



Update on a few interpretive disputes

One battle I want to update you on is the Postal Service's unilateral caser-streeter initiative. This is where the USPS comes in and creates assignments that separate casing and street duties. I wrote about this subject in my article in November, when the USPS implemented Phase I of the caser-streeter program. In case you missed it, here's how its theory/dream world works:

The caser assignments come in and case, pull down, and load up the hampers for three routes. They have everything ready to go for two routes before the streeters get to work. The streeters come in and get their accountables, inspect the vehicle, roll the hamper out, load up and go. Then the caser carries the third route (a shorter street assignment).

If you're reading this, I'd bet you already know that real life at the Postal Service doesn't work that way. I'd also bet that you don't need an initiative, program or whatever someone wants to name this thing to prove what you already know.

Here's reality: There were 15 sites that made up Phase I of the caser-streeter initiative. We are about four months into this period. The *Reader's Digest* version of the story is that this system doesn't work in its unilateral one-size-fits-all form—big surprise. The casers can't get the mail ready by the time the streeters get to work and the streeter assignments are grossly overburdened. That's a recipe for disputes, and dinner is being served buffet-style in the Phase I sites.

Reports indicate that assignments in this system take between nine and 12 hours to complete on average. (These times are much better than they were a few months ago.)

Now let's assume you're in charge of the USPS. Armed with the reality of this situation, what would you do? Before you answer, consider the fact that you're broke and take every opportunity to publicize it. Anyone with any sense would scrap the idea.

Back to reality: The USPS notified us that it was going to implement Phase II of its unilateral caser-streeter initiative. Phase II is made up of 47 sites. Most

of these sites will be implemented by the time you read this.

Another battle I want to update you on is the Postal Service's unilateral video recording study. I wrote a bit about this issue in my December article. In case you missed it, this is where the USPS comes into a post office, chooses a few routes, and films letter carriers from the time they punch in until they leave for the street and from the time they pull back into the parking lot until they punch out to go home.

The Postal Service told us it was going to use this information for bargaining purposes, related to trying to change current office standards used to establish standard office time. As previously reported, President Rolando initiated a national-level grievance to protest this practice.

Originally, we were notified that the USPS intended to film 400 routes, but it couldn't tell us any specifics in advance about which routes would be filmed. Anyway, it began filming on Oct. 13. We were notified that the last day of filming was Feb. 4. That's the last we've heard on this matter.

It remains to be seen how this will all work out, but my crystal ball tells me this "picture show" will be a box-office flop and turn out to be yet another big waste of time and money for the Postal Service.

This month's Contract Talk is dedicated to alerting you to a new battle on the horizon. The 2011 APWU National Agreement created a new category of clerks called non-traditional full-time (NTFT) clerks. Many of these NTFT clerks have a regular schedule of fewer than 40 hours per week. The problem is that management has begun to excess some of these clerks into full-time letter carrier jobs.

It appears that this will likely become another national interpretive dispute. Our position is that the newly created APWU positions are really part-time regular positions. Clerks holding these positions can't be properly excessed into full-time letter carrier jobs.

I'll continue to report on this as we go, but check out this month's Contract Talk for more information. ☒