

Rural mail carriers inform WSWs of mail volume drop during RRECS route evaluation

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Rural carriers, have you seen mail volumes drop during the current or previous mail counts? Email USPSRankandFileCommittee@gmail.com or fill out the form at the bottom of this article.

The fourth two-week route evaluation, or “mini mail survey,” under the detested Rural Route Evaluation and Compensation System (RRECS), began August 23 and extends until September 6. Despite intrusive monitoring year-round under RRECS, routes and compensation are only adjusted twice a year based on these mail surveys, and rural carriers are once again writing to the WSWs and posting online that mail volumes are artificially low, guaranteeing that their work will be undercounted and wages suppressed for the coming six months.

RRECS was signed by the leadership of the National Rural Letter Carriers Association (NRLCA) in 2012 and introduced in 2022, causing an immediate widespread decline in wages to the tune of thousands of dollars per worker. Carriers have been struggling to make ends meet ever since, as USPS Postmaster General Louis DeJoy introduces further far-reaching changes to the postal network that burden workers and erode service levels, while the unions maintain a guilty silence.

This past week, DeJoy introduced changes to rural routes that would prioritize deliveries within 50 miles of the new regional hubs that are the cornerstone of his Delivering for America (DFA) 10-year restructuring plan. As the *World Socialist Web Site* warned a year ago, rural routes under DFA were expected to double in length. To maintain delivery times, USPS would have to hire more carriers; however, instead, DeJoy has decided to allow service levels to drop by as much as 24 hours.

This preferential treatment also violates the universal service mandate, although no challenges have been

levied by the postal unions or big-business politicians, who back DeJoy’s efforts to steer the postal service towards privatization.

Letter carriers denounce RRECS and DFA

Mail carriers are livid that two years since the introduction of RRECS, empty union promises to amend the system or recoup losses through grievance campaigns have yielded no correction to their stolen wages.

One rural carrier out of North Texas wrote into the WSWs, “Since [RRECS] started, I have lost over \$20,000 in pay. No matter how my route changes, my pay doesn’t. We deliver 50 percent more parcels than we are credited for. It’s as if they are trying to push me out.”

Numerous carriers have cited losses of \$10,000-20,000 per year under RRECS. A rural carrier in New Mexico spoke to the WSWs about how the losses upended his and his wife’s retirement plans.

Many have called out the widespread complaint—ignored by the union—that mail volumes suddenly drop during surveys, which establish carriers’ wages for the coming six months.

A rural carrier in the Florida panhandle described to the WSWs how sharp the decline is: “Whenever the count comes, which lasts for two weeks, we only get one tray [of mail per day]. Usually, I will have 3 to 4, sometimes 6 trays. During the count, even after a holiday weekend, I only have 2 trays of mail. That’s crazy!”

This comes at a time when the parcel delivery

business of USPS—largely from Amazon and competitors like UPS and FedEx, who lack the rural delivery network of the Postal Service—is soaring.

Just last week, the NRLCA announced that they signed a secret Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with management to offer “voluntary” Sunday deliveries to impoverished carriers, struggling to make ends meet.

A rural carrier in south Texas told the WSWS, sarcastically, “Mail survey is the only time I get a break.” She continued, “DeJoy’s plan is not Delivering for America. It’s Delivering for Amazon. Every carrier knows the changes [to the postal network] are just to benefit Amazon. Period.”

Where are the unions?

The NRLCA bureaucracy stands completely apart from its members, collecting six-figure salaries, bargaining a new contract behind closed doors, passing sweeping changes through MOUs, rather than democratically with the approval of members, and ignoring the dramatic erosion to workers’ wages, jobs, and safety.

This antipathy to workers is not unique to the rural carriers’ union. The National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), representing city carriers, and the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), representing other crafts, are likewise negotiating new contracts with USPS management in secret.

Rather than uniting their nearly half a million members to overturn DFA, bring back jobs and wages, and protect workers’ safety, the union bureaucracies are isolating postal workers, keeping them in the dark regarding bargaining, and collaborating with management to roll out further anti-worker programs on the path to full privatization of the postal service.

The postal unions have been completely silent about the death of an Atlanta, Georgia postal worker last week in one of the new DFA regional hubs, which had a disastrous launch, delaying and losing mail for months. They were likewise silent about a 51-year-old postal worker in Fayetteville, North Carolina who died last month of heat stroke after riding all day in a postal

truck, which lack air conditioning.

Workers across industries are likewise coming to terms with the betrayals of their union leaders. After “historic” agreements last year by the Teamsters and United Auto Workers (UAW), which vaulted their presidents, Sean O’Brien and Shawn Fain, respectively, to celebrity status with featured speaking roles at the Republican and Democratic national conventions, workers are realizing they were sold a bill of goods.

UPS workers are rallying in Texas after two heat-related accidents last week, including one death, after the Teamsters claimed they had secured air conditioning for delivery drivers, yet not a single truck will be retrofitted with AC. And auto workers have faced mass layoffs in plant after plant, with Dakota parts workers now in open rebellion against the UAW, voting down a union-endorsed sellout agreement for the fourth time.

Workers have to learn the lessons of the Great Postal Strike of 1970, that only through independent action, in defiance of both management and the labor bureaucracy, can workers secure their lives, their dignity, and their livelihoods.

We call on postal workers across all crafts to join the USPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee by filling out the form below. Only through an independent organization for coordinated action will we achieve our goals. Share this article with your colleagues and join the real movement for change today.



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