

New Year's resolutions



**Lew
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If you're reading this, I guess all that talk about the world coming to an end on the last day of the Mayan calendar didn't happen.

I'd like to begin by thanking each and every one of you for your hard work and dedication over the past year. Despite all the "gloom and doom" in the air, we made quite a bit of progress on several issues in 2012. In my January 2012 column, I said, "We have more work than ever to do in 2012." Well, the same can be said for 2013.

I have a few resolutions for 2013, so here we go.

My first New Year's resolution is to complete implementation of the TE/PTF conversion MOU (M-01797).

We have continued to meet with the Postal Service and talk about the implementation process. As of this writing, we still don't have a joint Q-and-A finalized, so I'll use some of my space to update you again.

"Just remember, there is no substitute for preparation. I strongly encourage you to spend the time necessary to be as ready as you possibly can."

The Postal Service has provided us lists that show us what we need to see in order to monitor compliance with the MOU. These lists show where and when PTF conversions are being made and where and when TEs are being hired.

It looks like a big chunk of the PTF conversions will have been made by the time you read this. What is going to happen with the 1,265 list (Paragraph 1 of the MOU) isn't finalized, so I won't report on it quite yet. I can tell you that the 1,265 list shows 295 carrier technician jobs that are available in installations with no PTFs. That means that there will be transfer opportunities available through eReassign. When the 1,265 list is finalized, we plan to find a way to let you know where these jobs are located. The 1,400 list (Paragraph 2 of the MOU) is finalized.

There also should be a different wave of PTF conversions required by Paragraph 4 of the MOU that take place each pay period. The Postal Service has hired about half of the 3,400 TEs that Paragraph 3 of the MOU provides for. By the time you read this, we expect to see an additional 1,700

PTF conversions made pursuant to Paragraph 4 of the MOU.

My next New Year's resolution is to continue to tackle the Article 12 issues we've been battling for several years. Paragraph 5 of M-01797 created a joint workgroup to discuss vacant jobs and withholding. President Rolando assigned me to head this up for the NALC.

Recently, more than 25,000 APWU employees took the early retirement that was offered to them. This could be a game changer. I am hopeful that we will make a lot of progress through this joint workgroup toward eliminating improper withholding this year.

My final new year's resolution is to get the most out of implementation of our next National Agreement. As reported on page 7, we expect an interest arbitration award this month that will give us our new contract.

For now, I'll focus on local negotiations.

Following the award, each branch and installation will have a local implementation period. Either the branch or management may choose to open local negotiations. Once opened, every item in your local memorandum of understanding (LMOU) is subject to negotiation.

If you decide to open LMOU negotiations or management opens them, the best advice is to get serious about preparation.

First, you should select a local negotiations committee. It's best to have enough letter carriers on your local negotiations committee so that you have plenty of witnesses and someone to take notes at each meeting you have with the Postal Service.

Second, you should prepare at least three proposals for each of the 22 items listed in the Contract Talk article on the next page.

Third, you should be prepared to document and demonstrate that your proposals are reasonable. For example, if you propose to increase the number of employees allowed off on annual leave, you should be prepared to justify your proposal and show why it is a reasonable request, given your local circumstances.

Finally, be prepared to anticipate and counter management's proposals for each of the 22 items. In most cases, you already know which parts of the LMOU management would like to change. Management may or may not know which parts you would like to change. This is especially true when you come prepared to negotiate all 22 items.

Just remember, there is no substitute for preparation. I strongly encourage you to spend the time necessary to be as ready as you possibly can.

I want to wish each and every one of you and your families a healthy and happy new year!