee for a great and awesome job and his valuable experience to include the staff of volunteers from our local that helped organize this convention. Many thanks to Texas Postal Workers Union (TPWU) State President Carlton Williams and his staff who also worked alongside of us in making sure things went as planned, thank you for your hard work and dedication. Again, my Thanks also goes out to all.

### Stewards

During this event, it also involved Pre-workshops training for our stewards. Here they received many tools to assist them in representing the members of the locals they all represent. Training and learning is something that never ceases so thanks to you stewards for your dedication to this local.

One thing that I would like to point out which at times is forgotten, is that our stewards are also dues paying union members who have volunteered to step up to help the members. At times like any other steward who has worn the red, white and blue steward badge will make a mistake. We are all humans but we learn from it and move on, so let's try and treat each other with dignity and respect. The struggle should not be against each other, but rather against Management so they we better fight to preserve your rights and jobs for the future. Members keep filing those grievances whether you perceive that a violation has occurred or not and we will research it. If you have an interest in serving the local as a shop steward then don't hesitate to approach your craft stewards or Directors. We are always looking for those few and proud to become Shop Stewards.

*"Everyone has seen the volume of the mail decrease and we no longer can rely on just letter mail to sustain us. The USPS needs to help increase other avenues of growing revenue besides parcels. APWU is strongly campaigning for postal banking which is a provision of basic financial services through the USPS, ranging from check cashing to savings accounts, to offering small-dollar loans"*

### Mega Building (S & DC's)

I'm sure everyone has heard about the new and bigger Sorting and Delivering Centers that are being build, and the rumors about moving all the letter carriers

to the plant on Perrin Beitel. This is the Postmaster General De Joy's ten (10) year plan that is going to occur all over the country and will evidently happen here in San Antonio. We need everyone's support as union brothers and sisters to talk to your Representatives when the time arises to call them. Now is not the time to sit idle on the sidelines. Our National Officers will keep us posted on any new developments and we will keep you all posted as to what the next steps will be. Everyone has seen the volume of the mail decrease and we no longer can rely on just letter mail to sustain us. The USPS needs to help increase other avenues of growing revenue besides parcels. APWU is strongly campaigning for postal banking which is a provision of basic financial services through the USPS, ranging from check cashing to savings accounts, to offering small-dollar loans.

Brothers and Sisters also keep checking the non-members list, please talk to them on why we need them to join and bond together to be strong as one because it will affect them too if excessing ever occurs.

My office door is always open if you have any questions. Happy July 4<sup>th</sup> to all, celebrating the Declaration of Independence See you at the next meeting, "United we stand, divide we fall" which side will you be on. Proverbs 14:29 NIV "Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly".

David Z. Hernandez

**SECRETARY TREASURER** **JEFF GREENLEE**

# GUARANTEED! 100% Return On Your Money!!



First of all I hope all members are having a safe and cooooool summer. Please be safe and hydrate.

I must apologize for my article this month. My article is generalized information due to my involvement preparing for the Texas Postal Workers Union Convention that the San Antonio Alamo Area Local hosted. The

deadline for the Dispatch fell smack in the middle of the Convention.

I do want to say a special **THANK YOU** to President Alex Aleman, VP David Hernandez, Yolanda De Leon, Celeste Ornelas, Araceli Reyes, David Estrada, and Tony Ramon Jr., without whose help the TPWU Convention could not have been as successful as it was.

In the next issue of the Dispatch I will feature a full financial and Convention report.

But for right now let me bring two important issues to your attention.

**Thrift Savings Plan (TSP).....**

As the Unions Vice President and now as the Secretary/Treasurer I have on many occasions spoken to members who are looking at retiring under the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) program, and after discussion with them about their retirement they realized that by not contributing to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) their retirement funds are greatly reduced, which affects their quality of life in retirement.

Vice versa I have spoken to those who did contribute as much as they could and how much better off financially they are when it is time to retire.

It is important to remember that the FERS retirement system is like a 3 legged stool, one leg is your Postal Service annuity, one leg is Social Security and the other is the TSP. If you remove one of those legs than obviously it is going to affect your retirement.

Especially now when we have so many new PSE's being converted to full-time, the importance of contributing to the TSP is of renewed importance. But, even if you are well

into your career as a Postal Employee you should be taking advantage of the TSP Program and understand how it will affect you, and your families, retirement future.

Please remember the TSP is especially important for FERS employees. As a FERS employee, you can receive 2 types of agency contributions to your TSP account, which together can equal as much as 5 percent of your basic pay.

1. Agency Automatic (1%) Contributions. When you become eligible, your agency automatically deposits into your TSP account an amount equal to 1% of your basic pay each pay period, even if you do not contribute your own money.
2. Agency Matching Contributions. When you become eligible, your agency will match the first 3% of basic pay you contribute each pay period dollar for dollar. Each dollar of the next 2% of basic pay will be matched 50 cents on the dollar. You are immediately vested in the matching contributions.

Please also remember that if you contribute just 5% of your salary to the TSP, the Postal Service will match that 5%.... where else can you get a 100% return on your investment... that is as close to free money as you will ever get...

Please read the article below and if you have any questions please do not hesitate to call the Union Office.

**TSP Investing - Why You Should Start Early**

*It doesn't matter how old you are, whether you just got a brand new job or if you are only just starting to get a paycheck that is actually decent. You might even just be getting used to paying bills and finally getting to afford certain items that you have always wanted to buy.*



Percent of Basic Pay Contributed to Your Account (FERS Employees Only)			
You put in:	Your agency puts in:		Total Contribution:
	Automatic (1%) Contribution	Agency Matching Contribution	
0%	1%	0%	1%
1%	1%	1%	3%
2%	1%	2%	5%
3%	1%	3%	7%
4%	1%	3.5%	8.5%
5%	1%	4%	10%

Amounts that you contribute above 5% are not matched.

*TSP investing for retirement might be the very last thing that is in your thoughts at the beginning of a brand new federal or military career; in fact, TSP investing might not even be on your mind at all yet. However, it is definitely recommended by experts to look into TSP investing, no matter how early you are in your personal career. If you begin to look into TSP investing from the very first day, there will be fewer*

*chances of you ever missing the money that you set aside for it. This would mean that, if you're lucky enough to work for the federal government or military, to get on that bandwagon as soon as you can.*

*continued on next page*

There are many reasons to support TSO investing as early in your career as possible. **First of all, if you are fortunate enough to get matching contributions, they are something you shouldn't miss since they play a significant role to any benefit of retirement.** Second of all, if contributions remain inside your account for a longer amount of time, you will get to gain more wealth. Money within TSP investing appreciates through investment earnings, which then increases your TSP balance, and in turn goes on in repeating cycle. This would be called "**compounding miracles**". While your money grows inside your account as more time goes by, the proportion that will result from your earnings will get bigger compared to any proportions that result from individual contributions.

The overall size of your TSP account balance will depend on the amount that you contribute, the amount that your agency contributes based on your contributions, and how your personal account ends up growing as an overall result of your earnings from these investments. To get a rough idea of what your personal retirement account can look like in the near or distant future, study this example: Let us pretend that you are currently an employee who is eligible to get agency contributions. Let us also pretend that you earn around \$28,000 every year without receiving any salary increases in the future. If you want to save 5% of your average pay every time you get paid, you will get a total of 5% from agency contributions. The projections of growth described below would be for an assumed yearly return rate of 7% on personal investments.

Five years from now, your overall TSP investing account balance will stand at nearly \$17,000; ten years from now, your overall account balance will have gone up to \$40,000; twenty years from now, your contribution to your overall account balance will have reached \$122,000. It is clear that your overall balance will keep increasing as every year goes by. If you contribute for up to forty years (it's possible if you begin working at the age of 23 and don't retire until the age of 63), your overall account balance will stand at **\$615,000 - all merely from contributing an income of 5% from your very first day of working.**

If you look at these numbers, you won't be wondering why a lot of people look into TSP investing from an early age. You can do the same, too.

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[https://EzineArticles.com/expert/Devlin\\_Walker/515032](https://EzineArticles.com/expert/Devlin_Walker/515032)

Having recently lost my sister, the following information hits close to home. We are all uncomfortable about discussing the inevitable but it is very important to be prepared.

The APWU has a "Vital Records" organizer available to all members, contact the Union Office and one will be made available to you. This organizer allows you to store valuable information in a quick reference guide. It provides information such as Veterans Benefits, Pensions, account locations and number and who to contact and their addresses, Telephone numbers and much, much more.

This Vital Papers Organizer will make your very difficult circumstance a little less stressful and provide you with some guidance.

## Don't Put Off "The Talk"

How much have your parents shared with you about their finances and estate plan? It's a difficult subject for most families. Parents often don't want to discuss their personal finances and adult children may be reluctant to initiate the conversation. Even when parents are active and in good health it's important for children to have information about their financial situation and the plans they have in place.

### A Beginning

Although not a comprehensive list, parents should share the following information with their adult children:

- Estate planning documents, including wills, powers of attorney for finances and health care, and any trusts they've created
- Names, contact information and account numbers for financial institution, broker-age firms and insurance companies
- Information on retirement and investment accounts pension and annuities
- Contact information for their attorney, financial advisor and accountant/tax preparer
- Loans or other outstanding debts
- A list of credit cards with account numbers
- Location of safe deposit box and keys
- Logins and passwords for all accounts (including social media)
- Vehicle titles/registration/insurance
- Location of deeds to property and cemetery plots
- Funeral arrangements and/or final wishes

### It's Time to Ask

When parents aren't forthcoming about their situation, adult children may have to take the first step. Framing the discussion around something you're doing, such as making your own will or designating a power of attorney, can get the conversation started. Asking their advice on some aspect of finances or investing may encourage parents to share their financial information.



### Assess Their Abilities

Keeping in touch with parents is the best way for adult children to pick up on any decline in their ability to handle their finances. If you're concerned, offer to help with financial tasks, such as banking, investing and paying bills. Monitoring their accounts online can help protect them from fraud and scammers.

The article above is used by Permission - Article Source: [Platinum Wealth Solution/Bruce Stroup](#)

EDITOR/ CLERK CRAFT DIRECTOR "A"

CARLOS BARRIOS

## Say NO to Harassment!!



Hello to my union activists' sisters and brothers of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU). As I reported in a previous dispatch article that some of the San Antonio P&DC supervisors have taken their position of harassment to a whole new level of inappropriate behavior. One manager has already been found guilty of bullying and threatening actions, while another for making

unwarranted comments to a craft employee.

The following was previously released on APWU.ORG.

### Resources to Fight Harassment

There are many citations at your disposal when it comes to fighting back against a hostile work environment caused by a supervisor, manager, or postmaster. Article 19 enables us to require that management abide by and enforce its own policies. Below are some useful citations members, stewards, and officers can utilize when filing a grievance on a hostile work environment.

The USPS Employee and Labor Relations Manual for harassment or abusive supervisors. Special attention should be paid to sections 664 through 673 of [ELM Chapter 6](#). Also, the chapter on safety—[ELM Chapter 8](#) sections 810, 820, and 860 address the steps again management must take when dealing with PS-Form 1767.

[Pub 552](#) Publication 552 speaks over and over again about management responsibilities and the ramifications for those who are creating a hostile work environment. APWU members, officers, and stewards should utilize passages from this handbook to demonstrate what management's responsibilities are and aim to achieve the prescribed remedies contained therein.

[Pub 553](#) Publication 553 speaks to what employees can and should do if harassed in the workplace. It explains the definition of legal harassment but clarifies that harassment that doesn't meet the legal definition of harassment is not tolerated in the workplace. This publication clearly states there can be no reprisal for reporting harassment.

[EL-801](#) The EL-801 clearly states what responsibilities supervisors have in regards to safety. It states that employees have the right to report unsafe and unhealthy working conditions on a PS-Form 1767. Harassment and hostile work environments are unhealthy and should be reported on a PS-form 1767. This EL-801 then outlines what a supervisor must do when a 1767 is completed by an employee.

[EL-809](#) The EL-809 gives guidelines for Area/Local Joint Labor-Management Safety and Health Committees. It addresses the review of PS-Form 1767's in committee meetings. If harassment and/or hostile work environment is reported on a 1767 the issue is appropriate for discussion in

the committee meeting.

[Pub-108](#) This publication is a management guide on what must be done with threats are reported. A harasser or abusive supervisor can be a threat and should be reported. This publication states that preventing and reducing workplace violence falls under Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.

[USPS Policy on Workplace Harassment](#) This letter signed by the Postmaster General, lays out the USPS policy in very clear terms. It states what the law requires of the USPS, what

management's responsibilities are, and what the employee rights are. Please keep in mind that every worker has the right to a work environment that is free of harassment, hostility, preferential treatment, and discrimination. Over the past three (3) plus decades at the USPS in San Antonio the level

of Supervision at the post office has hit an all-time low. Local Management has FAILED to satisfactorily address hostile work environments. There clarification is to move a supervisor to another section or another facility outside the installation and then return them back. This action only enables management to cover up their abusive managers.

*"There are many citations at your disposal when it comes to fighting back against a hostile work environment caused by a supervisor, manager, or postmaster. Article 19 enables us to require that management abide by and enforce its own policies"*

## HARASSMENT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ILLEGAL TO BE WRONG

Postal policy declares not every instance of inappropriate behavior may fit the legal definition of harassment. However, such behavior at work violates the Postal Service's standard of conduct.



## STAND UP FOR YOUR RIGHTS

Make the Postal Service commit to their policy of providing a harassment-free work environment!

Text HARASSMENT to 91990, or scan the QR code below, for more information.



- ✓ REPORT IT
- ✓ PURSUE IT
- ✓ DON'T TOLERATE IT

CONTACT YOUR UNION REPRESENTATIVE

PLEASE POST

**APWU**

apwu.org/fighting-workplace-harassment

MVS CRAFT DIRECTOR

FARON HIERHOLZER

## Union Fights for Your Safety



### Greetings Union Members,

I want to say thanks to my Assistant MVS Director Dennis Barboza, Stewards Ron Odom and Ron Manor and to include Alternate Stewards Robert Martinez and Art Casillas for stepping up to the challenge to preserve the rights and benefits for our members.

Due to the Record Heat we are experiencing in Texas one would think that San Antonio Management would have been pro-active to making certain that sufficient bottled water would be provided especially to our drivers and those in the VMF.

The union would like to thank you for working hard to get this mail transported in this severe Texas heat.

San Antonio was forecasted to have some record heat this year which prompted the union to submit a PS Form-1767 requesting bottle water. Management knew about this heat wave, but unfortunately never ordered water until the union addressed this serious issue.

The union followed up with another PS Form-1767, and supervisor Mr. Cruz provided an invoice showing locks were ordered and **NOT WATER**. Management informed the union the water was delayed, and when asked why the delay management could not answer. The union then met with management to discuss this issue further to finally get results.

The union explained how safety is everyone's concern, and what and how is management keeping their employees' safe? Water was supplied in four hours after this meeting occurred. The union has not and will not stop fighting for you and your rights. With that being said, your air conditioning should be operating as designed in your vehicle as well. A mutual settlement between the USPS and APWU was reached in 2016 for air conditioning in the Postal Vehicles. This settlement has been implemented into the JCIM as stated:

### What is the current policy on the timely repair of air conditioning in Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) vehicles?

**Response:** Cargo vans, tractors, and spotters purchased with air conditioning must have the air conditioning system maintained as designed. During summer months or times when the temperature is expected to exceed 75 degrees, these vehicles must have the air conditioning system repaired within one (1) week from the date the VMF is notified. In the event parts must be ordered to perform the repair, the vehicle may be placed back in service for a period of up to one (1) week until the parts are received.

When the heat index is above 100, the vehicle must be repaired immediately and not delayed for the one (1) week. Parts must be ordered in an express manner when the weather conditions are expected to exceed 75 degrees. Air conditioning repairs may be postponed until the scheduled maintenance occurs when that delay would exceed the one-week time frame if temperatures are projected to remain below 75 degrees for the entire time until the next scheduled maintenance.

There has not been a lot of overtime over the last month and yet Management has been instructed to not provide any overtime to any employees. Overtime that is worked will need to be justified and answered for. Management has always preached that overtime is not guaranteed and is

only used as needed. Management has informed the union they will be watching for those employees who "creep" into overtime. So be sure you continue to watch for your turn to work overtime. Management has lost track for many employees, if you believe you

have been bypassed for overtime you should request to see your steward.

Congratulation on those who participated in the bid. We had several employees who jumped from a Tractor Trailer Operator to a Motor Vehicle Operator and vice verses. Keep in mind you must have a bid sheet in and be present when performing an In-House bid. Management is observing and looking at the runs again. Management will be adjusting runs in the near future. Be sure you pay attention to your stops, route, and runs. You need to request to speak with your steward if and/or when your run gets adjusted/abolished. Don't let management take your run, file a grievance.

### TPWU Convention

We just finished a very productive Texas Postal Workers Union (TPWU) Convention in San Antonio which was a success. The convention had many classes to help educate the stewards on some new challenges approaching the horizon that may impact the everyday operations of our members.

### Appreciation

I would like to extend a Big Shout out to Tony Ramon Jr. and David Estrada for hosting a fantastic hospitality suite for all the convention attendees. Also, thanks to Jeff Greenlee for his preparation which made this Convention per many National and State Officers as the best one they have attended in the past 30 years. And Elvis exited the building at the Convention.

*"Due to the Record Heat we are experiencing in Texas one would think that San Antonio Management would have been pro-active to making certain that sufficient bottled water would be provided especially to our drivers and those in the VMF. The union would like to thank you for working hard to get this mail transported in this severe Texas heat"*

## MAINTENANCE CRAFT DIRECTOR

ROBERT PROO

# Latest Pipeline News



## Hello Sisters and Brothers

I hope every one of our Union Sisters and Brothers are enjoying your summer in good health. I would like to thank the Maintenance Assistant Craft Director Jarrett Williams and are Chief Stewards Albert Red Cardenas, Mike May, Tony Ramon Jr. and Steward Miguel Muniz, Edgar Flores and Alternate stewards Sherrie Pierre,

Tony Ramon and William VanMeter for all the work they do in representing the Maintenance Craft.

[This article first appeared in the May/June 2023 issue of the American Postal Worker magazine\)](#)

## What is coming down the Pipe?

The Postal Service has now chosen to disrupt and inconvenience the work lives of our mechanics and technicians with a new Community Toolbox Pod initiative.

On Feb. 7, 2023, the Postal Service notified the APWU of their plans to standardize the workroom floor maintenance work areas and reduce the number of large rolling toolboxes by implementing multiple "pods." These maintenance pods would be strategically located on the workroom floor to provide coverage for all equipment in its general vicinity and would require badges to enter and access. Each of these pods would contain:

An industrial community toolbox with medium to rarely used tools.

Automated parts storage solution (vending machine) to track the inventory quantity and supplies.

Workbenches, computer kiosks, and other consumable storage options.

On March 2, 2023, national officers of the APWU met with management on the community toolbox initiative to voice our concerns, learn more about their community tool box initiative, and discover how this will directly (and indirectly) affect our mechanics, technicians, maintenance support clerks, and other occupational groups that may need access to the pods and tools.

The Postal Service informed the APWU that once these pods are implemented, individual employee toolboxes will be removed and returned to asset management. Instead of individual toolboxes, each mechanic and technician will now be issued a robust multi-platform tool bag that contains the most common tools used daily.

In addition, the toolbox and parts vending machine will be secure and accessible only by using an employee identification badge for restocking and accountability purposes. New "multi-platform tool bags" that contain commonly used tools

will be given to each employee affected by this change. Each technician and mechanic will also be given an additional locker (that is part of a larger bank of lockers) that is also accessible using employee identification badges to store their new tool bag. The pod initiative is first being tested in Richmond, Virginia with other sites and rollout dates yet to be determined. The stand-up talk given by management solicits employee feedback, so please speak your mind and share your thoughts with the APWU via email at: [Maint-HQUpdate@apwu.org](mailto:Maint-HQUpdate@apwu.org)

## New Technology to Account for your work

*The Postal Service Field Maintenance is already using this system it is called Radar and basically the Area Maintenance Technician can close out there work assignments, make work orders and even recommending contracting work out to sub-contractors on the computer system. In the near future this type of technology will filter down to the Mail Processing Technicians and Mechanics and Custodial side of the house. Route sheets will no longer be needed we will have to log in to the computer system and*

*close out our assignments and work orders for that day. To take it one step further we will have hand held tablets or scanners and scan the mail processing machine that needs to be fix or the area we will be cleaning, the restroom or work room floor that needs to be clean. This type of streamline management making sure that the service more efficient is coming to us in the near future.*

*Speaking of the Field Maintenance work group, AMT stands for Area Maintenance Technician this means you are a skilled worker in Area Maintenance not a Contractor who goes to a Post Office and looks at something that need to be repaired or replaced and then recommends to Management to subcontract the work out. Why would any bargaining unit Maintenance employee would sign a form for management stating you cannot do the work that was assigned to which is in your job description is beyond me. The Maintenance craft cannot be giving away are work like this. It is ridiculous when I receive an Article 32 review from Management which intends to Subcontract your work and there is a form signed by the Area Maintenance Technician stating the individual could not do the work.*

## Investigation Maintenance Subcontracting

*The postal service has a contractual obligation to notify the union, at the local level, when the decision to subcontract has been made at the field level. Some local unions have existing past practices or local agreements that require notification and discussion prior to the postal service making the decision to subcontract. Once the union receives this notification, it is imperative that information requests are submitted to determine whether or not the subcontracting was done in compliance with the national agreement.*

*"On March 2, 2023, national officers of the APWU met with management on the community toolbox initiative to voice our concerns, learn more about their community tool box initiative, and discover how this will directly (and indirectly) affect our mechanics, technicians, maintenance support clerks, and other occupational groups that may need access to the pods and tools"*

*continued on page 13*



ASSISTANT CLERK CRAFT DIRECTOR "B"

ROBERT BUTKE

## Attack On The Clerk Craft



### Greetings sisters & brothers

Hope everyone is having a wonderful summer. Obviously living here in South Texas, the summer months and even as we head on to the early fall months, the weather can be horrendous with the severe triple digit temperatures and humidity.

While this directly affects our

sisters and brothers in the carrier crafts, it can greatly be a burden to those in the stations and AO's when there are unbearable conditions due to the air conditioner not working properly. This is a yearly summer event at many of the stations when the AC units are on the fritz or just completely stop working.

In the unfortunate event this happens at your station, a 1767 should be filled out and turned in to your immediate supervisor. Form 1767's should readily be available on the workroom floor. If they are not, notify a supervisor or your shop steward. I recommend making a copy for yourself and a copy for your steward. When PS Form 1767 is turned in to your immediate supervisor, they should investigate the alleged safety violation and respond to the 1767 with how they will correct the safety hazard and return a signed copy back to the employee by the end of tour.

Once again, if management does not return a copy to the employee, notify your steward. The steward, based on management's response or lack of a proper response, shall determine if a grievance, initiated at Step 2, will be filed on the alleged safety violation. We, as the membership, must remain vigilant on safety issues especially when working conditions worsen such as unbearable temperatures in the building. Management will preach about the safety and the welfare of the employee, but rarely do they act on their empty hollow words. Their inactions and constant delays to promptly act on the safety violation show their true colors.

### TPWU Workshops Training Seminars

San Antonio was the host city to hold the Texas Postal Workers Union (TPWU) Convention. The Convention opened up on Wednesday, June 28, 2023 with pre-convention workshops to include craft breakout sessions. The Convention officially opened on Thursday, June 29 and ended on Friday, June 30, 2023. The two days of the conference consisted of training from our National Leaders to include President Mark Dimondstein and many Executive Board officers. The classes help were very educational for our shop stewards to help assist the rank and file.

Several of our stewards took advantage of this opportunity to embark on enriching their knowledge of the contract and various issues that constantly plague our membership. Small office issues, TACS, and OWCP were some of the classes our clerk craft stewards enrolled in for the seminar. There was some real valuable information that was passed on that will enable the stewards, old and new, to improve on the filing of those type of grievances.

### Reversions

Postal management has continued to attack and revert jobs. Recent reversions at Tejada Station and in Del Rio have resulted in grievances. Management once again has violated the process and not allowing the local Union President the right for the union's input. The Union will be seeking reinstatement of those reverted jobs in addition to any jobs that management has created when those jobs were reverted.

*"It is important that our members closely safeguard their jobs. This includes members reporting when they are not allowed to do our work and the work that is listed on their specific duty assignment"*

### Payouts/Updates

It is important that our members closely safeguard their jobs. This includes members reporting when they are not allowed to do our work and the work that is listed on their specific duty assignment. This should include the lead clerks performing TACS duties, the accountable clerks performing the distribution of all duties and the PM accountable clerk clearing the carriers of their accountable items when they return from their routes.

Carriers should not be obtaining their own accountable items and management should not be performing either task. If the clerk craft and especially the accountable clerk are not performing these duties, request your steward immediately so that a grievance can be filed. Another issue that should be reported is the utilization of 204-B's. Whether it is the carrier craft or even a clerk becoming a 204-B, they either need to be in the role of a 204-B Supervisor for 14 days or more and no more than 90 days when covering for an absence a supervisor. 204-B's are usually exceeding the 90 day threshold and are performing work that the lead clerk should be doing.

As always, please request to see your steward when issues arrive. Enjoy and have a safe rest of the summer.

In solidarity,  
Robert Butke  
[robertbutke@yahoo.com](mailto:robertbutke@yahoo.com)  
210-833-1714

**MAINTENANCE CRAFT DELEGATE/ TRUSTEE      ALBERT "RED" CARDENAS**

## Lack of Accountability from Management



**Hello brothers and sisters,**  
I would like to welcome the following stewards to Tour 3 San Antonio P&DC: Sherrie Pierre and William T. Van Meter. Thanks to the maintenance craft for the opportunity to represent you at the 2023 TPWU convention. All crafts worked together to vote in the best interest of our members. We had some great

speakers that expressed their support for our postal workers and supported our efforts for not allowing the privatization of the United States Post Office. I would like to congratulate the following individuals for being reelected to their TPWU Texas Postal Workers Union positions; Robert Proo, TPWU Legislative Aid and Carlos Barrios, Director of News / Information-Editor.

The pre-convention maintenance craft breakout classes were conducted by our National Business Agents

John Gearhard and Carlos Paz. One of the topics discussed was the custodial line H. We were given tools and guidance to better address the Line H issues and information on how to improve the quality of the grievances we submit.

Also discussed "creative" ways that management is trying to increase the hours without staffing properly. Ultimately, the custodians can be our greatest help; by not submitting your assignment sheet as completed at the beginning of the tour (usually management adds or changes your assignments) and your assignment sheet does not accurately reflect your work. Also, by making moves to the correct operation when you are not performing custodial work. Another topic was staffing: First and most importantly, is to verify the site inventory is correct and that management has the equipment at the correct operational -frequency and has it is in the correct status and usage. Documentation is still important, but we were told that unfortunately the Postal Service can run the equipment to failure; our craft is still encouraged to request work orders, account for time and to not sign off any work that has not been done.

At San Antonio P&DC maintenance management is lying to employees that the Union has agreed with management, to have maintenance craft employees close out ECBM Electronic Condition Based Maintenance work tasks that have not been done and that a work order will be written out. The Union would never agree to an employee falsifying documentation of records because that is what you do when you certify that the work was done.

The maintenance breakout was very informative, and I would like to thank our National Business agents for coming to Texas for the convention.

### Social & Recreation Committee

Thank you to those of you that joined us for the Postal family fun day at Six Flags. If you were not able to attend, then maybe you can join us next year or attend one of our other events. We will continue to negotiate with companies to bring the postal employees discounts and reasonably priced events.

Now I would like to discuss some current or ongoing maintenance issues. We have been made aware of threats towards employees by management. Management is bullying, harassing,

and creating a hostile environment towards employees for exercising their right to report unsafe work conditions. When faced with an unsafe working environment or an abusive manager or supervisor, union members must take the first action by filing a Form 1767 reporting the abusive boss. For example, the report

*"At San Antonio P&DC maintenance management is lying to employees that the Union has agreed with management, to have maintenance craft employees close out ECBM Electronic Condition Based Maintenance work tasks that have not been done and that a work order will be written out"*

could read: "Supervisor [name] continues to violate ELM Chapters 6 and 8 by harassing, intimidating, threatening and bullying employee(s) and is creating unsafe, unhealthful working conditions when on [date], [supervisor] did the following....") Don't let management threaten you, harass you, or intimidate you, if they do ask to see a steward.

Other issues that are still pending and have not been resolved or complied with are the regulations for the sharp's container program, and First Aid kits. Management has not complied to the OSHA agreement with USPS on lockout tag out and PPE program. So, the struggle continues with a management team that seems more concerned with their bonuses and self-serving agendas rather than the safety, training, and staffing of the Maintenance Craft.

We, as united maintenance craft employees can improve the work conditions in our craft, I support our union leadership in reversing management's continued efforts to erode the effectiveness of this craft by failing to staff, by bypassing routes and threatening our employees to close out ECBM items that have not been completed. As a local we are trying to produce positive changes across the maintenance craft, you, every employee has the power to help us defend your rights, your jobs.

Your union continues to fight for our jobs and our rights, but we have to be able to prove that there is a need for more work hours and more maintenance employees. So, help your Union, help you! Support the APWU; it is the only organization exclusively for rights as a postal worker.

As always, I thank you, the member, for your support and for allowing me the opportunity to serve you.



## How Prepared Are You Really? By Vivian Kolenda

When I ask employees who are considering retirement what their **biggest concerns** are, I usually get some combination of:

- I need to make sure I don't run out of money
- I need to make sure my spouse is taken care of
- I'd like to leave something for my kids or grandkids.

**Those concerns are the most important and the first things we address** in our one-on-one meetings. In those first meetings we analyze your pension, social security, TSP, FEGLI, etc. in relation to your expenses until you are totally comfortable with the financial aspect of retirement. Sometimes that takes several meetings because I encourage lots of

questions and it's really ok to ask the same question 25 times.

**There is more to retirement, however,** that many employees never even think about so my next questions to you are:

- **What are you going to do when you're not going to work every day?**
- **When you look 5, 10, or 20+ years into the future, what do your days look like?**

What I'm really asking is, what's going to get you out of bed in the morning? What is your purpose? We've all heard the stories about 'Old Joe' (insert Frank, John or whomever) who retired and then died six months later. Unless 'Old Joe' had an illness, 'Old Joe' probably no longer had a purpose, he didn't have a reason to get out of bed in the morning. Once he stopped working, he didn't know how to fill his days.

Many of you know me and know that I've been helping people retire easily and comfortably for over 40 years now... 27 years at Merrill Lynch and 13 years with American Benefits Exchange. What I have observed throughout those 40 years is that the people who retire with a plan and a purpose tend to live longer, happier, more fulfilled lives. Your purpose doesn't need to be a grand "save the world" purpose, it just needs to be something that lights you up. Here's some examples of what I've seen:

- Traveling - with your spouse, friends or alone
- Fishing
- Golfing
- Watching the grandkids
- Volunteering - food bank, prisoner reform, homeless shelter, hospital volunteer, etc.
- Gardening

Starting your own business: For example, my mother retired from being an accountant when she was 68 years old because she didn't want to have to do such detailed work anymore. She'd always been very active, so she promptly started volunteering by answering phones at the sheriff's department. She also did part time work wrapping presents during Christmas and wedding seasons at a women's store. For her, it was easy, fun and she enjoyed wrapping beautiful packages. She also did all her own yard work until she was 85 years old. She once said her biggest mistake was when she stopped mowing her own grass (yes, it was a gas push mower) at age 85. With all she had going on, she was loving life because her life had meaning.

What meaning will your life have when you aren't working? If you haven't already thought about it, now might be a good time to do so. Spend some time dreaming about your ideal retirement. Where would you live? What do you love doing? Is there something you've always wanted to do but every time you thought about it, your next thought was "oh I can't do that because...?"

When you retire, take a month or two or even longer to just do nothing, y'all need a break. What happens after that time though? **Most of us will spend 20, 25, even 30+ years in retirement.** Most people prepare for the financial aspect of retirement, but are you prepared for that plus everything else? **If you see the value of strengthening all areas of your retirement plan,** give me a call, send me a text or drop me an email and let's get together either in person or virtually. **I'm here to help you live the retirement of your dreams.**

**If you would also like help with your retirement booklet or would like a FREE personalized benefit review, simply reach out to me and let's set a time to talk.** Like I mentioned earlier, I have been guiding people through the retirement process for over 40 years now and have specifically been working with Postal Employees for over 12 years now. I also present free workshops to many area locals on a variety of topics including "Retiring with Confidence and Ease", "TSP and the Current Economy" and "FEGLI: All Four Parts Explained".

**To schedule an individual or group meeting, call, text or email me at:**

**Vivian Kolenda ,Federal Benefits Specialist, American Benefits Exchange**

**(512) 791-1019**

**Vskolenda@gmail.com**

## Alex Aleman ...

### Continued from page 1

Friday evening the local hosted the banquet and awards were presented to TPWU members. I would like to congratulate our local members who were presented with a TPWU Award.

The "Bennett-Stubblefield/Jonell MacKay" Award was awarded to the outstanding TPWU member of the year as selected by the Executive Board; the Executive Board selected The Director of News Information/Website/Editor shall be responsible for public relations to the TPWU Mr. Carlos Barrios from the San Antonio Alamo Area Local.

The TPWU "Tom Davenport/C.D. Williams Memorial Political Activity Award was awarded to the TPWU member who during the last year most promoted and contributed to furthering the political activity and involvement programs of the labor movement. The TPWU Executive Board selected TPWU Legislative Aide Robert Proo from the San Antonio Alamo Area Local.

I want to congratulate the following San Antonio Alamo Area Local members for being elected TPWU officers. Carlos Barrios was re-elected as the TPWU Director of News Information/Website/Editor. Robert Proo was re-elected TPWU Legislative Aide. Norma Impallari was re-elected TPWU District 4 Vice-President. Norma Impallari handles grievances for the TPWU, zip codes 780, 781, 782, and 788.

It was voted by the TPWU Delegates at the convention the San Antonio Alamo Area Local will host the TPWU Educational Conference in June 2024. I submitted the name of our local to take advantage of the opportunity to continue educating our stewards and officers. The TPWU Educational Conference is a three (3) day conference held in the month of June for TPWU members from across the state of Texas. The local looks forward to hosting the TPWU Educational Conference. Educating our stewards and officers is continual and one of our primary obligations to the members we represent.

### **"Poor Work Environment"**

Postal Management continues to harbor a Poor Work Environment at the Plant. The Plant Manager has made no efforts to improve the work environment and provide a safe work environment for all our members. All members deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. According to General Postmaster Dejoy, The Postal Service is committed to cultivating a positive and safe work environment that's free of threats, intimidation, bullying and violence for all employees.

If you feel your Supervisor is doing any of the above, request to see your steward and write a statement, be specific on the issue, date, time, names, witnesses, and most important how you feel about the situation, for example, if you feel you are being intimidated, write that word in your statement, management has a Zero Tolerance Policy, non one should feel intimidated, harassed, or bullied. If you feel you are being intimidated by your supervisor, that is against the Zero Tolerance Policy. Statements if written effectively can be very powerful in our fight against a Poor Work Environment. The bad condition of the postal facility contributes to a "Poor Work Environment" the restrooms are in horrible condition. Many of the urinals and commodes are non-operational. It is embarrassing to use the restrooms, the postal service in San Antonio feels like we are working for a third world country. Both the facilities and work environment are in Poor condition.

### **APWU Union Local Profile**

I would like to report to the members, for membership purposes the San Antonio Alamo Area Local is over 90% organized. That means we have a total of 1,152 members, 116 non-members as of 6/16/2023. We have an opportunity to sign up 116 non-members. Any member who enrolls/signs up any non-member will receive \$150.00 for their effort to sign up a non-member.

Take advantage of this opportunity. Non-members are receiving the same benefits, protections and pay raises as members. Signing up 116 non-members will assist our local financially, 116 members would equate to about **\$2,000.00** more a pay period. For a local our size we should be very proud of reaching 90% organized. I want to thank you for being a member and for supporting the American Postal Workers Union.

## Robert Proo ... Continued from page 8

Often times, the postal service fails to notify the local union when the decision to subcontract is made (which is a violation and must be grieved). As such, local unions should submit information requests at regular intervals to discover whether the postal service subcontracted work under the radar and without notification. Information requests will be largely based on local fact circumstance, but all maintenance subcontracting investigations must, at minimum, submit information requests for the following:

- Copy of the actual contract
- Copy of the scope of work document
- Copy of the Article 32 Due Consideration Summary
- Copy of the cost-comparison analysis (fair comparison of all reasonable costs)
- Copy of the notification to the union
- Identify which postal official made the decision to subcontract

Copies of all FSSP problem / call worksheets (if applicable)

It is important to understand the difference between national contracts and national initiatives. Just because the postal service, at the area or headquarter level, push for projects to be completed across the country, that does not automatically make it a national subcontract. Local investigations must flush out who made the decision to subcontract and who completed the due consideration requirement. These two pieces of key information will help determine whether it is a national contract or not. Don't hesitate to contact your National Business Agent if you are unsure or need clarification. Just because management claims it is a national contract, doesn't make it so... investigate and rebut, if necessary.

### Relief Assignments

Article 38.7.C.1 and 2 states the criteria of when relief assignments should be used is you are being sent as a relief for a vacancy request to see your steward so we can file a grievance.

1. When management determines that work coverage is necessary, relief assignments in the Maintenance Craft may be established only to provide coverage for absences of five (5) working days or more for scheduled annual leave, sick leave, military leave, court leave, employee requested leave without pay, and National off-site and on-site, or contractor supplied training programs.

2. Relief assignments, which shall be kept to a minimum, will be posted by a Notice of Intent which, in addition to the information required in Section 4.C (Information on Notice of Intent), will also show the days and hours of the specific duty assignments being relieved.

## EMERGENCY CARE FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE

Leaving the emergency department after receiving mental health or substance abuse treatment can be a vulnerable time. To help protect the health and safety of APWU Health Plan members, anyone who receives treatment in the emergency department or hospital for mental health or substance abuse must have a follow-up appointment with a primary care doctor within 30 days.

Research suggests that follow-up care for people with mental illness is linked to fewer repeat emergency department visits and avoidable readmissions, improved physical and mental function, and increased compliance with follow-up instructions. Among other benefits, close follow-up:

- Reduces incidents of suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and completed suicide
- Reduces substance abuse and improves entry into recovery
- Reduces emergency department use and hospital admissions, and lengths of stay
- Leads to better identification and treatment of behavioral and physical health issues

This is also important when seeking substance use treatment. Hospitals are increasingly filled with people suffering from medical complications of substance use disorders (SUD). Patients with SUD have longer lengths of stay, higher costs, and higher readmission rates.

### HOW CAN THE APWU HEALTH PLAN HELP?

Both the **High Option** and the **Consumer Driven Option** cover mental health and substance abuse care. For services received in a network emergency department, members pay 15 percent of the plan allowance. Please refer to your plan documents for more details about your specific coverage.



#### Need help finding a doctor?

To find a primary care doctor, log in to your member portal, visit your member website, or contact APWU Health Plan.

**1-800-222-2798**  
**1-800-622-2511 (TDD)**  
**8:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. ET**  
**Monday – Friday**  
[apwuhp.com](http://apwuhp.com)

# TEXAS POSTAL



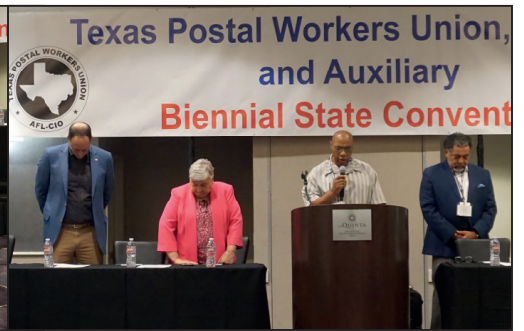
2023 TPWU STATE DELGATION



Luther Burbank JROTC Honor Guard



Retired Clerk Richard Fuentes



Moment of Silence



SAAAL Group Picture



HR Director Daleo Freeman



San Antonio Jeff Greenlee

# WORKERS CONVENTION



Texas Postal Workers Union, AFL and Auxiliary  
Biennial State Convention

Postal Workers Union  
and Auxiliary  
Biennial State Convention

LA QUINTA

# General Membership Meeting

July 15, 2023  
11:30 A.M.

Union Hall

13102 Lookout Run.

Executive Board Meeting

10:00 A.M.

\*\*\*\*\*AGENDA\*\*\*\*\*

- Financial Report
- Officers Reports
- Executive Board Recommendations
- TPWU Convention Report

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Your cooperation is  
appreciated.

