



COMMITTEE ON THE FUTURE MEETS ON LONG-TERM ISSUES



The NPMHU's Committee on the Future was originally constituted in 1996, and for more than two decades has engaged in strategic planning over long-term issues that will confront the Union over the coming months and years. 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 July 2018 in Buffalo, NY, continued this process. As is often the case, the Committee's focus is determined by current events, so this meeting primarily dealt with the following issues:

A significant focus of the meeting was on the need to recruit greater numbers of Mail Handler Assistants into membership in the Union. All NPMHU Local Unions and representatives need to make special efforts to sign up MHAs immediately upon their hiring, during new employee orientation, and not wait to implement recruitment efforts only upon conversion to career. At this point, the numbers of non-members amongst MHAs is more than two times the rate of such non-membership for career employees. With more than one-third of the Mail Handler bargaining unit now comprised of employees currently serving as an MHA or previously hired into the Postal Service as an MHA, if not corrected these lower numbers could have serious long-term consequences on the future of the NPMHU.

Another important topic discussed by the Committee was the recent threats coming from the Trump Administration

to privatize some of the Postal Service's operations. The White House Task Force is about to issue a series of recommendations, and it is expected to follow the President's suggestion that the Postal Service eventually be privatized. Coming after years of inaction by the Congress on postal reform legislation, and during political gridlock in Washington, DC, perhaps the Task Force recommendations will spur Congressional action in the opposite direction, as a clear, bipartisan majority of the Congress continues to support the Postal Service as a cherished American institution that is necessary to the economic and social well-being of the Nation.

The Committee also discussed, as always, various automation programs that the Postal Service is beginning to develop, purchase, and deploy. Most notably, the Committee discussed recent USPS plans to use Automated Guided Vehicles (AGV), also known as driverless forklifts, in various mail processing plants around the country. Still unclear is whether these AGVs actually will lower costs, whether these AGVs will adequately or competently perform their tasks, and whether these AVGs will replace employees or simply change the tasks of the remaining employees.

Finally, the Committee engaged in lengthy discussions about how best to implement the recently signed Update MOU relating to RI-399. NPMHU representatives on the Local, Regional, and National Dispute Resolution Committees have a lot of work to do in the upcoming weeks to ensure that the full benefits of the Update MOU are experienced by Mail Handlers across the country.