



WAKE UP!

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Publisher
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FALCONS

VS

PATRIOTS

President's Message

"NO DEALS"

Prior to the inspection schedule being released, I was approached by the Postmaster of Peabody regarding minor adjustments in the Peabody office. Minor adjustments are provided for in Section 141 of the M39. After much deliberation with the local stewards and management, agreement was reached in principle over what would take place regarding adjustment. Subsequently, an inspection schedule was released and Peabody was on it. Management approached Operations Programs Support (OPS) notifying them that there was an agreement in principle to do minor adjustments and asked whether the inspection would still take place. OPS reviewed the data and agreed that they would remove Peabody from the inspection schedule provided there was a signed agreement detailing what was agreed to.

Somehow, this agreement has been turned into "Branch 25 made a 'deal' in Peabody to avoid being inspected." Nothing could be further from the truth.

In the past few weeks, as the dates approach for the offices that are on the inspection schedule, I have been receiving emails and phone calls asking that I "make a deal" like the one in Peabody to avoid a route inspection in office x, y, or z. It's not gonna happen. Why, you may ask? I'm happy to explain.

We have a job to do, each one of us. My job is to provide you with the means to "stay informed" of your rights and responsibilities, and to ensure that our stewards are prepared and supported in their efforts to preserve your rights. Your job is to be a professional letter carrier, and to follow the rules as contained in the National Agreement, your local agreements, and the M-41 (City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities).

That being said, OPS also has a job to do. Part of their job is to provide support to an office to make sure that the routes in that office are as near as possible to 8 hours. This support is in the form of conducting office wide inspections if an office needs them. In theory, an office that needs to gain routes due to growth should get just as much attention as an office that will most likely lose hours due to inefficiency or decline in volume. Theory is a wonderful thing, but practice is much different. In practice, it is the office that shows potential savings that is targeted by OPS. Savings means cutting routes.

One might ask: "With the dramatic increase in parcels, and all the overtime being worked, how could an office possibly LOSE hours?" Well, there could be many ways this could happen.

Let's look at the most innocent scenario. A bunch of veteran carriers that aren't quite as nimble and quick as they once were retire and a bunch of new carriers that are full of vim and vigor become regulars and get the routes done quicker. Provided that they are taking their lunches

and breaks, and following all the safety rules, there's nothing nefarious about this scenario. Now before some of the veteran folks get upset and think that I'm insulting them, I'm not. I'm in my 30th year, only 53 years old, aches and pains and I know I'm not as quick as I was just 5 years ago.

There are other scenarios, however, that cause me dismay. Many offices are showing inflated office times. Usually, this is the case when carriers are casing FSS, DPS, or playing with the mail to make it easier/quicker to deliver on the street. It can also happen when the plant messes up and doesn't get the mail to the office in a timely manner. Carriers, through no fault of their own, are sitting around doing nothing and this is an unacceptable loss to the postal service.

There is also the scenario where the street times for an office begin to creep higher and higher. Often, when this happens, a manager will do a 3999 on a carrier and "bring the carrier back" much earlier than he or she would normally return when not accompanied by anyone. Don't point the finger at me, I'm just reporting the news, not making it.

So, let's take a look at these scenarios and determine why I would want to "make a deal" with OPS. Let's take the last case, the one where the street times fluctuate quite a bit. Why is that? Beats me. But, I want every carrier to have the opportunity to carry their route professionally and demonstrate to an examiner what the route is worth. With the number of parcels out there, street times should not be decreasing.

How about the office time? As long as I've been a letter carrier, the work room floor relationship/antagonism has been one of the biggest complaints that a letter carrier has. It's been my experience that much of this is actually created outside of the office, from the bean counters at the district and/or area level that make local managers answer to each minute "wasted". Perhaps the start times are too early on a particular day of the week, or in a particular office and that makes it impossible for the carriers to be as efficient as they are capable of being. This is not a carrier problem, it is a management problem. So, why would I "make a deal" to prevent an inspection that may uncover management created inefficiencies that are causing stress to letter carriers.

What about the carriers that are casing FSS, DPS, and playing with the mail in the office and thus reducing street time at the expense of office time? Well, I'm definitely not going to "make a deal" to keep the spotlight off of these carriers and their duplicitous management teams. This is the most onerous of all scenarios. We were hired, and trained, to carry the mail. There are rules that we are required to follow. Some rules make more sense than others, but they are rules nonetheless. If I were to enter into an agreement that
(continued on page 4)

Executive Vice President's Report

Well it didn't take long for President Trump to sign an Executive order to freeze hiring for the Federal workforce but it is done. The order is meant for everyone except military personnel and public safety and health. This order was completely expected as Trump made this a priority during his campaign. As of the writing of this, the NALC is looking into whether or not the freeze actually applies to the Postal Service.

This is probably just the beginning of assaults on the wages, benefits and retirement package that the federal workforce has come to know. Trump and Paul Ryan have made it clear that this will be a priority, but just how successful they will be remains to be seen. If the hiring freeze remains for more than a short time that will put a serious strain on the current workforce, and the service will suffer. We have a large percentage of carriers eligible to retire or are getting close to it. As a matter of fact, we have a lot that have recently retired and if they are not replaced I don't have to tell you who will be picking up the slack. Also, the freeze should not delay any conversions of CCAs to regular.

Another problem that could arise from any hiring freeze imposed by President Trump would be the using of non-OTDL carriers for OT. This has happened in the past. If this occurs, contact your Union steward or the Branch office. It is up to the Postal Service to fully staff each station, regardless of any hiring freeze, the Postal Service is contractually required to have a regular assigned to every route and T-6 position. Any vacancies that result from a hiring freeze should be reported to the Union office. Hopefully, we get word that the hiring freeze does not apply to us.

As I was writing this I saw a report from Rep. Chaffetz who chairs the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. He talked about the need for bipartisan Postal Reform and wants to get legislation approved to be signed by Trump. He reported that this is a priority of his committee. Part of his bill would be to refigure the burden put on the Postal Service for the pre-funding mandate of retirement benefits. He supported Trump for wanting to make across the board cuts to government, but also said that there are departments and agencies that need more employees. I hope he was referring to us. The NALC applauded him for these statements about reform and hopefully his committee can be more productive than the previous one chaired by Rep. Issa. These things do not happen overnight unfortunately.

We are currently undergoing inspections in one of our stations and another station is complete, but the results from that inspection have not been compiled, as

of yet. Whether or not you will be inspected this Winter or Spring, the road times you are currently compiling will be used as comparative data for any future

inspections. We don't have a schedule for any Fall inspections or next year, but I'm sure route inspections will continue beyond this Spring. Do your route the way you are supposed to efficiently and safe.

The parcels should be delivered properly and not just left out in the open. We are required to deliver it to a person if they are there, or at least make the attempt. The Postal Service expects the parcel volume to be a large part of our business so we should give the customer the proper service.

The Winter is about half over and we are getting more daylight everyday, and the Patriots are in another Superbowl. Hopefully, we will have a new National Agreement soon.

Keep your head up.

Paul Desmond

Calendar of Events

February 2	Groundhog Day
February 4	Thank a Mailman Day
February 5	Super Bowl 51, Houston Texas
February 7	8PM Branch Meeting @ Knights of Columbus 27 School St. Ext. Wilmington Food served @ 7:15
February 14	Valentine's Day
February 20	President's Day
March 5	Region 14 RAP Session; Biltmore Hotel, Providence, RI

Branch 25 Directory of Officers

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Your "Wake-Up!" is produced in-house at the Branch 25 Union office each and every month.

Branch 25 would like to welcome the following

Welcome New Members!!

new members into the fold:

Robert W Coughlin, Lowell
Michael Y Newman, Lowell
Priscilla Alicea, Billerica
Jessica Celi, Maynard
Yesenia Garcia, Lowell
Robert H Townsend, Acton
Brad Nolan, Lowell
Jason Monaco, Tewksbury
Guy Leva, Haverhill
Peter Landers, Danvers

Do you ever get frustrated by the amount of mail you have to bring back every day because it is undeliverable? I remember when, if a carrier returned to the office with

A Non-Functioning Function

a handful of mail, he or she would be subject to being interviewed for possible discipline.

When DPS was first introduced in the early 1990's, it had to pass a quality test for accuracy. I cannot remember the exact percentage but I believe (cont p. 5)

definitely not going to "make a deal" to keep the spotlight off of these carriers and their duplicitous management teams. This is the most onerous of all

President's Message continued

scenarios. We were hired, and trained, to carry the mail. There are rules that we are required to follow. Some rules make more sense than others, but they are rules nonetheless. If I were to enter into an agreement that would serve to allow these practices to continue, then I would be no more compliant with the contract than those that are breaking it each and every day by committing these infractions in the office.

Make no mistake, either, any agreement to keep the inspection team out of the office is for this season, not for all eternity. So, if an office wants to give back 10 minutes per route now, or if another office wants to give 2 routes back now, what are they going to want next year?

Let's play this out. You give back 10 minutes, then what? On some days are you going to have to skip or cut short a break or lunch to keep the boss off your back? Do you think that when you call in from the street because you're running late that the boss will say: "Oh yeah, you gave back 10 minutes, take your time, of course I'm not going to yell at you for running late, you're a great carrier! You took one for the team!"

And how about that office that gives a couple routes back. How do I look at the junior regulars and tell them their lives may be upended because they are now excess to the needs of the service and could be excessed across the state? How do I look at the CCA's in the office and tell them that the carriers senior to them didn't want to carry their routes professionally so now you're not going to be converted to regular for quite some time?

I'm not going to do that. If your office is over, you should gain time, possibly a route. If your office is under, you should lose time, possibly a route or routes. If you gain time, you've earned it. If you're going to lose time, make them earn it!

Stay informed!!

Dave Barbuzzi
President

Hey everyone! I hope you had a great Christmas with your families and your New Year is starting off on the right foot. I wanted to let you know with this New Year we will be trying something new to try to raise money for Muscular Dystrophy. We are going to, with your help, put on what you older people might know as a "PENNY SALE", for you younger people that is where you come to a hall family in tow, buy raffle tickets and place raffle tickets in your items of interest and if your number is called you win that item. This is a lot of fun for adults and children alike.

I am asking each one of our members to look in your homes for new items that you might want to donate to this awesome cause. Some examples might be: Kids items: games, puzzles, craft kits, crayons, and coloring book, etc. Kitchen items: utensils, small appliances, knife sets, baking items, etc. Grilling items: charcoal, grill utensils, grilling marinades, etc. Sports items: gloves, bats, hockey pucks, badminton games, memorabilia, baseball cards, etc. Gift cards of any kind.

If you got an item for Christmas that you will not use, don't re-gift it next year, think about donating it to the Penny Sale, your mother-in-law will never know. Please bring items to the Union Meeting on the first Tuesday of the month for the next 3 months, if you can't make the meeting ask someone you know to bring them for you or give me a call and I will decide to pick them up, remember without you this event cannot happen. I am also looking for a hall so if you have any suggestions of a place where we can do this please let me know, suggestions are greatly appreciated. We will also be looking for about 10 volunteers to help, so when I get the date and place, if you are available that would be great. I cannot do this alone.

One More thing I would like to discuss as far as Muscular Dystrophy is concerned. I was under the impression that everyone was having a good time at the bowlathon, but at last count that wasn't the case. I would love to schedule another one but do not want to do so if there is no interest. I am asking everyone and anyone who is interested in having another bowlathon this spring to please give me a text at 603-819-9038 and let me know that you want me to proceed in scheduling this event. Please leave your name and office you are out of in the text and how many are interested. Please do this by end of February so I can book a date. The next Branch 25 Pancake Breakfast will be on March 26. Look for more details in the next Wake Up. Thank you,

Kathy Hall

it was in the upper 90s (Maybe 95 to 98%). I think most carriers would question if that quality is still being maintained. In addition, the carrier had access to

submitting "station inputs". Station inputs gave the carrier an opportunity to have problem delivery addresses removed from the DPS sort plan and handled in office as cased residual mail. Problem delivery addresses included recent forwards, vacation holds, some multi-unit businesses where mail would come in under an individual name instead of the name of the business, long termed vacants, or other concerns that were a consistent problem. These deliveries being removed from the DPS sort plan gave the replacement carriers (T-6, CCA, overtime replacement) an opportunity to remove the articles of mail from the carrier case before pulling it down into trays.

It also allowed the carrier to remove mail from delivery when preparing a piece given off for auxiliary assistance. The replacement carrier would be responsible for checking the forward cards in the carrier rack, to review any active forwards for the past six months. It also would inform the carrier of any new forwards whether individual, family, or temporary, which hopefully could be remembered when on the road. The replacement would remove these letters and flats and place them in the proper area for handling (COA, endorsed, UBBM, hold, review).

Today, the procedure of station inputs is non-existent. The replacement carrier is unable to remove this mail before departing for the street. Unless the regular carrier maintains numerous special order cards, which takes time to be cased, the replacement is unable to prevent this mail from being delivered. In fact, over the last many years, the replacement carrier has been instructed to send everything to Central Forwarding System (CFS), instead of reviewing the pink forward cards going back for the last eighteen months at the end of the day for mail returned. An article of mail (1st class or periodical or special handling) can be forwarded for one year.

The time of one year to eighteen months the article is no longer forwarded but is returned to the sender with the new address label attached. Over the eighteen months is considered "unable to forward" (UTF). In many cases, the CFS mail is returned to the carrier route for review since no forward on file is found.

(continued on page 7)

Guide To Route Inspection Carrier Consultations

There are two different consultations that must take place as part of route inspections. The first is the Route Evaluation Consultation. This consultation is the carrier's opportunity to review the data that has been collected from the week of inspection. This data is collected on forms PS 1838 (Carrier's Count of Mail) and PS 1840 (Carrier Delivery Route -Summary of Count and Inspection).

Route Evaluation Consultation

Form 1838 must be provided to each letter carrier 5 calendar days before the consultation. Form 1840 must be provided to each letter carrier 1 day before the consultation (M-39 Section 241.4). All time disallowances and related comments on the 1840 will be provided to each letter carrier 1 day before the consultation (M-39 Section 242.347). **If you are having a consultation and you didn't get Form 1838 5 days prior and/or Form 1840 1 day prior than you shouldn't be having a consultation.**

Any adjustments to a carrier's base street time due to identified improper practices or operational changes (elimination of park points, relays...) must be documented by Comments on the reverse of form 1840. These adjustments must be discussed with the carrier at the consultation. "If the carrier, at the time of the consultation, notes the absence of such documentation in writing on the Form 1840 or attachment thereto, and initials and dates the Form 1840 or attachments thereto, and management does not supply such documentation within 1 week, with a copy to the carrier, the time adjustment shall be disallowed." (M39-242.345). **If management takes time away from your route and does not explain why it's up to each carrier to note that and if management can't document why within 1 week then the deduction is no good.**

"If management excludes a day(s) from the 8 week analysis, the reasons must be documented and discussed with the carrier during the consultation. If management does not have comments documenting the change, the carrier may note this absence of documentation on the 1840 or an attachment. If management does not provide the documentation within a week, the exclusion of the day(s) is disallowed" (M-39 Section 242.346). **If management throws out days from the 8 week analysis because the time didn't fit into what they want it's up to each carrier to note this. If management can't document**

their reasoning within 1 week then they can't exclude the day(s).

Route Adjustment Consultation

When relief or addition to a route is considered, the carrier should be consulted regarding the adjustment. The reasons should be discussed and the carrier's comments and recommendations should be recorded on the 1840. The carrier is not required to sign a statement (M-39 243.11a). **Management must talk with each carrier about their proposed route adjustment. Each carrier has the right to tell management their thoughts about the adjustments. The carrier does not have to sign anything.**

The carrier's comments cannot be just dismissed. They must be considered by the postmaster or designee (M-39 243.11c). **Just listening to the carrier is not enough. Management must actually hear what the carrier is saying.**

These consultations are mandatory. Management is not allowed to simply meet with the carrier and tell him or her what they came up with and what adjustment management intends to make. To consult means to seek an opinion as a guide to one's own judgment.

You, the regular carrier, have an important role in determining the evaluated time of, and adjustment to, your assigned route. Do not allow management to pretend to consult, with a wink and nod, and simply go through the motions. Postal regulations are very explicit about what is required regarding consultations.

As with everything, when it comes to route inspections knowledge is important! Management is required to do the following:

1. Consultations must be done within the 52 day period from the completion of the count that they have to implement the adjustments (M-39 Section 211.3)

Management must record each carrier's recommendations and comments (M-39 Section 243.11) Management may not make the carrier sign anything (M-39 Section 243.11a).

Management must consult with a carrier a second time if adjustments are proposed (M-39 Section 243.11a) Management must consider your suggestions (M-39 Section 243.11c)

Consultations continued

Permit carrier's notation of absence of documentation of street time and disallow adjustments if no documentation is provided within 1 week of notation (M-39 Sections 242.345 and .346)

Management must provide a completed copy of reverse of 1840 promptly after consultation (M-39 Section 243.11a)

It's up to each carrier to arm themselves with the knowledge they need during consultations. Don't take the attitude that whatever will happen is going to happen. There is no guarantee that everything goes perfect but if you do your part it will make things easier even if violations need to be grieved later.

In Solidarity,
Dan Wheeler

A Non-Functioning Function cont.

In these instances, the regular and/or replacement is to review the forward, not just be instructed to mark it UTF or UBBM depending on the class of mail. Review of the beginning and end dates, family or individual, is the address correct, is the spelling correct, accurate zip code, could the street or apartment number be wrong or missing. These functions should be done daily. It helps to provide the most accurate and timely delivery of mail. Without proper review and handling, misdeliveries and/or delay of mail results.

My hope is the problems of quality of DPS mail, the allowance of carrier station inputs, the instruction to regular carriers to properly maintain the pink forward cards and the training and time necessary being given to replacement carriers can improve the accuracy and timeliness of our task in delivery of mail.

Happy Valentine's Day

Jim Nutter, Treasurer



Last Punch Bunch



After 37 years of service, Bedford carrier Dick McGurl hung up the satchel on January 3rd. Dick looks forward to spending time with his new granddaughter and finally getting Saturdays off to spend time down on the Cape. Route 2 and the Bedford/Burlington office won't be the same without the "Chief". Thanks, and Good luck!

Momentum

Goal setting for success

USPS EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
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www.EAP4YOU.com

Tips on not giving up

- Sometimes a goal can suddenly seem too ambitious. Try breaking your goals down into smaller, manageable parts. Then, celebrate when you achieve each short-term milestone.
- If you experience doubt about your goal pursuit, confer with and get support from people you trust. This could be relatives, friends, or work mentors.
- Pushing toward goals can sometimes be stressful. Be sure to make time to rest, relax and recharge so that you don't burn out.

Creating SMART goals

As another new year arrives, you might think about goals you'd like to pursue in multiple realms of life—from career to health to family to education to finances. Whatever personal or professional targets you'd like to aim for this year, setting SMART goals can help you get there.

Although there are various interpretations of the SMART acronym, in general, these goals are:

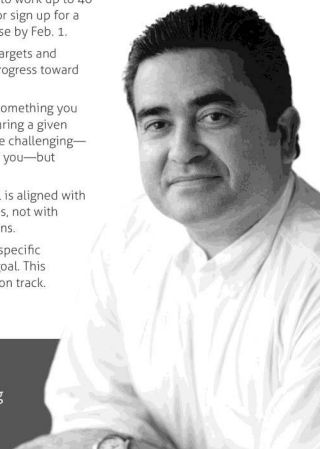
Specific—You've defined your objective with clear targets: amounts, dates, and confirmable accomplishments. Examples of specific goals would be to work up to 40 pushups a day by June 1, or sign up for a continuing education course by Feb. 1.

Measurable—You've set targets and milestones to track your progress toward your goal.

Attainable—Your goal is something you can realistically achieve during a given timeframe. Goals should be challenging—and represent a stretch for you—but shouldn't be impossible.

Relevant—A relevant goal is aligned with your life and work priorities, not with someone else's expectations.

Time-based—You have a specific deadline for meeting the goal. This helps you stay driven and on track.



To set goals, first develop an action plan and put it in writing. This helps you commit to it. And, to avoid getting overwhelmed, don't set too many goals at once.

Log on to www.EAP4YOU.com today!

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*at the next meeting
February 7, 2017*

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