

# Aptos Post Office 'running smoothly,' say authorities

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APTOS — An investigation by Postal Service authorities has found everything "running smoothly" at the much-maligned Aptos branch, Raymond Garcia, Rio del Mar Improvement Association president, reported.

Both Garcia and Gerri Anderson, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers' branch which covers Aptos, agree operations have improved. Both, however, maintain the administrative problems concerning Aptos Postmaster Carol Clyde are far from solved.

According to Anderson, the eight carriers from Aptos who received formal letters of proposed termination and suspension for talking publicly about internal problems are in the next-to-last grievance procedure step. The carrier union's business agent is attempting to get agreement from the Postal Service's Labor Relations Board to drop the

proposed punishments.

Garcia also told The Sentinel that while he was gratified Postal Service officials "have learned their lesson and are showing they're interested in solving the problem" — he is still getting complaints about service from Aptos Post Office patrons.

Garcia and fellow association director Mel Deerwester met with Clyde and Manuel Subia Tuesday. Subia manages the Sierra region, headquartered in Sacramento, which includes more than 600 post offices in California and Nevada.

Subia had been directed to conduct an investigation at Aptos by Anthony Conway, a representative of the Office of Government Liaison with the U.S. Postal Service in Washington, D.C. Numerous letters of complaint apparently reached the higher echelons of the department.

While Subia was unavailable for comment, Garcia relayed his message: That "situations at the Aptos branch had been

corrected and things are running smoothly."

Critics say that mail service has drastically deteriorated at the Aptos branch since Clyde took over one year ago. Also, there has been an alleged drop in productivity and an unusually high turnover of employees — nearly half of Aptos' carriers and clerks are new in the past year. More than 60 grievances have been filed by the branch's employees to their respective unions.

The latest, which has been going

through the grievance procedures for several months now, concerns eight carriers charged with "standards-of-conduct violations for discussing allegations concerning unlawful acts by Postal Service employees with persons outside the inspection service."

The carriers sent a letter to postal inspectors concerning the throwing away of thousands of bulk mail fliers at their branch. Although the letter was properly sent to the postal inspector, the carriers are in trouble for leaking the letter to the

public.

Originally, the Postal Service was attempting to fire three of the employees and suspend the other five. Now, Anderson said, most of the charges had been reduced to suspensions. Only one employee — the one who actually leaked the letter — is under fire.

Anderson concedes operations at Aptos have improved, aided by the fact that an additional, more experienced supervisor has temporarily been transferred there.

She cautioned, however, that problems

are expected to increase when a postal window at Kamian's Pharmacy at Deer Park shopping center closes soon. Anderson said the closure will put additional pressure on the Aptos branch.

Both she and Garcia still see Subia's visit as positive.

"They've finally got the message higher up that there really is a problem," she said. Added Garcia: "It's nice of him (Subia) to take the time to come see us. I'm sure the problem will be very satisfactorily corrected."

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