

## An Accurate Seniority List Matters

# WAITING FOR SENIORITY LIST 2.0

**D**uring the last few weeks, a U.S. Postal Service event was about to reach its conclusion. While this action was taking place, there had been at least several inquiries from bargaining-unit employees asking APWU stewards and the Oakland Local about seniority lists, where each stand on such lists.

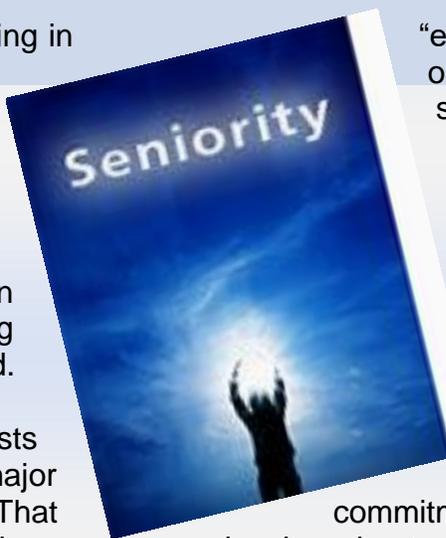
The impetus for such requests was that, among other things, Oakland P & DC employees were experiencing a Postal Service created “excessing” event. In this particular case, USPS had already made the determination, effective on a national scale, that the number of bargaining-unit employees they employ far exceeded the amount of work available for them to perform. The Postal Service’s response to this was to attempt to reduce the number of employees at specific facilities, to “right-size” the Postal Service, and then feign a further attempt in reasonably relocating them at facilities where ostensibly a need exists.

In theory, these employees should all have a landing spot, and no one loses his or her job. In practice, the displacement of an employee to another location, sometimes involving a much farther distance, places that employee in a fragile position of seriously considering leaving the Postal Service, whether by retirement or resignation, or of trying to make the new, more difficult situation, work for him or her.

This is where a seniority list that is up to date and accurate becomes of major importance.

A bargaining-unit employee identified as being in section or installation is determined by only or her seniority standing on that craft’s Among other things, such as precedence preference in overtime hours, bidding for assignments, choice annual leave slots, and moved from their duty assignment whereas employees are moved to other sections when exist, the seniority list is the controlling document in determining who gets excessed.

The entire concept of workplace seniority rests idea that an employee has committed a major his time in service to his or her employer. That longevity, of being a senior employee, has shown understood, will be recognized favorably and rewarded commensurately. When, by way



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of an inaccurate seniority list that recognition and acknowledgment go away, the employee feels betrayed. If management had taken it upon themselves to create an accurate seniority list, that sense of betrayal and lack of respect between bargaining-unit employees and management would have been severely lessened.

**At the Oakland P & DC there are several seniority lists circulating about, as well as being posted inside the facility, which invariably have been shown to be inaccurate.**

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The effect of this inaccuracy, although not acknowledged by USPS management, can be devastating to an employee due to the financial and emotional costs of relocating somewhere else ("Moving" is considered one of the top five most stressful events in a person's life). The experience and decision-making process involved in handling this disruption is often unsettling. It is even worse when an employee is mistakenly identified as being eligible for excessing because of an inaccurate list.

In this latest excessing event, the USPS left off the names of nearly 200 employees from the Clerk Craft Seniority List, mostly lower seniority employees. Since these further identified lower seniority employees' names were not on the seniority list, inevitably they could not be identified as being eligible for excessing. The consequence then became that other employees were mis-identified as being eligible for excessing. This was wrong. When you consider the large number of lower seniority employees involved who were left off the seniority list, assuredly many higher seniority employees were targeted for excessing. This would have been a major violation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement as well as a major injustice to the employees affected.

The excessing event has been temporarily put on hold. But, in the meantime, while we are waiting for management to come up with Seniority List 2.0, we cannot help but think, "Will that be inaccurate, too?" We will have to wait and see.

- Theodore Houben

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