



## Are you ready? And are you doing all you can do?

**D**iscussions about the Postal Service and whether it can survive are constant in the news media. The conversation includes the call for privatization, closing post offices, eliminating jobs and moving to five-day delivery, all of which have been discussed and debated in the past. Who is right? What will happen? These are the questions.

America needs universal delivery and will continue to need the services of the USPS to keep the country linked together. The mailing industry is responsible for nearly \$1 trillion worth of services and employs about 7 million Americans. The Postal Service is something that every member of Congress should recognize as essential to sustain our nation, both now and in the future. Our forefathers recognized that when the nation was created by making the Post Office part of the United States Constitution. It is actually listed in Article 1, Section 8.7.7: "To establish Post Offices and post Roads." This provision particularly falls under congressional jurisdiction.

This is why Congress is so pivotal in the decisions about our future. Each legislator has a voice in what the future role of the USPS will be. No matter what their party affiliation, it is the representatives, senators and the American public who will determine what happens.

Many of our members will say, "I have heard the privatization talk and the possibility of elimination of a day of delivery before, and nothing happened. So what's different this time?" This time, there really is a financial problem.

It was caused by several factors. The main reason is the 2006 legislation requiring payment each year to cover pre-funding of the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund (PSRHBF). The USPS already has paid about \$42 billion toward the pre-funding. Each year, on Sept. 30, it is required to make the payment; this year, about \$5.6 billion. No other federal agency or private company is required to make such a payment. Then we have the over-payments that have been made over the years to both the Civil Service Retirement System and the Federal

Employees Retirement System. It is estimated that the CSRS overfunding is between \$50 billion and \$75 billion. For FERS, it is about \$6.9 billion. Returning these funds would fully fund the Postal Service's 75-year liability for future retiree health benefits. Had the Postal Service not been required to make the pre-funding payments over the last four years, it would have had a \$837 million surplus. If the funding provisions were changed, the USPS would have breathing room for several years, giving it time to adapt to the changing environment. On June 22, the USPS notified the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) that, effective June 24, it will not make its payment to FERS.

**Each member needs to take an interest in what is being discussed.** How can you do that, you ask? Stay informed on the issues. Sign-up to be an e-Activist. Donate to COLCPE and become a Carrier Corps member. Write to or go visit your legislative representative and ask them to support H.R. 1351, which calls for OPM to recalculate the USPS surplus in the Civil Service Retirement System within six months. The money would then be transferred to the PSRHBF and permit the USPS to use the FERS surplus to satisfy the FY 2011 payment due to the PSRHBF.

The future of the USPS and what role we will play is really at stake. So whether you are an active letter carrier or a retired letter carrier, it does matter. A healthy USPS is something that pertains to our entire membership. Too many times you hear, "Oh, it will never happen." Just look back a few years ago, in 1983, when the Medicare tax was proposed and passed. We lost that battle by only a few votes.

Don't stand idly by; get involved. Tell your co-workers, friends, relatives and neighbors about these issues. Ask them to write to their legislative leadership and request support to preserve six-day delivery and support H.R. 1351. Now is the time. Don't wait—it's up to *you!* ✉