



The Detroit Postal Worker

A NEWS BULLETIN FOR APWU MEMBERS

American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO - Detroit District Area Local

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2019 STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS FOR THE APWU-DDAL

Greeting brothers and sisters, it is a humbling experience to have your continued support for three more years. It has come to my attention that our membership would like the officers of the local to be more visible on the workroom floor and in the facilities. We are in the field often and as we walk through the various locations you may not always see us. However, that doesn't mean we aren't there.

In 2016 we achieved many goals that we set for the year. I will say to the membership that we could not have achieved any of those goals if we had been in the field more than we were in our offices.

In 2019 with the foundation of our administration set on leveled ground, I believe that you may see a little more of us. It has always been my intention to provide the very best representation for this membership.

FINANCES

Our incoming finances for 2019 are almost always less than the year prior and that will continue this year as well, because as you know we have members who decide to get out of the union for whatever reason. Also members that get promoted to supervisors and of course we have a few non-members mostly in the maintenance craft. I will say to all non-members and I quote "that when you decide not to join your local union you than sign a silent proxy with management to help them further their agenda." It is a fight that at some point you may have to choose a side.

We can achieve many of our finance goals just by getting our non-members to join. It is only \$29.00 a pay period to help further the union. Our administration have not raised your dues while we have been in office, simple because we don't want to put that burden on the membership, so your officers and our budget committee has come up with strategic ways to cut cost in other areas to balance our budget.

We have decreased each and every utility bill that your union utilizes, and of course as you know from past years that the huge bill owed to our attorneys has been paid. I stated last year that we starting to pay the Retirement benefit again after it was stopped. We have paid roughly around 20 retired employees amounting to \$6,000.00. It isn't the amount we wanted pay, but it sure does bet \$0.00 for over 6 years. We have to become creative in ways to boost our finances such as auctions, functions, events, raffles. Our local needs your help to stay on top of our economics.

BUILDING UPGRADES AND REPAIRS

We have in the last 3 years painted some parts of your union hall. We will continue to address other area of the building. It is amazing how just a little paint on the walls will warm up our décor. I would like to make our building appearance look good. This will hopefully give our members a warm feeling when visiting. It will also be a statement to the community that we have pride in our business ownership, and we want to be an example to the entire 8 mile area.

We have made several repairs to our aging building. I realized 3 years ago that our union hall had been severely neglected. For example, our front entrance was literally hanging on by caulk. When our new secure door was installed the installer said the old door could have actually been push over, not even a bolt was holding it together. We have purchased a new furnace, but our building has a total of three furnaces, and the other two are aging and need to be replaced as well. We have replaced the outside steps and installed a banister. We have installed a new hot water heater. Two new copiers were purchased because the old machines were constantly breaking down and we would have to wait weeks in some cases on parts to be ordered. A new speaker system had to be purchased because the old system was very old and no longer working properly. These are just some of the upgrades that have been completed and it could not have been done without the members support and cooperation.

The repairs that we need to focus on, is a new roof for our building. We have tried to patch our current roof several times in the past year, but it is not providing us with a tight seal and we still must continue to address roof leaks. Our estimates are around \$20, 000.00 and this is something that must be addressed very soon. We need to replace our windows all around the building. Electrical issues are a

concern as well as ceiling panels or new ceiling. The lower level kitchen needs upgrading and the outside fence and automatic gate needs replacing too just to give you some idea of where we stand today.

UNION GOALS

It is very important to me that we grow as a Local Union. We must begin the process by enabling and fostering access to the union for new and younger members. It is necessary to get our older members to understand our access to one another too. Our stewards and the members are the eyes on the workroom floor and both are needed to grow our agenda and our ability to sustain and forward the union's position locally.

A huge goal is to be inclusive and available to all members. The digital divide has caused many to think that we don't hear their concerns. I believe inclusiveness will entitle all members to feel included and will ensure every voice is heard.

We must have sustainability for future years to come. One way to sustain our union is again to get our younger members involved. This will allow our children, and their children to survive in the United States Postal Service for decades to come.

Innovation and partnership will provide much needed leadership for improving as well as adapting new technology in our workplace for our members.

The local officers and stewards continue to do an amazing job filing grievance and receiving settlements. The arbitration advocates have made huge accomplishment in winning arbitrations that the union and management can't seem to agree on. I intend to improve our locals success rating when it comes to doing our very best for the Detroit District Area Local.

It has been said that our officers could be more visible in the station, branches and plants. I will tell you that I think that we have been very visible, but that doesn't mean we can't do better. I would just remind you that we accomplished a great deal of work and reached all of our goals in past years. It would have been difficult to complete those missions if we didn't apply the time to fix the problems.

It is our goal to further the process of paying those who retired the \$300.00 that our Local Constitution instructs us to do. It has been difficult because the list we received went back to 2012. However, we are trying to do the right thing and take care of this debt as well.

It is true my friends that we fight every year to balance our budget because every year we receive less funds to function and of course every line item on the budget is going up. As you all know with that being said this administration has not asked you to pay more dues. We have looked over things once and sometimes twice and we have found other ways to cut cost.

OFFICERS AND STEWARDS APPRECIATION

We have been told by many of our members that we are doing a great job. I personally want to say thank you to every Advocate, Officer and Steward for all your hard work in making sure you provide good representation for our members.

It is because we work together that the members are seeing the success stories. All of us together are smarter than any one of us, and that includes the members as well.

I have to say thank you to all the men and women that have decided to become a union representative of our historic local. I must give credit where it is due. The Officers and Stewards are doing an awesome job. This is what the **TEAM** is all about.

UNION SUPPORT

I have to thank our entire membership for your support. It is important to understand that none of this could have happened without you. It is also true that some dishonest and very untrue things have been said, but I'm very humbled to see that most of our members didn't let the propaganda change your mind and you did the right thing. It is very much appreciated.

It has been truly been a pleasure to represent your local as one of your elected leaders. I can't say thank you enough. I believed we need to get back to be the historic local that we once were, and thanks to this membership we are on the

path to restoring our local. **Thank you, thank you, thank you,** and have a prosperous New Year.



Keith M. Combs Sr.

President of the APWU-DDAL