

# SPRINGFIELD RIFLE

November  
2024



ISSUE #1

SPRINGFIELD, MA      AREA LOCAL #497

Ronda Wynn, Editor

## THANK YOU!



Hello brothers and sisters! I would like to officially thank everyone for choosing me as the new Editor for our Local 497. My apologies, for this edition of the Rifle is long overdue. Our President, Ed Rowell, addressed the reasons why this edition was delayed at the September Union meeting. This was due to the new Local Officers getting acclimated with their newly appointed positions, scheduling and advocating the backlog of grievance cases lined up for Arbitrations, waiting on my editor press credentials and most importantly the abundance of training we have attended since April until the present. In addition to my editorial duties, I am a Tour 1 Maintenance Steward and an Advocate for Arbitrations. As we all have witnessed in the past year, discipline has been at an all-time high here in the plant. We know that management has been lacking in the “Dignity and Respect” department and we will continue to fight back.

This Rifle will be an online issue due to time constraints. I would love to hear from our members. Please feel free to submit any input and/or articles for our Rifle. Feel free to drop any material at the Union office or email me at [Ronda497editor@gmail.com](mailto:Ronda497editor@gmail.com). I will review them to reassure they follow the press guidelines. I would like to thank you all for your patience in this process.



The Springfield Mayor, Domenic Sarno, came out to support our Local 497 and expressed the importance of the USPS mail delivery services.



Our Local 497 had a great turnout for the “Day Of Action” Rally on October 1, 2024. “Union Proud! Say It Loud!” What are we fighting for? “Dignity and Respect!”

by Ronda Wynn

## “Day Of Action” Rally

WWLP News 22 and Mayor Sarno supported our voices!

The Rally was a success! The Local 497 would like to thank everyone who came out to participate on October 1, 2024. We want to make the public aware of all the upcoming changes. “Let the Public Speak” was one of our chants. We were honored with the appearance from the Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno and he did just that. He stated, “I’m old school. I still write letters. I still buy stamps. We want our mail delivered timely. Mail is important! Many people are now wanting to vote via mail. What used to take three days is taking five days.” As the Local 497 chanted on Berkshire Avenue in Springfield, MA, “Leave Our Service Standards Alone and Deliver Our Mail on Time”, we had passerby traffic supporting our concerns. We all have been informed of the Post Master General Louis Dejoy’s latest proposal which will slow down the mail. These unfavorable practices have a direct impact on our ability to process the mail to ensure a timelier delivery like we have done in the past. In addition, Dejoy is increasing delivery costs again. Moreover, Mayor Sarno recognized that we don’t just deliver the mail. He expressed, “Relationships are formed.

Especially with the older customers. They look forward to you when you come to the door. You’re unsung heroes. You not only deliver the mail, you participate in community service with the Pancake Breakfast, food drives and helping the community in need.” Ed Rowell, President of Local 497, also addressed the crowd reaffirming, “we are a public service! I understand we have a bottom line and have to make ends meet but ultimately, we are for the community out there.” Diana Kirkland, APWU member, spoke with WWLP 22NEWS and one of her concerns was people count on the USPS to get their checks and medication through our mail delivery services which have been slowing down since changes have occurred. Mayor Sarno summed up his supportive speech and thanked all of us behind the scenes. He deeply appreciates us all.

A big shoutout to Diana Kirkland, Gina Jones, T2 Maintenance Steward and Ed Rowell for all their efforts to make this “Day of Action” come together.

**Energize, Mobilize, Organize!**





Mayor Sarno expressing his concerns and speaking out about the mail delivery services.



Gina Jones letting her voice be heard!



Mayor Sarno with Ed Rowell, President bringing awareness to the public.

WE'RE FIGHTING FOR:

PUBLIC RIGHT TO COMMENT

BETTER STAFFING

BETTER SERVICE

GOOD CONTRACT NOW!





A few words from the Local 497 officers:

Justin Deslauriers, APWU 497  
Executive Board for the Area  
Offices, APWU Massachusetts State  
Executive Board for the Area Offices

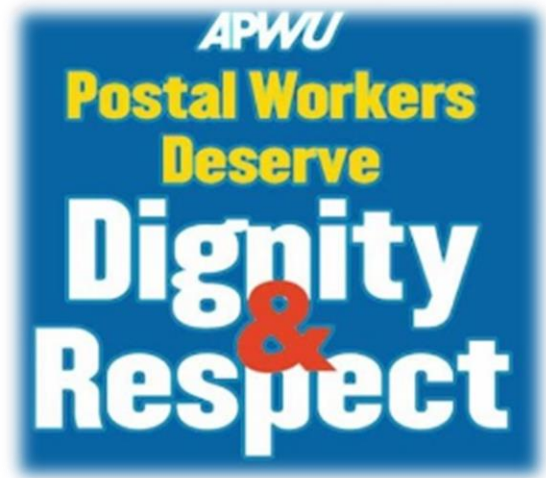
Hello APWU Family,  
For those of you who are unfamiliar to my positions in this Union, I would like to take this time to thank all of the Springfield Area Local 497 membership who elected me for my second term on the Executive Board of this Local to enforce and administer your contractual rights and to address many other tasks set before myself and my fellow board members by our President. I would also like to thank the members at large in the State of Massachusetts for electing me to my first term on the APWU Massachusetts Executive Board. Having the privilege to serve the membership on two Executive Boards simultaneously was always something I strived for, yet unexpectedly so soon in my 5-year tenure with the APWU representative roles. Throughout the last 5 months, our President has kept his focus lasered on a very important topic. Training. All of us serving you on the Local, and State level must remain current with our knowledge and skills to advocate for you all to the best of our abilities, and to ensure assertive combative tactics against management who chooses not to recognize, and not cooperate. The most effective way for us to achieve this, is to be constantly learning and staying informed with the latest training created at all levels of our Union. I cannot emphasize enough the dedication I have witnessed from our

President, our Clerk craft, Maintenance craft, MVS craft Directors, and our Research and Education Director to ensure the "soldiers" on the ground such as myself are fully prepared for whatever challenges we face to achieve our goals. Although I did work in multiple Annex, L&DC, and P&DC facilities in the Springfield area during my 20-year postal career, if there is anything I've learned the quickest it would be that the Area Offices are a whole different world than the big house. The APWU membership in the A.O.s make up approximately 15% of our membership. Although two different facility dynamics exist comparative to the P&DC, the same issues exist on a daily basis. Management failures. Failure to comply, failure to cooperate, failure to recognize good faith observance obligations, failure to treat us with dignity and respect, dishonesty, lack of integrity, and an overall disregard for our CBA provisions that are enforceable under Federal Law. Management is reminded of these terms on a daily basis, yet as a whole continue to fail us when it comes to giving us what we've earned, and what we deserve, our rights. Your Executive Board on the Local and State levels will not stop our constant phone calls, email responses, meetings, and dedication to the highest governing body of this Union: You, the membership. Our State President and Local President are in frequent communication along with the Regional and National level officers to provide us with the tools and information needed to represent you effectively. I have great ambition to see what more we can become compared to where we started this term on June 1st. Your leadership is strong.

Our membership numbers are growing on a daily basis. We remain ever stretching our capabilities to grow and be more unified in solidarity. United we stand, divided we fall. We cannot fail if we do not give up our common goals together. You can put that up on the Board! I am looking forward to visiting as many offices as time allows to ensure management is cooperating with our rights in the one hundred plus offices between our Local and State areas that I represent. In closing, I have high hopes for this Local, and the growth we shall create as I'm sure we all want for one another. We appreciate you all. Your membership, your communication to us, and your loyalty to our mission to succeed further every day.

Yours in solidarity,  
Justin Deslauriers

[justindeslauriers370@gmail.com](mailto:justindeslauriers370@gmail.com)



Mario Colucci,  
MVS Craft Director

It is an honor to serve all Tours in the Motor Vehicle Craft (MVS) for your local American Postal Worker Union 497 (APWU 497) Springfield MA as your MVS Craft Director. Since you gave me your seat, I have been pushing strongly for you to know your Weingarten Rights before our Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU), and before your Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Once you understand your Rights our beloved LMOU and CBA will make you Always Right when you come to work, it's not a promise, it's just the simple truth. I am still looking for stewards that are ready to learn of their Rights, and who are willing to step up and do whatever it takes, in a non-combative way, as we took the OATH to Defend our Beloved US Constitution upon entering the United States Postal Services work force to serve our members. Members, every wall you see is us (me and you), the mortar are my Stewards, the block is you and together we are that WALL. In my best ability I will serve by informing you of your Rights, your LMOU, and your CBA.

In Solidarity,

Mario Colucci, APWU #497 MVS Craft Director, [mcapwu497@gmail.com](mailto:mcapwu497@gmail.com)



MVS Stewards

All Tours: Ed Rowell, Charles Morin,  
Mario Colucci

- Tour 1: Justin Lincoln- Steward  
Bob Burnup- Steward  
Dan Rosso- Alternate  
Jesus Rios Diaz- Alternate  
Nick DeFeo- Alternate  
Caroll Ciccarelli- Alternate
- Tour 2: Dan Rosso- Steward  
Nick DeFeo- Alternate  
James Davis- Alternate  
Carol Ciccarelli- Alternate  
Charles Morin- Alternate  
Sean Hayes- Alternate
- Tour 3: Alan Dickey- Steward  
Sean Hayes- Steward  
Jesus Rios Diaz- Alternate  
William Lakota- Alternate  
Bob Burnup- Alternate

**\*\*HEALTH INSURANCE\*\*****Open Season:  
November 11 – December 9, 2024**

The Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program employees are to be transitioned to the new Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program if you wish to continue health benefits coverage through the Postal Service.

Employees and annuitants ***must*** select a new health insurance plan under the PSHB Program.

**MORE INFO:** [www.opm.gov/health](http://www.opm.gov/health)  
& [Keepingposted.org](http://Keepingposted.org)



USPS mailed out an informational flyer this October 2024

**Open Season is coming!**  
**Are you aware of what is changing?**



**UNITED STATES  
POSTAL SERVICE**

BENEFITS AND WELLNESS  
475 L'ENFANT PLAZA SW ROOM 9670  
WASHINGTON, DC 20260-0004

**What's new for 2025**

For the 2025 benefit year, Inspira Financial will replace FSAFEDS as the Postal Service's Flexible Spending Account (FSA) program administrator. You will now have additional flexibility in how you pay for your out-of-pocket expenses, including a new debit card option.

Employees are encouraged to use all FSA Healthcare, Limited Expense Healthcare, and Dependent Care funds for the 2024 benefit year before Dec. 31, 2024.

This Open Season, a [login.gov](http://login.gov) account will be required to access the new Postal Service Health Benefits System (PSHBS). The PSHBS is the system that employees must use to make changes or enroll in a health benefits plan under the new Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program. [Login.gov](http://login.gov) is a secure sign-in service. Creating an account can be done in a few steps. Visit [login.gov](http://login.gov) for more information.

Open Season begins Nov. 11 and will be here before you know it. Don't wait to create your [login.gov](http://login.gov) account.

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This OPEN SEASON, it is important to establish a ***login.gov*** account which will be ***required*** to access the new Postal Service Health Benefits System (PSHBS).





A few words from the Local 497 officers: (continued)

ED ROWELL, President Report: A Call for Dignity, Respect and Progress

Dear Members of the APWU Local 497 family,

It is with great honor and humility that I step into the role of your new local president. Serving the hardworking members of the American Postal Workers Union is a privilege, and I am deeply committed to ensuring that every member receives the dignity and respect they deserve!

Our work is more than just a job—it is essential to the fabric of our communities. Yet, too often, postal workers face challenges that threaten our sense of fairness and respect in the workplace. As your president, I am committed to changing that. We will continue fighting for better conditions, fair treatment, and the respect each of you has earned through your dedication.

Pushing for Training and Growth

One of my top priorities is providing increased access to training and development opportunities. By investing in our skills and professional growth, we can ensure that every union steward is equipped with the tools needed not only to excel in their current roles but also to advance this local to new heights. Knowledge is power, and by strengthening our local through education, we empower ourselves to claim the dignity and respect we deserve.

Better Communication for a Stronger Union

I also recognize the importance of clear and open communication. A union is only as strong as the voices of its members, and your feedback is essential to our success. That's why I'm committed to improving communication at every level—ensuring that you are informed, heard, and engaged. Whether it's updates on negotiations, training opportunities, or workplace issues, grievance updates, I pledge to keep the lines of communication open, transparent, and accessible to all members.


Our Path Forward

As we look ahead, I want to reaffirm my commitment to standing with you in solidarity as we continue our fight for fair wages, safe working conditions, and a workplace where dignity and respect are non-negotiable. Together, we will build a stronger, more unified APWU—one that listens to the voices of its members and advocates fiercely for their rights.

I am incredibly grateful for your trust in me, and I am excited for what we can achieve together. With your support, we will not only meet the challenges ahead but rise above them stronger than ever.


Thank you for this opportunity to serve you. I look forward to working alongside each of you as we build a future of respect, growth, and solidarity.

[edrowell497@gmail.com](mailto:edrowell497@gmail.com)



**Ed Rowell**

President Springfield area local 497



4132221327



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## **A few words from the Local 497 officers: (continued)**

### **Enid A. Rivera, Maintenance Craft Director**

In recent months, the maintenance department has undergone significant changes, prompting the need for a renewed focus on collaboration and respect between workers and maintenance management. These shifts have sparked increased activism within our union, culminating in a recent rally that garnered media attention on October 1, 2024.

The maintenance changes primarily involve employees of all occupational groups. It has led to concerns among workers about job security and the potential for increased workloads without adequate support. Recognizing these challenges, our union has been tirelessly advocating for the rights and welfare of all employees, ensuring that their voices are heard in discussions with management.

The recent rally, held at our Berkshire Avenue Office, emphasized the principles of respect and solidarity. Union members gathered to demonstrate their unity and commitment to fostering a cooperative relationship. The event featured speeches from our union president Ed Rowell who articulated the collective desire for a respectful dialogue about the ongoing changes. His message was clear: while improvements are necessary, they should not come at the expense of workers' dignity. Mayor Sarno was another speaker who stated how he stands with the union and what we do as workers in this field. He stated that the mail is important, the workers are important, and the union is important. He discussed how many more people are now voting through the mail. He also stated how he has a special place in his heart for what we do, and the relationships built with the people in our society. In addition, the media coverage of the rally highlighted the solidarity among workers. This public visibility is crucial, as it not only raises awareness of the challenges faced by postal workers but also reinforces the idea that a respectful workplace is paramount to achieving long-term success.

In the weeks preceding the rally, the union has had meetings with management to discuss the workers' concerns directly. These discussions aim to create a framework for ongoing communication and to ensure that any changes implemented are done so with the least number of employees affected. The union's commitment to these negotiations reflects its dedication to creating an environment where all workers feel valued and empowered.

As we move forward, it is essential to remember that these changes in maintenance present both challenges and opportunities. The union's tireless efforts to advocate for respect and solidarity not only highlight the importance of workers input but also foster a culture of collaboration that can lead to a more productive workplace.

On October 9, 2024, union officials for our Local 497 had the opportunity to participate in a Line H training session led by our National Business Agent Dave Sarnacki. This training, organized by the Providence Area Local, provided a platform for union officials to deepen their understanding of Line H provisions and how to effectively address grievances related to these important guidelines.

Union officials were able to ask questions and encouraged to engage in discussions about applications of Line H. Sarnacki's expertise and clear communication made complex topics accessible, ensuring that attendees left the session with a solid grasp of the material. The opportunity to learn directly from a seasoned leader in our union was not only educational but also inspiring, reinforcing our commitment to advocate effectively for our rights.

By the end of the training, members of Local 497 felt a renewed sense of confidence in their ability to understand and navigate Line H grievances. Armed with this knowledge, we are better equipped to represent ourselves and our fellow workers should the need arise. The insights gained from this session are crucial and with strong training like this, our local union stands ready to tackle any challenges that may come our way.

Local 497 extends heartfelt thanks to the Providence union local for organizing this vital training and for their warm hospitality. The collaborative spirit demonstrated at this event exemplifies the strength of our union and the importance of shared knowledge across locals.

We appreciate Dave Sarnacki for taking the time out of his busy schedule to lead this training. His dedication to empowering union officials is commendable, and we look forward to applying what we've learned to strengthen our union and advocate for our rights effectively. Together, we are committed to fostering a work environment where every voice matters.



In solidarity,  
Enid A. Rivera,  
Maintenance Craft Director  
[enidrivera497@gmail.com](mailto:enidrivera497@gmail.com)



**Thursday is Gear Day!**

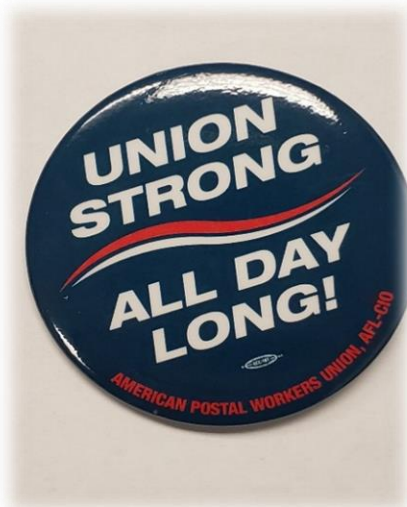
Show your support for APWU -  
“Union Proud, Say it Loud!”  
Wear your union gear on the  
workroom floor on EVERY  
Thursday until we have a new  
contract! - **“Union Strong, All  
Day Long!”**



We are saying “Enough is  
enough!” and taking action  
together to demand Dignity and  
Respect from postal management.

**NATIONAL ELECTION  
2024**

**LET YOUR VOICE  
BE HEARD!  
VOTE  
TUESDAY,  
NOVEMBER 5**



**Our APWU Family  
Affected by  
Hurricanes Helene  
and Milton  
Devastation Needs Our  
Help**

Our prayers and support go  
out to all affected by these  
devastating hurricanes. As  
everyone has seen on the  
news, the total losses people  
have endured are  
unimaginable. They are facing a  
long difficult road to recovery. If  
you would like to help the  
Postal families that were  
devastated by the disasters,  
PLEASE make a secure, tax-  
deductible DONATION. Visit  
the website below for  
information and the place to  
donate. Our Union Family  
needs our help.

[www.postalrelief.com](http://www.postalrelief.com)



**Honoring and Remembering ALL OUR HEROS.  
Thank you for your brave service and the sacrifices  
you’ve made for us and our country!**

A few words from the Local 497 officers: (continued)

Union Safety and Health Representative: Committed to Ensuring a Safe Workplace

As your Union Safety and Health Representative, my top priority is making sure that all safety hazards in our workplace are identified, reported, and abated promptly. I am here to ensure that your concerns are heard, brought to the attention of management, and resolved swiftly. Your safety matters to me, and I work closely with management to ensure that issues are addressed without delay.

When safety concerns arise, there are not just a personal issue but a collective responsibility. If you notice any unsafe condition or hazard in the workplace, please do the following:

- 1. **Fill Out Form 1767:** Whenever you encounter a safety hazard, fill out Form 1767 immediately. The instructions on the back of the form provide clear guidance on how to submit it to your supervisor. Always make a copy of your 1767s.
- 2. **Submit to your Supervisor:** Hand the completed form 1767 to your supervisor. Once submitted, management is obligated to review and take action to mitigate the risk. I will work diligently to ensure that they are addressing your concerns as soon as possible.
- 3. **Follow-Up and Updates:** After your report is submitted, I will stay on top of management to confirm that the hazard is being corrected. The safety committee as well as I will also make sure updates regarding the status of abatements are posted in all order books so that everyone is kept informed.

I am always available to discuss any safety concerns you have. In addition to my role as your safety representative, I work in the maintenance department as a building and equipment mechanic, which gives me hands-on experience in dealing with safety issues firsthand. If you see something that concerns you or if you have doubts about a safety matter, don't hesitate to reach out to me directly.

STAY SAFE, AND REPORT SAFETY HAZARDS

Jay Rivera  
APWU Safety and Health Representative  
[Jrivera497apwu@gmail.com](mailto:Jrivera497apwu@gmail.com)

PS Form 1767

Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice

I. EMPLOYEE'S ACTION

Area (Specify Work Location):

Describe hazard, unsafe condition or practice. Recommended corrective action:

Employee: Print and Sign: Date and Time:

II. SUPERVISOR'S ACTION

Recommend or describe action taken to eliminate the hazard, unsafe condition or practice. (If corrective action has been taken, indicate the date of abatement.)

Supervisor: Print and Sign: Date:

III. APPROVING OFFICIAL'S ACTION (Check One and Complete)

The following corrective action was taken to eliminate the hazard, unsafe condition or practice (Indicate date of abatement):

A work order has been submitted to the manager, plant maintenance to effect the following change:

There are no reasonable grounds to determine such a hazard exists. This decision is based upon:

Approving Official: Print and Sign: Date: Date Employee Notified:

IV. MAINTENANCE ACTION (Complete if Necessary)

Maintenance Supervisor: Print and Sign: Date: Date Hazard Abated:

PS Form 1767, March 2017 PSN 7530-01-000-9422

WHITE - Local Safety Office (After Abatement) PINK - Local Safety Official (Initial Notice)

YELLOW - Approving Official BLUE - Employee







Local 497 participated in the outside rally, for our rights, with the American Postal Workers Union in Detroit Michigan, at the Huntington Place Convention Center, for the 27<sup>th</sup> Biennial National Convention, July 15-18, 2024. Left to right, Justin Lincoln, Jacob Carroll, Enid Rivera, Justin Deslauriers, Ronda Wynn, Dave Bogacz, in front row, Ed Rowell, President.

# The APWU’s 27<sup>th</sup> Biennial National Convention in Detroit Michigan

A recap of President Dimondstein’s State of Union message, July 2024

by Ronda Wynn



On our solid foundation to include good annual wage increases continuing to bridge the gaps between the divisive two-tier, multiple tier wage systems established in the 2010 concessionary contract.” He believes that building maximum power and leverage is a key to our success in negotiations. As he and we proclaim, “Good contract now! Union Proud, Say it Loud!” Most importantly, he strongly believes that a powerful message was sent to management, with 8,700 new members as negotiations opened, that “Winning the best contract is VITAL for postal workers!”

President Mark Dimondstein started off the APWU 27<sup>th</sup> Biennial National Convention in Detroit strong and enthusiastic with his State of the Union message. He recognized, “It is the workers verses the bosses! It is Wall St. versus Main St. and we are Main St. It is labor versus capitol and we are labor.” He continued with, “The support for union is at its highest point in decades and highest amongst young workers. We have witnessed significant Union organizing successes. How are we doing in these times, full of challenges but also opportunities? Our APWU is, indeed, Union strong, all day Long!” He raised his fist in solidarity affirming how strong the APWU really is. President Dimondstein also addressed contract negotiations which included career no lay off protection, the 50-mile limit on excessing and our full COLA’s. “He was avid about “enhancing

“Union Strong, ALL Day Long!”

-President Mark Dimondstein

