

NPMHU Officers Gather to Discuss Bargaining Issues



The National Office held a meeting on December 1, 2011, for all Local Union Presidents and other Local Union representatives, to discuss this year's bargaining, possible settlements stemming from negotiations, and the process for proceeding, if necessary, to mediation and/or arbitration.

During that meeting, National President Hegarty discussed the various considerations that are having a direct impact on the 2011 bargaining process, from the state of the private economy and the private job market, to the state of USPS cost cutting and plans for closing and consolidating mail processing facilities. He also described the contract or bargaining status of each of the other major postal unions, and the possible impact that those agreements could have on mail handlers. And, of course, he described some of the on-the-record discussions that have been held by the NPMHU and the Postal Service over the past 90 days, as well as the issues that will determine whether a contract can be successfully negotiated. There was a significant amount of strate-

gic analysis amongst the Local Presidents and other Local Union representatives in attendance, as several mail handlers from around the country described the hopes and fears of members in their home facilities.

With regard to specifics, there was little to share that has not already been publicized to the entire membership. Nonetheless, President Hegarty set forth some of the on-the-record proposals that the Postal Service has laid on the bargaining table.

In particular, consistent with its usual practice, the Postal Service has presented a host of draconian proposals that represent the agency's official, on the record positions for possible arbitration. For example, as already described in a recent contract update, management wants at least 40% non-career, low-wage, no benefit employees who have no restrictions whatsoever on their work; management has proposed to eliminate extra pay for working on Christmas; management has proposed overtime to be governed by the

Fair Labor Standards Act, so that no overtime is paid until there is more than 40 hours of actual work in a week, with paid leave not counting as work; management wants to eliminate all Local Memoranda of Understanding, and thus require the restart of local negotiations, from scratch,

