

PMG Potter ends nine-year tenure

Deputy PMG Donahoe appointed Potter's successor

Postmaster General John E. (Jack) Potter announced October 25 that he will retire from his position as head of the United States Postal Service, effective December 3.

Potter announced his decision during a Chicago meeting of the Postal Service Board of Governors. In making his announcement, he praised the Service's nearly 584,000 employees. "I fully appreciate their support in maintaining the tradition of trust that dates back to Benjamin Franklin and the founding of our nation. It is our people that define our organization and it is their dedication and sense of purpose that drives our business," Potter said.

"America's letter carriers wish Jack Potter a long and healthy retirement," National Association of Letter Carriers President Fredric V. Rolando said. "Although we have had profound strategic differences with Jack in recent years over the best approach for securing the long-term viability of the Postal Service, we had a good working relationship with him and his team.

"He was an honorable partner in collective bargaining and served his country well during a very difficult period in the history of the Postal Service."

Potter began his career as a postal clerk in New York in 1978. He has served as chief operating officer, vice president of labor relations, and in a number of other senior operational positions, both at postal headquarters and in the field.

The postal Board of Governors appointed the Bronx native as the 72nd head of the USPS in June 2001, three months before the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and subsequent anthrax scare. He is the second longest-serving postmaster general ever, and the longest-serving since Gideon Granger, a Thomas Jefferson appointee who served from 1801 to 1814.

In an interview, Potter said that reaching the minimum retirement age was his prime motivation for stepping down. "Every civil service employee

has a target, and my target was to reach 55 and then move on to do other things," he said.

Passing the torch

Succeeding Potter is Deputy Postmaster General Patrick R. Donahoe, a 35-year Postal Service veteran who began his career as a clerk in Pittsburgh. His previous officer positions include chief operating officer and executive vice president, senior vice president of operations, senior vice president of human resources and vice president of Allegheny Area operations. He has served as deputy postmaster general since 2005.

"The NALC offers its congratulations to Pat Donahoe," Rolando said.

"We welcome the selection of a career postal employee who is committed to working with the postal unions to ensure that the Postal Service continues to provide high-quality and affordable service to America's mailers and citizens."

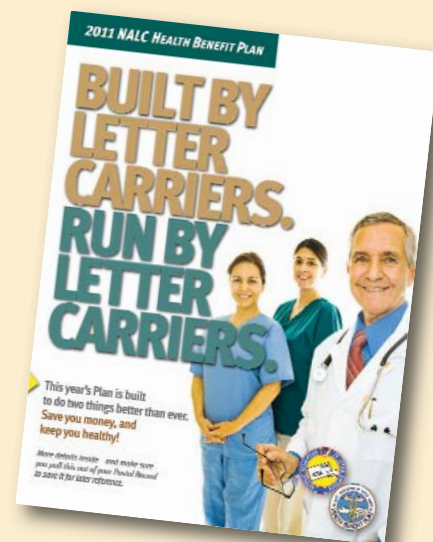
Rolando noted that although Donahoe has not yet spoken on the record about the Postal Service's plan to eliminate Saturday mail delivery service, in the past, voiced his support of the Service's craft organizations.

In an interview last year, for example, Donahoe said, "I grew up in Pittsburgh. I watched the steel mills go away. My mom and dad worked for General Motors. I watched General Motors go away. We will not let that happen in this organization. Our unions want to do the right thing," he said. "We have to resolve pay and labor issues internally and I think that it's important that we do that, because if we do that, that makes for a stronger Postal Service."

The NALC concurs. "I could not agree more with that statement," Rolando said. "The 284,000 members of the NALC look forward to working with the new postmaster general to make this a reality in the months and years ahead." ☒



Postmaster General
John E. Potter



Open Season to close soon

The last day of Open Season for health plans and flexible spending accounts is near.

December 13 is the last day you can make a change in health plans for the coming year. A special insert in last month's *Postal Record* explained the excellent benefits and superior customer service that the NALC Health Benefit Plan—your plan—provides to its customers.

The NALC Plan is run by letter carriers, for letter carriers. For 60 years, it has focused on the health of its members, not making a profit. The NALC Plan keeps getting better—several new benefits will kick in next year. If you aren't already a member, please consider joining your plan. See Health Benefit Plan Director Timothy O'Malley's column on page 35 for more information.

Open Season for creating or changing a flexible spending account (FSA) also ends December 13. An FSA deducts an amount you specify from your paycheck, tax-free, to pay for qualifying expenses. You can open two kinds of FSAs—a health care account to pay for health expenses not covered by insurance, or a childcare account to pay for daycare.

You must enroll every year in a flexible spending account—it does not continue automatically into the next year. ☒