

## Letter from the Editor

**F**inally, what has been a largely one-sided battle in the public arena over the image and issues related to our nation's postal system is being joined—and none too soon, because *its* future, and *our* future, are at stake.

While the NALC has done a superb job *vis-à-vis* legislators and our own members, getting the message out to the public has often been tough sledding.

Why? Because we face a collection of extremist adversaries who are facilitated by a willing set of accomplices. The adversaries are those ideologues who loathe government, detest unions and denigrate public service. Their accomplices are a pliant press corps full of journalists stretched too thin to go beyond the press releases or the conventional wisdom.

The result has been the creation and perpetuation of prevailing myths—about failed business models and an unaffordable mail delivery system losing billions of dollars a year, out-of-control labor costs and imminent taxpayer bailouts, unneeded services and facilities—that have filled the nation's newspapers and airwaves and dominated the public dialogue. Or, more accurately, that have prevented a real dialogue from taking place.

Well, that dialogue is beginning in earnest.

**Finally, the naysayers face a powerful** force willing to take them on. And who better to lead the challenge than the people who actually know what they're talking about—those who carry the nation's mail and do all the other things letter carriers do to link this vast country together while improving every community in it.

The battle has been joined because *you* have stepped up and said "Enough"—enough to the presentation of fiction as fact, to the emphasis on ridiculing and tearing down rather than informing and building up. And in so doing, you are surprising large numbers of people by dismantling—in clear and logical fashion—what they have been led to believe.

A trend that became discernable two months ago has only grown more powerful over the past four weeks. And so, the myths no longer have the stage to themselves. They are sharing it with the facts—about a Postal Service that hasn't been budgeted a dime of taxpayer money for more than a quarter-century, about an agency that made a net profit of \$611 million the last four fiscal years

despite the recession, about a pre-funding burden faced by no other agency or firm, about a readily available legislative remedy.

President Rolando continues his yeoman's work in this regard. The headline on his recent commentary in *The Providence Journal* told it all: "The Truth about the Postal Service." When the postmaster general used the pages of *USA Today* to portray delivery cuts as inevitable, our president responded so well that the editors expanded the normal word limit by one-third. When the Postal Service announced that 3,700 post offices would be considered for closing, President Rolando put this in the context of the real financial situation facing USPS, in a story on the Scripps Howard wire service.

In one day alone, his perspectives flanked Washington, running in Maryland's *Baltimore Sun* and Virginia's *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. The *Sun's* headline and subhead summed up our perspective: "Reducing postal service is not the answer" above "Post office financial woes have nothing to do with mail delivery and everything to do with a misguided retiree health policy."

More and more he's surrounded by an army of letter carriers—state and regional leaders, local officers, rank-and-file activists—who have seized the initiative with a grass-roots energy that can help turn the tide. Space permits only a few examples: Hawaii State Association President Terry Kaulolo wrote a commentary piece for the *Hawaii Reporter* so compellingly personal and professional that it quickly drew 1,200 "likes." Chicago Branch 11 President Mack Julion made our case extremely well in the *Chicago Tribune*, and Cindy Kirby, a Denver carrier currently assigned to Headquarters, had a strong letter in *The Denver Post*.

**Make no mistake: The misleading** rhetoric hasn't disappeared. But the public is being given a choice—accept the same old spin, or consider arguments that are refreshingly straightforward.

We need you to keep up your impressive work. And we need even more of you to join in. When you do, you are helping yourselves; you are helping each other; you are helping your profession, your union and your country. No one can do it more effectively than you. And that is becoming more and more evident with each passing day. ☐



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