



The future? It's your call

It's your call as to whether we have a Postal Service in the future. I guess you could use the old line on me—"I pay my union dues, so I don't need to attend branch meetings," or "Don't worry about it, our union officers will save the day." Well, my friend, it's not going to work this time. I've been at this since 1971 and the truth is plan and simple: We're all going to have to either roll up our sleeves and pitch in or look for a job somewhere else.

Before you give me the old song and dance, "I was looking for a job when I found this one," take a good look around. There are several million people out there looking for jobs and the unemployment numbers just

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keep going up each month. Add to that all the financial problems our country faces. We have our work cut out for us.

Then there's the good old U.S. Postal Service, all dressed up and no place to go. How else can our managers feel after they spent billions of dollars with no mail volume to sort? Now we even have some postal managers out trying to sell five-day delivery to us and our customers. The Postal Service has even put together a 90-minute briefing on five-day-a-week delivery. They have been running it on the web and giving copies to anyone on Capitol Hill who will listen.

First off, our jobs are more than just putting mail into mailboxes. Letter carriers provide a real lifeline to all Americans. Just dropping one day of service would have a major impact on programs like Carrier Alert and neighborhood watch. Our customers depend on us to keep an eye on their neighborhoods and their mail.

Just think about the backlog we would have in our transportation network if we went to five-day delivery. We

can't get mail out on time with the current mail volume, so how in the world do they think we can deliver six days of mail in five?

The real joke is the amount of money the Postal Service is claiming it will be able to save. With its magic wand, it makes the sixth day go away and all of the overhead cost, too. When you run all the numbers, dropping to five days may not save us a dime. You have to remember, the Postal Service will have to redo all of its transportation system. That cost in itself will take several years to recoup.

So, what's really going on over at USPS Headquarters? My guess: They are setting the stage for our next contract

negotiations. I can see it now: The postal managers are going to say if the unions think six-day delivery is so important, then they should give up, say, 20 percent of their wage package. To that Post Office, I say, dream on! The NALC has and will continue to put on the very best case we can and if we end up in

national arbitration, so be it.

With that out of the way, let's look at the real battle taking place before we ever get to negotiations. That battle is with Congress and how it plans to keep this country going and pay down the national debt at the same time. Maybe it should see about using that magic wand the Post Office has.

National President Rolando and our Legislative Department have been running back and forth to congressional meetings so much they have worn out the carpet here at the NALC building. Most of their days are 12 to 16 hours long while Congress is in town.

Now the rest is up to us. Do you like that paycheck? Would you like to have a decent retirement plan? Then you better head on over to your branch meeting.

A note to the other NALC state associations: I just attended the Colorado state legislative training, and they get an A+ for a great job. Texas, we've got to get busy! ☒