

PLANNING AND STRATEGIZING FOR THE FUTURE

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE ON THE FUTURE

First created by the National Executive Board in 1996, the Committee on the Future of the NPMHU continues to meet on a semi-annual basis in order to engage in long-range planning and strategic thinking for the Union and all mail handlers employed by the U.S. Postal Service. The Committee usually focuses on five key issues facing the NPMHU: privatization of the Postal Service; the NPMHU's legislative relations program; USPS automation and other technological changes; financial planning, especially at the Local level; and membership recruitment.

The current members of the Committee include all members of the NEB and Local Union Presidents Ernie Grijalva of Local 302, Anthony Davis of Local 314, David Jarvis of Local 315, Nick Mosezar of Local 318, and J.R. Macon of Local 329.

At its most recent three-day meeting in June, which was held at NPMHU National Headquarters in Washington, DC, the Committee focused on several extremely important topics:

First, the Committee addressed the special needs of the newly-hired Mail Handler Assistants (MHAs). More than 4,000 MHAs have been hired into the mail handler craft since early April 2013. At an earlier meet-

ing, the Committee spent a considerable amount of time and effort writing and revising materials that could be circulated to the Local Unions as a guide for attending and presenting orientation programs for newly hired MHAs. At this meeting, the Committee started to develop materials that can be circulated directly to MHAs about their rights and benefits under the National Agreement, including their right to be converted to career employment under certain circumstances.

Second, the Committee continued to review some disturbing reports that have been issued by so-called think tanks to encour-

age the Postal Service to consider privatizing all aspects of its operations other than delivery. This "hybrid privatization" model would allow the Postal Service to reduce mail processing, transportation, and maintenance costs, while maintaining a USPS presence in the residential neighborhoods and commercial establishments that rely on the Postal Service as their primary link to the federal government. The Committee discussed possible responses to these reports, with special emphasis on Pitney Bowes, which has been providing financial support to the organizations and individuals preparing these reports while, in a thinly-veiled conflict of interest, it

The Committee on the Future of the NPMHU recently met in Washington D.C. to address a plethora of important issues.



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continues to make a considerable percentage of its profits in the mail preparation, presorting, and related industries. The Committee intends to monitor further developments on this subject, while at the same time preparing a direct response to disclose the bias and conflicts of interest that are motivating Pitney Bowes and other supporters of “hybrid privatization.”

Third, the Committee reviewed some limited automation changes that the Postal Service is implementing, paying particular attention to an upcoming jurisdictional determination that is expected to govern staffing on various Tray Sorters and Universal Sorters.

Fourth, the Committee analyzed recent legislative developments. Although publicly dormant for many months, more activity is expected (see related article in this magazine) given that the financial and strate-

gic pressures on the Postal Service are still mounting. A Legislative Conference was held in May 2013, and both the House and Senate are considering alternative postal reform bills present significant issues

Fifth, the Committee participated in a training program about the changes made to the National Agreement by the Fishgold Arbitration Award. This training program will be presented to the Local Unions during the next Semi-Annual Meeting.

Finally, the Committee also discussed other issues that are crucial to the survival of the Union, including

- **The continued vitality of the Mail Handler Benefit Plan.**
- **The Postal Service’s attempt to create a postal-only health insurance plan, at**

least for the new non-career employees being hired by the agency.

- **The Postal Service’s continuing plans to close and consolidate scores of mail processing facilities.**
- **Recent trends in NPMHU membership numbers.**
- **Recent subcontracting initiatives by the Postal Service.**
- **Expected improvements in finances of the Local Unions from the changes made at the 2012 National Convention and the re-establishment of wage increases under the National Agreement beginning in November 2013.**

The next meeting of the Committee on the Future is scheduled for January 2014, at which time the Committee will issue another written report.

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1. *privatization of the Postal Service;*
2. *the NPMHU’s legislative relations program;*
3. *USPS automation and other technological changes;*
4. *financial planning, especially at the Local level; and*
5. *membership recruitment.*