

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE ON THE FUTURE

The Committee on the Future of the National Postal Mail Handlers Union, first created by the National Executive Board in 1996, engages in long-range planning and strategic thinking on behalf of the Union and all Mail Handlers employed by the U.S. Postal Service. With recent events, and the seemingly continuous debate in Washington, DC and in the press about the future of the Postal Service, many of the key issues now faced by the NPMHU are also at the heart of the agenda of the Committee.

For sixteen years, the Committee has focused on a wide-ranging agenda that includes key issues facing the NPMHU: privatization of the Postal Service; the NPMHU's legislative relations program; USPS automation and other technological changes; financial planning; and membership recruitment. The Committee members attending the February 2012 meeting included all members of the NEB and Local Union Presidents Ernie Grijalva of Local 302, Steve Taylor of Local 312, Anthony Davis of Local 314, Nick Mosezar of Local 318, and then Local 301 President Tim Dwyer (who has since left that position to join the NPMHU Contract Administration Department (CAD) staff at the National Office).

At its meeting in February 2012, the Committee focused on two separate, but intimately related, issues:

first, the Postal Service's plans for closing and consolidating hundreds of mail processing facilities; and second, the ongoing debate in the U.S. Congress and before the Postal Regulatory Commission about the financial future of the Postal Service and possible changes to the USPS service standards.

USPS Closings and Consolidations

The first day of the Committee's prescheduled meeting happened to fall on the same day that the Postal Service announced the mail processing facilities that it intends to close or consolidate after the May 15, 2012 expiration of the current moratorium on such actions. Last September, the Postal Service listed over 250 facilities that would be studied for possible closing or consolidation. Since then, for almost 200 of these facilities, public hearings were held to seek public input. It appears, however, that the Postal Service largely ignored the pleas of the employees, the customers, the politicians, and the ordinary citizens who tried to argue at those hearings and by other means that specific closings or consolidations were not justified. Thus, when announcing its most recent list, the Postal Service disapproved closing or consolidating only 35 of the facilities being studied, and announced that approximately 225 mail processing facilities, large and

small, would be closed or consolidated during the coming months.

More specifically, there are approximately twenty-five mail processing facilities selected for closing or consolidation at which more than 100 Mail Handlers currently work, another thirty facilities with less than 100 but more than 50 Mail Handlers, and approximately 100 other facilities with less than 50 Mail Handlers working (leaving about 50 facilities without any Mail Handlers also affected by the final decisions on closings and consolidations). A complete copy of the list was reprinted in the March 2012 CAD Report.

It bears noting that the closing/consolidation of approximately 35 of the studied facilities was disapproved, at least at this time, and these facilities have approximately 3,500 Mail Handlers working at them. In order of Mail Handler complement, these facilities include the following installations with more than 100 Mail Handlers:

Cincinnati P&DC – 367 MHs;
Boston P&DC – 347 MHs
Metro NY L&DC – 327 MHs
South Jersey P&DC – 305 MHs;
Detroit P&DC – 253 MHs;
San Bernardino P&DC – 203 MHs
Irving Park Rd P&DC – 199 MHs
Memphis P&DC – 182 MHs;
Nashua L&DC – 174 MHs;
Manchester P&DC – 136 MHs;
Western Nassau P&DC – 115 MHs;
Fort Myers P&DC – 105 MHs.

Also, certain facilities with less than 100 Mail Handlers that also were being studied will not be closed or consolidated, at least at the present time, and these include the following:

Orlando, FL
Fayetteville, AR
DMDU Cantano PR Annex
Reno, NV
Albuquerque, NM
Mount Hood, OR
Champaign, IL
Mobile, AL
Cedar Rapids, IA
Burlington, VT
New Castle, PA
Waterloo, IA
Beaumont, TX
Little Rock, AR Annex
Austin, TX Annex
McAllen, TX
Seattle, WA DDC
Rapid City, SD
Grand Forks, ND
Missoula, MT.

At this point, the Committee understands that the focus must be on facilities that are slated for closing or for consolidation, and on taking all legal, contractual, and practical steps that may be available to reduce the number of these changes, and to limit the adverse impact from the excessing that necessarily results from such dislocations. [On May 17, 2012 the USPS announced its amended plant closure and consolidation plan; the full details of that plan are available for