

COMMITTEE ON THE FUTURE OF THE NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION

The NPMHU's Committee on the Future was originally constituted in 1996, and for nineteen years has engaged in strategic planning over long-term issues that are likely to confront the Union over the coming months and years. The membership of the Committee is comprised of all members of the National Executive Board and various Local Union Presidents. 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 most recent semi-annual meeting of the Committee, which took place during January 2015, continued this process. The current members of the Committee include all members of the NEB and Local Union Presidents Ernie Grijalva of Local 302, June Harris of Local 306, David Wilkin of Local 309, Nick Mosezar of Local 318, J.R. Macon of Local 329, and Woody Hendrickson of Local 332. Sister Harris and Brothers Wilkin and Hendrickson were attending their first meeting as new appointees to the Committee.

As is often the case, the Committee's focus is determined by current events, so this meeting primarily dealt with the following issues:

First, the Committee analyzed the Postal Service's plans to close or consolidate an additional 82 mail processing facilities in 2015, which actions are being made possible by the Postal Service's decision to reduce the governing service standards for much of the nation's one-day or overnight mail. The service standard changes actually took effect earlier this year, on January 5, 2015. This degradation of service is thoroughly unacceptable to the NPMHU, as it reduces service to the American mailing public precisely when better, quicker, and more responsive mail service is what is needed to ensure the future success of the Postal Service.

Various strategies for limiting or reducing or even eliminating these closings and consolidations were discussed, most notably including the processing of a National-level grievance claiming a violation of Handbook PO-408 and further attempts to generate legislative action by the newly-installed 114th Congress. On this latter subject, already this year several Senators and Representatives, on a bi-partisan basis, have asked the new Postmaster General to halt the closing and consolidations; as of the end of January

2015, the Postal Service has still not responded to these requests. It may be that more formal legislative action by majorities in both houses of Congress will be necessary before the Service responds.

The Committee also discussed strategies for dealing with the impact on mail handlers as these closings and consolidations are implemented. This led to discussions about various issues arising under Article 12, and potential approaches to resolving the remaining outstanding issues.

As usual, the Committee also discussed various automation programs that the Postal Service is beginning to develop and, in some cases, to purchase. These include the Small Parcel Sorting System, the Secure Destruction Program, and various types of Tray Sorters and Universal Sorters.

Another portion of Committee discussions focused on various reports issued during the past few months by the Postal Service, by the Office of Inspector General, and by the General Accountability Office. These included the USPS Annual Report, as well as studies from the OIG on First and Last Mile Strategy, the Lack of Service Standard Change Information in AMP Reports, and Workforce Flexibility, and reports from the GAO on Delivery Standards and the Status of Workforce Reductions.

As usual, the Committee also reviewed the latest membership data and continuing approaches to organizing nonmembers. On these issues, the emphasis has to be on newly-hired MHAs, newly-converted full-time regulars, and new career mail handlers who have joined the mail handler craft from other employment with the Postal Service, and thus the issue of membership recruitment has become more complicated than ever. The National Office is communicating directly with new career mail handlers who have



(l-r) standing: Nick Mosezar- President Local 318, J.R. Macon- President Local 329, Bob Losi- Legislative and Political Director, Woody Hendrickson- President Local 332, Mark Gardner- National Secretary-Treasurer, Lawrence Sapp- Vice President Southern Region and Local 318 SEBM, David Wilkin- Local 309 President, Rudy Santos- Vice President Western Region, Ernie Grijalva- President Local 302, Michael Hora- MHBP Executive Director and Asst. to the NST and Jefferson Peppers III- Vice President Central Region

(l-r) sitting: Kevin Fletcher- Local 305 President and Vice President Eastern Region, Thomas (T.J.) Branch- Manager CAD, John Hegarty- National President, June Harris- Local 306 President, and Paul Hogrogian, President Local 300, and Vice President Northeastern Region.

converted from MHA but have not to this point signed up for the Union. Hopefully, these efforts will bear fruit in the coming weeks and months.

The lengthiest discussions held by the Committee concerned NPMHU involvement in various legislative issues, and the adoption of a Legislative Agenda for the NPMHU to follow during the 114th Congress that runs through 2015 and 2016. As noted, the primary focus of the Union in the legislative arena will be to help preserve the Postal Service, by finding a productive way for Congress, or at least the supportive members of Congress, to convince or compel the Postal Service to reverse its current plans so that service standards are not changed and additional closings and consolidations are either canceled or postponed.

Last year, many observers believed that the USPS June 2014 announcement to resurrect these closings and consolidations during 2015 (previously scheduled for February 2014 before being postponed indefinitely) was an effort by USPS management to convince, or some would say threaten, Congress into enacting comprehensive postal reform before the end of 2014. But the totally dysfunctional 113th Congress proved once again that postal reform – which should be a bipartisan issue like motherhood and apple pie – has become another issue that cannot cross the acrimonious atmosphere and partisan divide that have characterized Congress in the past few years.

These issues will come to the forefront later this year, when the NPMHU gathers for its Legislative Conference in May 2015. The NPMHU's Legislative Agenda for the 114th Congress, as adopted by the Committee in January is published in the March Update.

The next meeting of the Committee on the Future is scheduled for July 2015.



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The National Postal Mail Handlers Union has been a proud sponsor and participant of the JDRF Walk to cure diabetes for over 14 years. **We pledge to continue to walk until Type One becomes Type None!**

This year our walk will be held in Washington D.C., on the National Mall. Everyone will meet on the grounds of the National Monument. The walk begins 9:00 A.M. on Sunday, May 31, 2015. If you are unable to attend personally, please consider sponsoring those that will walk on the NPMHU Team.

We need your support. A dollar here and there adds up, no matter how small you may think it is — to someone with Diabetes it's a huge gift. By donating or registering today, your support will help fund life-changing research and create a world without type 1 diabetes (T1D).

Roughly 30,000 people are diagnosed with T1D each year in the US. JDRF is supporting \$568 million in active T1D research projects worldwide.

To donate, register for the walk or get more information, visit the NPMHU website at www.npmhu.org.