



New year's resolutions time again

Here we are, at the beginning of another year. Where does the time go? They say the older you get, the faster it goes by. It sure does seem that way.

I'm going to spend my time with you this month reflecting on the new year's resolutions I made in my January 2011 column and talking about new year's resolutions for 2012.

The first resolution was about getting lingering JARAP disputes resolved and a joint route adjustment process negotiated for 2011. Our goal was to negotiate improvements on what we already had in the 2011 agreement.

At present, we are in the middle of the route adjustment review side of the 2011 agreement. It remains to be seen how everything will go, but we have been able to resolve all the disputes sent to the national level thus far.

We've been talking with the Postal Service over the last few months about coming up with a joint route adjustment agreement for 2012. The goal is not only to negotiate a joint route adjustment process that improves on what we had in 2011, but to get this done earlier in the year than we have in the past. However, that can only happen if it turns out we have a willing partner. We should know one way or the other soon.

We asked the delegates at the national rap session in October who came to the city delivery workshop to write down their suggestions for improving our process. Thanks to those of you who participated—I really appreciate all of your ideas and suggestions. We found them to be very helpful and right on time for the negotiation process.

President Rolando has tasked our JARAP committee to continue negotiating with the Postal Service for a new joint route adjustment process agreement. We'll have a better idea of where things stand on this subject by the time I write my next column. I'll update you then.

The second resolution last year was about narrowing Article 12 disputes and getting PTF conversions made where it is appropriate to do so. We've seen some movement this year in both areas, but there's still a whole lot of work to do in 2012.

Before we get to 2012, I want to take a minute to thank all the national business agents, regional administrative

assistants, arbitrations advocates, Step B representatives, branch presidents, and shop stewards for all your hard work to fight against improper withholding and excessing and fight for PTF conversions this year.

We started 2011 with a little fewer than 19,000 PTFs. At present, there are a little fewer than 17,000 PTFs around the country. We've also seen many withholding events closed and/or the withholding radius reduced.

However, we continue to struggle with getting all the information we need in some parts of the country to make our computer program fully functional.

You can help by sending your "no bid" postings to your national business agent's office so he or she can make sure they get on the residual vacancy list. If we can see all the "no bid" vacancies as they occur, we have a much better chance of achieving quicker PTF conversions. Thanks in advance for your help!

The goal for 2012 is to finally get a handle on all the withholding events around the country and continue to work on making PTF conversions where it is appropriate to do so.

Another resolution from last year was about following FSS implementation. The goal was to try to get an agreement to work jointly everywhere to fix the initial FSS route adjustments in a timely fashion. I regret to say that we were unsuccessful in getting such an agreement at the national level.

Many branches have successfully made local agreements to get the routes fixed after initial FSS route adjustments. There are other branches where no such agreement could be reached and management has stalled or just refused to conduct six-day route counts and inspections.

I understand and share your frustration with trying to force managers to abide by the part of the FSS implementation agreement that requires them to come back after the initial FSS route adjustments and fix whatever mess they make. This is a difficult problem, but one that I will continue to try to help solve in 2012.

You can help fight this battle by requesting a special route inspection in offices where we can't convince management to do what they agreed to do.

In closing, I want to wish all of you and your families a very happy and healthy new year. ✉