

Iowa State Association of Letter Carriers



President's Report

November 2008

As I write this month's article, just a few weeks before Thanksgiving and on Veterans Day, I'd like to wish all of our veterans a happy holiday and all of our members a happy holiday season.

Well, we're just beginning the implementation of the new route adjustment process here in Hawkeye District. It's obviously too early to tell how it will turn out. On a positive note, even before any numbers are crunched, at least there is union involvement.

On another postal subject, the "sky is falling" mentality of the postal service has got to stop. Try managing and try telling the truth! The price of gas is now down over a dollar per gallon - does that revise your figures? They're now looking at "paired routes" and "walk out routes", as if that was something new. Many of the paired and walk out routes should have never been broke up and motorized in the first place. Has anyone thought about taking the puzzle weights out of the LLV's during the spring, summer and fall! How many managers does it take to count everything, input the data, spit out useless reports and then harass the carriers? (There is no answer to that question as it apparently is one of those mathematical questions that end in infinity ...) In some offices, dog spray should be replaced with supervisor spray, as it is the supervisor that is constantly barking, yapping and nipping at the carrier's ankles. With any luck, the aforementioned route adjustment process may do away with some of this daily aggravation and more importantly, do away with some of the managers who truly are a waste of postal resources.

I wouldn't know how to write this month's article without discussing the recent election. After 8 years of attack after attack upon labor, record deficits, two wars, an economy in the pits and 75% of the population believing we are headed in the wrong direction (what's wrong with the other 25%), we have elected a new president.

President Elect Obama was elected because the American people are demanding change. Many of us would like instant change, an immediate reversal in policies; however, it's not going to happen overnight. Our new President really must try to reunite this country. He must lay out the issues to the American people so they understand and can support his policies. Why you ask? Because the American people, like me, are just tired of it.

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I'm tired of hearing how the corporate income tax is the 2nd highest in the free world when the tax loopholes leave two thirds of all corporations paying no tax at all. I'm tired of trickledown economics that allow CEO's golden parachutes no matter how their companies do and allow them to pay a lower tax rate than their secretaries, while the workers in their companies live paycheck to paycheck. I'm tired of hearing about the flat tax, which is just another way to have the working poor pay for the wealthy. I'm tired of hearing about the socialism of spreading the wealth now, when for the past 8 years we've spread the wealth from the middle class to the wealthy. I'm tired of the deregulation that allows businesses through their use of creative accounting, to hide their true financial status from their shareholders. I'm tired of privatization of everything, which has only lowered wages and increased costs to the government and taxpayers. I'm tired of hearing about lead paint on toys and mercury in our seafood because after all, businesses will "self regulate." I'm tired of hearing about how unions are bad from white collar workers who only enjoy vacations, health insurance and every other benefit they receive because some union somewhere fought for it. I'm tired of number crunching, myopic postal managers who wouldn't know a customer if they saw one.

In closing (I'm getting tired), I'd like to thank all of the letter carriers across the state of Iowa who donated their time and efforts in support of all of the labor endorsed candidates. Specifically I'd like to mention the work of our members who were released by National to work for the Iowa Federation of Labor, Vice President Mark Fallis, 1st District CDL Tom Reisdorf, 2nd District CDL Jim Beach, 3rd District CDL Michele Donnelly and Kevin Powers. Believe me, I know how many hours they worked, making innumerable labor to labor phone calls and door knocks. The letter carriers, not only in Iowa, but across the country made a huge contribution and impact in this election cycle. You should all be proud.

While every endorsed candidate did not win, a message was sent that once again, labor has a voice and it needs to be reckoned with.

Mike Birkett
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Iowa State Assoc. of Letter Carriers