

LIMITED DUTY CARRIERS SUFFER THE ULTIMATE HARM

By: Ray Hill, Executive Vice-President



I'm sure you are all at least somewhat familiar with the story of Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger III, the pilot that successfully landed US Airways Flight 1549 in the Hudson River on January 15th, saving his crew and all 155 passengers on board in the process. Ever since I heard about his heroic Hudson River landing, when the word pilot comes to my mind, I immediately think of Mr. Sullenberger. On the other hand,

when USPS Management thinks about the word pilot, sadly, it isn't Mr. Sully Sullenberger that pops into their minds.

Speaking of the word pilot, the USPS has just launched their brand, spanking new "**Limited Duty Pilot Program**". No, when USPS Management thinks of the word pilot, they don't see Sully Sullenberger III; they see visions of their injured carriers being kicked in the ass as they shove them out the door.

Thanks to this particular **pilot**, many of the Sierra-Coastal District's already injured Letter Carriers are now suffering from new injuries that are being inflicted upon them by USPS Management. The good news is that this **disastrous** "Pilot Program" is only being tested in 4 USPS Districts in the entire country. The bad news is that the Sierra-Coastal District is one of them. The worst news is that USPS Management will probably embrace the havoc wreaked by the Pilot Program and eventually implement it across the nation.

Apparently the **National Reassessment Process** (NRP) was not proceeding fast enough for their liking, so the USPS came up with this Pilot Program to **hasten the harm** to those Letter Carriers that have sustained on-the-job injuries and have been working modified assignments for several years.

In Branch 2902 the Pilot Program crash-landed in the Reseda and Woodland Hills Post Offices on Friday, April 3, 2009 as Management Teams went into those offices and met with the limited duty carriers.

On Monday, April 6, 2009 the Pilot Program crashed into the North Hollywood and Sylmar offices. Throughout the weeks of April 6th and April 13th, the Management Teams have continued the meetings in Post Offices throughout the Branch.

Most of the limited duty carriers that I have spoken to say that they requested Union representation in their meeting with Management and that their requests were denied. Branch 2902 will be filing grievances in any and all offices where carriers requested Union representation and their requests were denied.

Some of our injured carriers were offered no work at all and sent home with a Form CA-7, while other carriers were offered varying amounts of work totaling less than 8 hours per day.

Regarding the offers of less than 8 hour's work per day that were given to the carriers, it is really a mixed bag. For example, one carrier was offered 1 hour of work per day, another carrier was offered 2 hours of work per day while yet another carrier was offered 6 hours of work per day.

Injured carriers that have been carrying routes have, for the most part, been offered 8 hours of work per day.

In my correct opinion, it is really a slap in the face to offer someone 1, 2 or 3 hours of work per day. I take that back. It is more of a kick in the ass than a slap in the face.

Some of the injured carriers that were given these insulting job offers commute from long distances (i.e. Palm-dale, Lancaster, Rancho Cucamonga, Inglewood, etc.) and their commutes will take them longer than they will be working. That, Brothers and Sisters, is just plain, unadulterated, Grade-A B.S.

We are advising all the limited duty carriers being adversely affected by the pilot program to contact the steward in their office to file a grievance immediately when they are given offers of anything less than 8 hours of work within their medical restrictions per day.

We are also advising these carriers to provide their stewards with a detailed statement explaining what work they have been doing since they suffered their injuries.

The work that the limited duty carriers have been doing all these years did not magically disappear when Management kicked them out the door. **Someone has to be doing that work. The question is: Who is now doing the work that our injured carriers have been doing for years?**

I carried mail in North Hollywood, where Management has a long history of doing craft work when they think they can get away with it. Supervisors have been known to case routes, pull down routes, deliver mail, deliver Express Mail, spread mail, pull the hot case for carriers, etc. When we

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not really needed. Moreover, there are many positions under the level of Postmaster that are repetitive, overpaid, and could probably be done better by the craft. Many of these positions pay in excess of \$70,000.00 a year plus benefits and bonuses. A huge savings here! If the Personnel department could be consolidated, why not Operations Programs Support and Labor Relations?

Reversions/Withholdings/Excessing

The recent round of early outs has triggered a rush of reversions and withholdings by Management. It seems like Management is considering every route recently vacated as an auxiliary route based on their DOIS data. The Union disagrees with Management's assessment of these vacant routes and is filing the appropriate grievances. I'm sure that many regulars out there would have loved to bid on some of these choice assignments. The positions that are not being reverted are being withheld under Article 12 for displaced carriers and clerks. Yes, we have been noti-

fied that clerks are being decimated by the drop in mail volume and are being forced into the carrier craft. It's not their fault. Please welcome them into our craft and give them all the help you can. It's traumatic for them and we should extend every courtesy to them. Hold on PTFs . . . I know you want to be regulars, but these are trying times and we have to wait until the dust settles. In the meantime, you should be scheduled to work 40 hours per week before TEs are scheduled to work. In addition, opt on everything you see. You never know, but that opt could turn into a long-term indefinite assignment.

Food Drive

By the time you read this article, the Food Drive will have come and gone. I hope we all did our best to get the word out and to ensure that all the food was picked up. Thanks in advance for making a good effort. More details, and hopefully photos in the next edition of the Mail Bag News.

All for now back in two.

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find out about the violations, we file grievances and are successful getting letter carriers paid for craft work that was performed by Management.

Unfortunately, we do not have a steward that works at either the Chandler or Studio City Stations that can observe what actually goes on there every day.

Now that 4 Chandler carriers have been given the boot (offered zero hours of work per day) and another has been offered 2 hours of work per day, there will be a lot of uncovered work that **someone** has to do. The same holds true for the Studio City Office and the Laurel Canyon Carrier Annex (LCCA) where injured carriers have also been shown the door.

If I were a betting man (and I am), I'd bet the farm (if I had one) that there will be a "goodly amount" of craft work being done in North Hollywood by Management.

I spoke to North Hollywood Postmaster Mary Jane Smith on April 7, 2009 and I told her that we were getting reports of Management personnel performing craft work in North Hollywood and that we would vigorously attack any such violations in the grievance procedure. **That goes for every office in our Branch, by the way.** Postmaster Smith told me that she was unaware of any such violations and she sent an e-mail to her supervisors and Managers telling them that they were not to perform craft work under any circumstances.

That's just great, but Postmaster Smith can't see everything that goes on in North Hollywood and the work our injured carriers have been doing for years still has to get done. I'm betting that Management will, **without a doubt,**

be doing some of the work our injured carriers used to do. Not just in North Hollywood but in every office where injured carriers are being kicked out the door.

This is where we need the help of all the carriers that are still working and can see what is going on in their offices on a daily basis.

If you know that Management in your office is performing any type of craft work (i.e. spreading mail, delivering Express mail, casing routes, pulling down routes, taking swings out to carriers, working in the accountable cage, working at the hot case, delivering mail, helping the customers in the lobby, passports etc.) please notify your shop steward or call the Branch Office.

You can remain anonymous if you are so inclined but we would prefer that you stand up and write us a statement about what you have observed. However, as I just wrote, you can remain anonymous if you so chose. Just let us know when you see any possible violations so that we can have our stewards investigate and grieve those violations.

I find it **criminal** that Management has the gall to kick injured carriers out the door because they **allegedly** have no work for them and then **sneak around** doing the work that the injured carrier used to do. Help us with this, Brothers and Sisters! Let us know if and when you observe any violations of Management doing the craft work that our injured carriers used to do and should still be doing! Remember, "There but for the grace of God walketh I".

Management is supposed to be providing assistance to the carriers filling out the appropriate Forms in order to be paid by OWCP. These are Forms CA-7 (for those who are not working at all) and Form CA-7a (for those who are

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working less than 8 hours per day). The Branch office can assist you if you have questions regarding the completion of the Forms.

Having said that, I think that we should make this "Pilot Program" as unpleasant for Management as they have made it for their injured carriers.

If you have a question about the completion of Forms CA-7 and CA-7a, **force** Management to assist you in filling them out. They are **supposed to** assist you in completing the Forms. If your local office says they don't know how to fill out the Forms then ask them to let you call the **Health And Resource Management** (HARM...as Frank Salazar likes to ask, isn't that an appropriate acronym?) **Department** at the Sierra-Coastal District Offices in Santa Clarita. **HARM's** phone numbers are (661) 775-7061, (661) 775-7062 and (661) 775-7063.

Feel free to call them with any and all questions you might have regarding the completion of Forms CA-7 and CA-7a.

Also, feel free to call us at the Branch Office with any questions if you are not in the mood for suffering further HARM.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Maria Pacheco and her family. Maria, who is a carrier at LCCA in North Hollywood, suffered an aneurysm on April 9th and is currently in extremely critical condition. God bless you, Maria. We miss you!

Talk to you all in two months, hopefully with some more "cheery" news to report.



Oxnard Carrier Malik Reyes Parties like there is no tomorrow...on his last day!!! Good luck in your newfound retirement life Malik.

CAN WE AFFORD THAT?...

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on their part.

The idea of giving up the all important Diversity Development Specialist in Santa Clarita who makes more than \$77,000 a year to send out e-mails with reminders of Breast Cancer Awareness month or Black Heritage month or National EAP month or coupons for TGI Fridays is what really helps move the mail along, right! (If you think that I am making this stuff up, take the time to look it up). Or how about the Safety Specialist who makes more than \$70,000 a year and whose job it is to go out to the field and point out all the unsafe conditions that exist at each Postal Facility, then write these infractions up with mere "recommendation" for abating the safety infraction. Of course this position has no real authority to actually force the local management to make whatever repairs are needed to abate the safety problem. How about the Customer Service Analyst that Santa Clarita spends more than \$70,000 a year on? What the hell is a customer service analyst anyway and how does that position directly help to move the mail along? Or how about the Resource Manager position that is costing the Postal Service a mere \$55,000 that is simply a tool for labor relations in their never ending quest to fire as many people as they can by now using the NRP as a shield.

No, all THIS dead weight can not be spared. Their jobs are far too important for management to give up. After all if management gave up a position such as the resource manager then the Postmasters would actually have to do their job. That can't happen. Postmasters are far too busy acting as lobby directors and passport clerks. You think I jest. When I recently noticed that the OIC in my office was acting as a lobby director and retrieving parcels for customers waiting in line, I was told by her that it is part of her job description. I could have sworn that was a clerk's job. Can we afford that?

You want to save money Mr. District manager? How about you get your stubborn, ill informed Supervisors and Postmasters to simply comply with the contract and stop attempting to make their own interpretation of the national agreement. I am not talking about really complicated issues.

For instance, in the quarter that just ended for January, February and March, the OIC in Woodland Hills just wrote a big fat check for \$6,000 for OTDL equability. Can we afford that? It's pretty simple, just stop being lazy and leaning on your favorite carrier over and over again and do the right thing. The problem is that it takes work to follow all that complicated OTDL tracking stuff. It would mean that the Supervisors would actually have to figure it out. Can we afford not to do that?

How about the \$8849 check that the OIC in my office just had to write because once again management decid-

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