



Delivering the truth

From time to time, I will stop my channel surfing on The Discovery Channel to catch an episode of “Mythbusters”—a television program that puts to the test all kinds of crazy myths to determine if they are fact or fiction. One of the many things I now know is that if you scream in space, no one will hear you.

You may be wondering what busting myths has to do with letter carriers. Or screaming in space, for that matter. Let me explain. Misinformation concerning the Postal Service has emerged from the halls of Congress and from the media. Together, we need to deliver the facts and set the record straight.

These myths concern the overpayment into the Civil Service Retirement System fund by the Postal Service and the value of even having a postal system.

Myth No. 1: The Postal Service is asking for a taxpayer bailout.

Not true. First of all, the Postal Service hasn't used a dime of taxpayer money for more than 25 years. Secondly, the funds that we are asking to be returned to the Postal Service belong to the Postal Service. The funds are an overpayment by the Postal Service into CSRS. Two independent actuarial firms have confirmed that the Postal Service has a surplus of between \$55 billion and \$75 billion in its CSRS pension account if fair methods are used to value the account.

We want Congress to let us use this fairly calculated surplus—along with a \$6.9 billion surplus found by the postal Inspector General in the postal FERS pension account—to cover the remaining cost of the future retiree health care pre-funding mandate introduced in 2006 with the passage of postal reform. H.R. 1351 would achieve just that. If your representative has not signed on as a co-sponsor to H.R. 1351, please ask him or her to do so. (For more information on H.R. 1351, check out the NALC website.)

The Postal Service is currently paying \$5.5 billion a year into the health care pre-funding account. We are the only company or agency in America required to pre-fund all future retiree health benefits—a 75-year liability that is being paid in just 10 years' time. Without the \$5.5 billion

payment, the Postal Service would have been operationally profitable over the past four years.

Myth No. 2: The Postal Service is no longer of value.

Not true. The Postal Service binds this country together. We are the largest delivery network in America, going to every home in every corner of America six days a week. We are already being used for the last mile of delivery by both FedEx and UPS.

We deliver packages, medicine, documents and checks—items that are essential to the customers we serve. We provide affordable universal service, going places where our competitors don't deliver on a daily basis.

We have the ability to reach every home in America in case of a national emergency. What other agency can say that? In fact, under the Cities Readiness Initiative—which is already in place in several cities—letter carriers deliver needed drugs to residents in case of a bioterrorist attack on the United States.

We are a presence in every neighborhood, putting out fires, thwarting crime and keeping a watchful eye on our elderly customers through the Customer Alert program. We are the most trusted federal agency for the sixth year in a row.

In addition, the Postal Service is of value to this nation's economy. The mailing industry accounts for close to 9 percent of the Gross National Product and employs approximately 7.5 million workers. And let's not forget that the United States Postal Service is the most affordable postal service in the world, all while delivering more than 40 percent of the world's mail.

All of these things are of value to this country. It's time to dispel the myths.

By now, your branch should have received information from President Rolando on the message we need to deliver and how that information should be dispersed. Please check with your branch officers on how you can help.

Fortunately, we are not limited to simply screaming in space. We have an army of voices that can be heard. Let's deliver the truth. 