



What's in the news?

A position was created in the APWU contract called "Delivery/Sales Services and Distribution Associate, PS-06." The job description of this position included some of the elements from the old "Special Delivery Messenger" APWU position job description. One element of the job description that was carried over to this APWU position states the following: "delivers and collects mail on foot or by vehicle under varying conditions in any area."

This element of the job description has caused a lot of concern and speculation out in the field. The question raised is: "Does this mean that clerks can now do letter carrier work?" The answer is no. This matter was settled nearly 20 years ago when we had special delivery messengers. The parties resolved this matter with three national-level settlements (M-01080, M-01125 and M-01188) that are printed on the next page.

These agreements clearly establish the principle that the delivery of mail on routes served by letter carriers is letter carrier work. There are (and always have been) provisions for cross-craft assignments in Article 7 of the National Agreement. However, it has been well established through the years that the circumstances where clerks can be assigned to do letter carrier work are very limited.

After seeing the position description for the "Delivery/Sales Services and Distribution Associate, PS-06," we wanted to make sure there was no misunderstanding here, so we went ahead and asked the Postal Service about this issue.

Our first question was, "Under function (page 2 of the new position description), what type of mail is being referred to?" The Postal Service's response was, "This new position will deliver the mail that is currently delivered by a special delivery messenger."

We also asked, "Will the newly created position include any current or traditional duties of a letter carrier?" Their response was, "The work to be performed is currently included in the special delivery messenger position. There is no impact to the letter carriers anticipated."

Despite everything I just reported, branches should monitor how this position is used. It should not affect work that traditionally has been performed by city letter carriers. Just in case you need to brush up on this subject, we've dedicated the first page of the Contract Talk section this month to the issue of improper cross-craft assignments.

On another note, the Postal Service has been filming letter carriers performing office duties on some routes in selected delivery units since mid-October. President Rolando responded by initiating a national-level interpretive dispute on Oct. 28. The text of this interpretive dispute is printed on the second page of the Contract Talk section this month for your review and information.

Unfortunately, the Postal Service isn't providing notice of what delivery unit it is going to until the evening before or day of filming. It doesn't provide notice as to what routes it's going to film until after the fact. This leaves us with no way to have an observer present or to notify those of you involved in these situations.

So what are they after, anyway? It appears the Postal Service believes that the current casing and fixed office time standards are outdated and need to be changed. (You can check out page 21 of your *2011 NALC Letter Carrier Resource Guide* for a full explanation of office standards.)

This latest "camera" fiasco is a perfect example of how the Postal Service can't see the forest for the trees. We have an employer that preaches about our dire financial condition and looks for ways to save money nearly every time it utters a sentence. This same employer is happy to bear the expense of filming 400 letter carriers working. That just doesn't make any sense. It's something else, isn't it?

I don't think there is any question that we could find better ways to do our jobs and save money, but this isn't the way. We're not going to get anywhere unless and until we can find a way to convince the Postal Service to move away from engaging in unproductive nonsense such as this camera thing it is doing.

Thanks to all of you who attended the city delivery workshop at the national rap session. I'd especially like to thank those of you who wrote down your ideas and suggestions for improving our joint route adjustment process. This information is right on time for bargaining and is greatly appreciated. I have read each one and I promise you that your ideas and suggestions will be taken into consideration as negotiations go forward.

Finally, I want to wish each of you and your families a wonderful holiday season and a happy new year! ☒