



“PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE”

Kevin P. Tabarus, National Secretary-Treasurer

The 2024 National Convention theme is “Betting On The Future, We’re All In”. As we prepare for the future it is also a time to reflect on the history and achievements of the National Postal Mail Handlers Union over the years.

This National Postal Mail Handlers Union was founded in 1905. Many of the terms and conditions of employment we have now were not given to us; they had to be obtained through collective action — negotiations at the bargaining table or even lobbying politicians on Capitol Hill.

Here is a brief summary of our past early years;

- **1910s** — We achieved the right to organize and to adjust grievances, an 8-hour workday, compensation for injury, and holiday compensation.
- **1920s** — We improved compensation for injuries on duty. We achieved a higher rate of overtime and night differential pay. Our title was *Unskilled Laborer*, which resulted in Clerks and Letter Carriers receiving a larger salary increase. This was due to the fact that an insufficient number of Mail Handlers paid dues, or that those who were paying were not paying enough to keep **a representative in Washington to make sure that Legislators in Washington understood the difference between the Skilled Laborer and the Unskilled Laborer.** (*Federal government classified Unskilled Laborer at a lower salary rate than a Skilled Laborer.*)
- **1930s** — A 5-day work week established, gained retirement, sick leave, holiday benefits and a 44-hour work week.
- **1940s** — Credit for military service toward retirement, higher wages won, true *time-and-half* for overtime, paid jury duty. In 1944, our title changed from *Laborer to Mail Handler*. This enabled us to get a corresponding increase in salary with the Clerks and Carriers.
- **1950s** — Sick leave accrual ceiling removed, liberalize retirement and survivor retirement benefits.
- **1963** — The Mail Handlers Benefits Plan (MHBP) was created. This formed a new revenue stream for associate membership dues. In

1966 — automatic Cost-of-living increases (COLA). In 1969 we merged with the Laborers International Union of North America, (LIUNA).

- **1970** — Was a big year for us. Our constitution was only 32 pages in length in 1970, today our constitution is now 57 pages in length. There was a massive Postal Strike, which resulted in our first negotiated agreement for the federal public sector with specific wages as a negotiable item. Congress approved the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970, signed into law on August 12, 1970. The Act transformed the Post Office Department into a government-owned corporation, called the United States Postal Service.



Note that prior to the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970, changes in the wages, terms and conditions of employment had to be attained through enacting Public Laws with Congress. The Union had to basically lobby members of Congress to get Public Laws passed to improve wages and benefits. Since 1970, the National Postal Mail Handlers Union has been collectively bargaining with the United States Postal Service to improve wages, benefits, plus terms and conditions of employment.

Presently, we represent over 50,000 Mail Handlers across the nation. Our Union is as strong as ever as we face the USPS Network Redesign with the Postmaster General's Delivering For America plan. We are seeking to improve our membership with new Mail Handlers through our "Join The Union, Join The Fight" campaign.

We are also presently preparing for our 2024 National Convention to be held in August this year. The National Postal Mail Handlers Union Convention is a democratic process. Every four (4) years, Delegates from all thirty-six (36) Local Unions meet to discuss amendments to our National and Local Union Constitutions, resolutions to guide the National Postal Mail Handlers Union policies including our legislative and political agenda and to elect National Union



Officers. In addition, Delegates will also select the site (city) of our next National Convention to be held in the year 2028.

After the Convention concludes, the National Office shall be focused on the future as we prepare to negotiate a new National Agreement. Our current contract expires on September 20, 2025. The membership shall be solicited to suggest changes to our National Agreement. Only members of this great Union will have the right to submit proposed changes to the National Agreement

In February of 2025, the National Postal Mail Handlers Union shall form a "Field Negotiating Committee" to review each and every proposed change to the National Agreement from the membership. Then in June of 2025, Representatives from the National Postal Mail Handlers Union and Representatives from the United States Postal Service shall meet to mark the official start of the collective bargaining process for a successor agreement to replace the current National Agreement.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K. Tabarus". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Kevin P. Tabarus
National Secretary-Treasurer