



Challenges

The Postal Service recently announced the reduction of management staff nationwide by 15 percent, with more than 1,400 processing, supervisor and management positions at 400 facilities being eliminated. Approximately 150,000 postal workers will be offered early retirement. The Postal Service intends to close six of its 80 district offices across the country this year, although political pressure and the clamor of at least one management organization may delay those plans somewhat.

A number of “feasibility studies” are being conducted by the Postal Service allegedly to determine whether the future closing of Bulk Mail Centers is viable. The postmaster general recently testified at a congressional hearing that it may make sense to consider five-day delivery of mail. Plans are being made to consolidate and close the 80 Stamp Distribution Offices (SDOs), the five Accountable

receive mail from them and, in turn, how that impact will affect service to the public.

Another concern regarding the direction of the Postal Service pertains to the postmaster general’s testimony before Congress on the consideration of five-day delivery. That is a strong indication that he is more concerned with the present financial woes of the Postal Service than with its long-term survivability. If we lose that one day of delivery, we may never get it back. The private express statutes would be irrevocably harmed, and the Postal Service’s ability to provide its service to *all* of America would be at risk.

Of course, whenever the Postal Service had budget woes in the past, it resorted to understaffing offices, causing a deterioration of the quality of service to postal patrons. Fortunately, in the letter carrier craft we have some protection against that occurrence with transitional employees, but we have to be forever on our guard should this product of postal mismanagement rear its ugly head again.

Mail volume dropping, revenue shortfall and panic management. Seems like a marriage made in...

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Paper Depositories (APDs) and the two Stamp Service centers (SSCs). The Postal Service anticipates that these facilities will be consolidated into a network of five to seven sites.

Whenever it is asked if these plans are individually or collectively being done to improve service or cut costs, they appear to be done to cut costs. It seems to be the slash-and-burn panic of management—the “let’s look at today and forget about tomorrow” style of business-think.

First of all, the elimination of thousands of management positions will not negatively impact service to the public. Keep in mind, however, that those positions targeted for elimination are not in the delivery units where letter carriers work. What should concern all of us is how the consolidation and elimination of mail processing facilities will positively or negatively impact the delivery units that

But, what’s the solution to this dilemma? As I mentioned in an earlier article, all of us need to contact our congressional representatives and urge swift adoption of H.R. 22. At this writing, there were 252 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives. You can go to the NALC Legislative Department’s website at nalc.org/depart/legpol and check to see if your representative is a co-sponsor. The enactment of this legislation would provide needed financial relief to the Postal Service without using government funding.

The second part of the solution is going to require the Postal Service to discard its traditional paradigms and devise more innovative ways of generating additional revenues. Customer Connect is a starter, but we’re going to have to go even further—a look to the future vs. trapped in today. ☒