



Six-day delivery necessary

The plan unveiled first last year and then again last month to go to five-day delivery poses a real danger to the future of the Postal Service. A move to five-day delivery makes no business sense. It won't save that much money in the short run and, in the long run, it would result in lost business and revenue.

Sometimes when you hear the same message over and over again, it's human nature to start to believe what you are hearing. It's disappointing that the Postal Service appears to be committed to eliminating a day of service, though Congress would have to approve such a change.

If you are starting to buy into the position that going to five days would be the answer to the Postal Service's financial problem, consider this:

Just 24 hours after Postmaster General Jack Potter released the seven-point "action plan for the future" at a conference in Washington that advocated a change to five-day delivery, it was reported that the Postal Service had been urged to consider three-day-a-week mail. I read one editorial that suggested one-day delivery.

That's what you call a slippery slope. I never liked climbing icy stairs and it looks like management is trying to run down them. That's how you get hurt, not how you get better. Downsizing won't lead the USPS to good health. It will likely drive mailers away and therefore worsen, not improve, the Postal's Service's bottom line.

Instead of looking at ways to dismantle the Postal Service, let's look at creating new uses of the mail and new uses of our last-mile delivery network. The NALC is committed to exploring alternatives that would build the Postal Service instead of tearing it down piece by piece, day by delivery day.

In November, we announced the "Last Mile Project," asking NALC members to send us suggestions for new postal products and services. There was an update on the project in last month's *Postal Record* with a sampling of the creative ideas that have been sent in.

Who better to come up with new concepts in delivery products than the letter carriers who would deliver them?

What are your ideas to boost Postal Service revenues? How can we take advantage of our strengths to create a bright future? Write it down. We want to know.

In the coming months, the NALC will take ideas from the "Last Mile Project" and others to Congress and the USPS as we work to ensure a healthy Postal Service for the future.

In addition to looking to the future with a little creativity and vision, NALC is advocating important legislative relief. The NALC has asked Congress to do its part in addressing the \$75 billion overpayment to the CSRS fund reported by the USPS Office of Inspector General. Fortunately, the Postal Service did include correcting this overpayment in its action plan.

In January, the OIG released a special report that said the Postal Service was overcharged for pension liabilities that should be paid by the federal Treasury. The report from the OIG's investigative unit supports the case NALC has been making for three years now: The Office of Personnel Management badly miscalculated the postal surplus in the Civil Service Retirement Fund.

The \$75 billion could go a long way toward resolving the Postal Service's financial problems. The OIG estimates that if the overcharge were used to pre-pay the health benefits fund, it would fully meet all accrued retiree health care liabilities and eliminate the need for the annual payments of more than \$5 billion that are currently required by law.

If Congress takes action to correct the error, the Postal Service will have the financial breathing room it needs to develop a more successful plan—one that does not include eliminating a day of service.

Such a drastic move is unnecessary and counter-productive, no matter how many times you may hear it.

The NALC stands ready to develop a comprehensive strategy for the long-term viability of the Postal Service and continued high-quality service to the American people. Not one, two, three, four or five, but six days a week. ☒