

## A REPORT ON CURRENT AND UPCOMING AFFAIRS OF THE UNION

Michael J. Hora, National Secretary-Treasurer



In the 2018 Winter edition of the Mail Handler Magazine, I provided an overview of the next 20 months, calling members' attention to significant forthcoming events such as national contract negotiations, the upcoming quadrennial convention and delegate elections, the NPMHU Legislative Conference, and our national headquarters relocation into the AFL-CIO. This was meant to highlight only those matters that do not occur annually, and I am pleased to report success on many fronts.

National bargaining and efforts to secure a National Agreement are well underway. The Field Negotiation Committee met in Washington DC in February of this year. This Committee, coupled with a bargaining strategy session held during a recent SAMLU, helped to formulate the Union's proposals. Bargaining with the Postal Service formally kicked-off on June 27, 2019. The Union's proposals have been submitted in Main Table bargaining sessions, and smaller groups are tackling the intricacies of each proposal in one of nine subcommittees. It is a cumbersome process that is getting the full resources and attention it deserves. So far, we have published four Contract Updates that are included in this magazine and posted at [npmhu.org](http://npmhu.org). Additional Updates will be distributed as warranted. We are also exploring a new method to communicate with members, but more on that later.

In June, the NPMHU held its 9<sup>th</sup> biennial Legislative Conference in Washington, DC. Attendees enjoyed a comprehensive training session with a host of speakers and discussion panels. Mail Handlers also received a crash course on lobbying and Capitol Hill protocol. Armed with our message, NPMHU mail handlers stormed the Hill and collectively attended more than 250 meetings with members of Congress and their professional staffers. You can read about this highly successful program beginning on page 22.

On June 26, 2019, the National Executive Board adopted Rules to govern the election of Local Union delegates who will attend the upcoming NPMHU 2020 National Convention. The Convention Call included at page 33 of this magazine portrays the rules applicable to the 2020 NPMHU National Convention, which is scheduled to occur during the week of Tuesday, August 11 through Saturday, August 15, 2020 at

the Hyatt Regency Convention Center & Hotel in Denver, Colorado. The Convention Call is the start of the process for Local Unions, but the National Convention team has been working on Convention preparations for more than 18 months. We have secured the hotel and off-site venues, as well as all necessary ground transportation. We are finalizing selection of delegate gifts and have shifted focus to securing the various speakers that will address the body.

To make the Convention more user friendly, we are exploring ways to communicate more efficiently and effectively with delegates and members. When it comes to the Convention, we historically generate separate reports from the Constitution, Resolutions, Legislative & Political, and Rules Committees, with recommendation reports from Constitution and Resolutions. In addition, we produce the Report of National Officers, a Credentials Committee report, and the Convention Agenda. In short, we kill several large trees compiling 8 reports weighing 6 or 7 pounds for each delegate. Then, of course, there is the leather 3 ring-binder to hold it all.

It is one thing to rent a truck and transport 5 pallets of printed material across the country to the Convention, but on the final day everyone is confronted with the question, how do I get this Convention material home? Some delegates mail it home and others cram it into luggage, but the fact remains that many of these manuals are left on the Convention floor or in hotel rooms and end up in the landfill. We heard the complaints about the large reports and overwhelming mounds of paper and will make a change. In 2020, we will distribute this material and information electronically. Each report will be reduced to an electronic file and distributed via our Convention website and/or a forthcoming NPMHU mobile application. In lieu of hard-copy reports, all delegates will be provided with an eReader/tablet. Delegates will be able to access these reports as an electronic file. The logistical challenge of charging and loading several hundred tablets with Convention reports is daunting, but we are up for the challenge. We have spoken with several labor organizations that have transitioned to electronic convention material to evaluate their experience;

all report a successful experience. We are confident that we too can make the move to electronic reports.

Continuing with the theme of improved member communications, we are in the process of finalizing an agreement with a mobile app developer that specializes in applications for Labor Union and non-profit organizations. It was important to find a company that could demonstrate compatibility with multiple platforms including IOS (Apple) and Android systems. We also want seamless integration of existing hosted content. The Union will incorporate a push notification feature into the app, enabling us to create, schedule and transmit important notifications to all members on the fly. We will continue to produce, print, and distribute monthly Updates and quarterly Mail Handler magazines, but we need more. Let's face it, everyone carries a cell phone. The forthcoming mobile application will increase membership activity, and keep members informed and engaged. I anticipate a soft rollout within the next several months; additional details will be shared soon.

In September 2019, all career Mail Handler craft employees are scheduled to receive another cost-of-living (COLA) adjustment as outlined in Article 9.3 of the 2016 National Agreement. This is the final possible COLA increase under the terms of the current agreement. This COLA increase is based on the upward change in the relevant Consumer Price Index (CPI) following release of the July 2019 Index, and provides an annual increase of \$624 for all Steps in Table 1 and for Step P of Table 2. The remaining Steps in Table 2 will receive the proportional COLA increase percentages as outlined in Article 9.3 of the National Agreement. Updated wages charts will be posted on the national website at [npmhu.org](http://npmhu.org) and will be distributed in the September Update. Any future cost of living adjustment depends upon the terms of a successor contract to the 2016 National Agreement. We will continue to fight for a continuation of the current COLA formula.

Finally, we have received many questions about the timing of the monetary payment as it pertains to the Update MOU on RI-399. The Postal Service has indicated a desire to initiate payment in the current fiscal year. There is no guarantee, but the expectation is that this settlement payment would be made in early October, possibly October 5<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup>. The USPS refused our request to issue this settlement in a separate

check. Remember, In order to be eligible for payment, a Mail Handler had to be in the NPMHU Bargaining Unit (Career or MHA) and on the rolls of the Postal Service during the Pay Period which ended on September 1, 2017 AND the Mail Handler has to be in the NPMHU Bargaining Unit (Career or MHA) and on the rolls of the Postal Service during the Pay Period which ended on March 15, 2019. Any action taken by the Mail Handler after March 15, 2019 (e.g., retirement, transfer, resignation) is not considered.

- a. If eligible, and in the Bargaining Unit for less than 5 years (as of September 1, 2017), the Mail Handler will receive 1 Share—\$143.90
- b. If eligible, and in the Bargaining Unit for 5 years or more but less than 10 years (as of September 1, 2017), the Mail Handler will receive 2 Shares—\$287.80
- c. If eligible, and in the Bargaining Unit for 10 years or more but less than 20 years (as of September 1, 2017), the Mail Handler will receive 3 Shares—\$431.70
- d. If eligible, and in the Bargaining Unit for 20 years or more (as of September 1, 2017), the Mail Handler will receive 4 Shares—\$575.60

The National Office will establish a union-run appeal procedure for claims to be filed by ineligible Mail Handlers who believe they should have been listed amongst the eligible and by eligible Mail Handlers who believe they did not receive the proper number of Shares authorized. The decisions made by this appeal procedure will be final and binding, and will cause distributions of additional monies.

In Unity,



**Michael J. Hora**  
National Secretary-Treasurer

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