

Taking it to the streets— March 24 day of action



**Fredric V.
Rolando**

Dropping a bombshell like that with so little notice is not just bush-league labor relations; it's also insulting to all the hardworking men and women who deliver the mail every day to make the Postal Service one of the best postal operations in the world. So is seeking to exploit a bogus

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legal loophole to override the will of Congress. As I told Mr. Donahoe on Feb. 5, we consider his move an attack on letter carriers, business mailers, the American public and the Congress, and we will fight him with everything we've got.

The stakes could not be higher for all of us. Although some of you may quietly welcome the chance to have a normal weekend like everyone else, ending Saturday delivery threatens the future viability of the Postal Service and therefore the jobs of all letter carriers. If he is allowed to go forward with these delivery service cuts without a growth plan and continues to dismantle our networks, it will be just a matter of time before we go from five-day to four-day or even three-day delivery.

I'm giving Pat Donahoe a month's notice: We are taking our fight to save America's Postal Service and Saturday delivery to the streets on March 24. On that day, we will mobilize a broad coalition of Americans to fight for the future of the United States Postal Service.

Sadly, the postmaster general gave us less than 24 hours' notice before he launched his sneak attack on our jobs and on his own customers on Feb. 6. That's the day Donahoe arrogantly announced his plan to end 150 years of Saturday mail delivery starting in August, even though current law mandates it—as it has for some 30 years.

A third of the Postal Service's business customers have said they oppose the elimination of Saturday. They will look for alternative means to reach customers on Saturdays—pulling their volume from us, and setting the stage for more service cuts. Some will go to electronic means of delivering messages; others will find private delivery companies to meet their

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needs, as the Dow Jones Company just announced it would do to ensure the Saturday delivery of *The Wall Street Journal*.

Creating new competitors for the Postal Service and facilitating an inevitable campaign by those competitors to gain access to Americans' mailboxes on Saturdays, are the last things that a responsible postmaster general should do. But that is what Donahoe is doing. And new competitors will not be satisfied with access to mailboxes only on Saturdays. They will seek the total deregulation of the Postal Service—and threaten our ability to provide affordable universal service. And then four-day or even three-day delivery would would go from possibilities to probabilities.

NALC will spare no expense to fight this disastrous decision by the Postal Service and the Board of Governors. This is just the latest foolish decision to degrade the Postal Service's networks. USPS has pulled thousands of collection boxes off the streets and slashed post office hours at more than 10,000 post offices, making it harder and harder for households and businesses to access our service.

After weakening our “first-mile” network, now management is starting to dismantle our “last-mile” network. Don't be fooled by Donahoe's claims to have saved Saturday delivery of packages and prescription drugs—though it is evidence that our prior grassroots efforts to protect our customers have partially worked. The booming package volume we've delivered in recent years was made possible by the shared network we've built to deliver magazines, letters and flats. Thanks to that shared network and spreading its costs across multiple products, we've been able to keep postage on packages very low—a capability the postmaster general is now threatening to destroy.

As our investment bank advisers from Lazard told us last year, slowing and reducing the quality of service is not a sound business strategy. “Shrinking to survive,” as they termed it, will not save the Postal Service. We need a strategy for innovation and growth.

Donahoe is leading us into a death spiral, with the tacit support of some in Congress who have refused to lift the crushing mandate to massively pre-fund retiree health insurance decades in advance. The destructive nature of that mandate was once again on display in February when the USPS announced its first quarter financial results—a \$100 million profit was turned into a \$1.3 billion loss by the \$1.4 billion pre-funding expense.

At the Minneapolis Convention, we resisted the temptation to call for the postmaster general’s resignation and instead adopted a resolution to support a new governance structure for the Postal Service. It is now clear that we need to do both. To save the USPS, Donahoe must go and Congress must enact reform to transform the Postal Service into a government-owned corporation with the commercial freedom to innovate and grow even as it provides universal service financed by the postal monopoly.

Our lawyers are investigating every legal and contractual avenue to block the Postal Service from moving ahead with its plan. We will mount a targeted media campaign and employ every tool we have to advance reform in Congress, and to mobilize the public and our customers to support a vibrant Postal Service for the 21st century. We will also fight to preserve the Saturday mail delivery mandate in the appropriations process and work to permanently prevent the postmaster general from skirting the law.

I am counting on all of you to mobilize the local coalitions you have built in the labor movement and in your communities. We need to turn out our families, friends, neighbors and co-workers to fight to save America’s Postal Service, starting on Sunday, March 24, at rallies all across the country.

With this national day of action, and in the months ahead, we will rally state by state to preserve Saturday delivery. Stay tuned to the NALC’s website and other communications channels to learn about all of the ways we are fighting the Donahoe downsizing plan.

Get ready, brothers and sisters—it’s time to fight.



NALC plans DAY of ACTION for March 24

NALC will hold a day of action on Sunday, March 24, to mobilize the public support for Saturday delivery service. The timing will allow us the perfect opportunity to remind our representatives in Washington to maintain the six-day mail delivery language in the continuing budget resolution, expected to be renewed by Congress on March 27.

“We want to make this fight about the cost of losing Saturday mail delivery and how it would affect people in each and every state,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

Letter carriers are encouraged to gather friends, family, co-workers and community coalition partners at specified post offices in major media centers with signage and T-shirts that reflect the feelings of the citizenry, such as “Virginians for Saturday delivery” or “The People of California want 6-day delivery.” Carriers should not wear their uniforms.

More information on the day of action will be on nalc.org, in the *NALC Bulletin* and available from your local branch leaders. **PR**