

Iowa State Association of Letter Carriers



President's Report

September 2008

What seems like a long time ago, the Postal Service in its ultimate wisdom decided to start subcontracting out our work across the country - yes, and even here in Iowa. Anywhere a new skyscraper, strip mall or even sub-division went in, the Postal Service decided it was a new delivery and the territory went to a non-postal, no benefit, low bidder. Who in turn may have sub-contracted out to any felon, illegal alien or whomever.

One man led the way in the U. S. Senate. Our Senator Tom Harkin! Senator Harkin introduced S. 1457, The Mail Delivery Protection Act of 2007. For those that don't recall, this legislation brought the Postal Service back to the bargaining table! This Legislation is the reason we have a contract! Senator Harkin is up for re-election this year, so, when you cash your check the Friday before Election Day. Please remember Senator Harkin.

To leave politics for a moment, Management here in Hawkeye District seems to be going out of their way to ruin the service part of our job! They've told business's that are closed on Saturdays they'll have to install a mail receptacle, come get their mail on Monday, or, have it returned to sender. This is absolutely asinine. They're harassing flood victims (as if they don't have enough problems). They're quick to pull mail delivery from a neighborhood when a dog bite occurs, even when the dog is put to sleep! What in the world are these people thinking, violating the contract and paying grievant's because it's "easier". Well, it's called "Chasing the Numbers"! Come hell or high water (literally in some cities), these managers have decided that their obligation is to their false god "DOIS", instead of the American public.

Let's clear up another misnomer, our customer is not only the sender, but also the addressee! Grandchildren don't want Grandma going down the street in an ice storm, risking a hip fracture, to get their card or letter. Businesses don't want their time sensitive flyers delivered to an NCDBU, where the piece may sit for a week. Those of us with NCDBU's know that very few patrons pick up their mail on a daily basis.

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Ever wonder why we're losing money?

I just heard we lost nearly a billion dollars in August. We drive away customers, price of gas is ridiculous, and there are more managers, chasing more useless paperwork, harassing fewer workers. Gee, wonder why?

Meanwhile, the workforce is ageing. More injuries occur. Carriers are off longer because someone in management just lost their paperwork for the third time! Six months before surgery, another 4 months of recovery. Gee, wonder why?

They're taking "extra" cases away from carriers because in a few years, they might not need it. So, let's double up address's in the slots or even triple if necessary. Carriers can finger the mail on the street and finish sorting! Gee, wonder why?

Fill out your 3996, 1571, take a minute to walk to the clock to switch codes, so you can take a minute to work your edit book, then walk back and clock back to your route. If the mail is light, let's make sure everyone sees the same training video for the fifth time. Of course, this now takes an extra 5 minutes because you better clock to training, and back from. Gee, wonder why?

Let's make sure all offices are understaffed, violate the overtime agreements and then pay carriers for not working, or pay the ones extra who shouldn't have worked. Gee, wonder why?

Here's my opinion - get rid of all the supervisors, keep your postmaster and station manager (for scheduling purposes only). Leave the carriers alone and maybe we can turn this organization around. How's that for a "fantasy".

One of the great things about my position as president of the State Association is that on a monthly basis, I get the opportunity to "vent" (see above article). If you need to vent, don't take it out on your fellow employee's or your family. Send me an e-mail at: mbirkett@iowallettercarriers.org I look forward to hearing from you!

Mike Birkett
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Iowa State Assoc. of Letter Carriers