

## Letter from the Editor

**A**merica is blessed with wonderful public servants who protect us, move us, connect us and educate us—the police, firefighters, teachers, bus drivers, social workers, public health nurses and others. Let's just say that no other country is as fortunate as we are in this regard.

And there are, of course, our nation's letter carriers. At this point, you are performing not one but three types of public service. You are, as we all know, the centerpiece of the world's best delivery network, linking together this vast country while unifying individual communities, serving both residents and businesses.

If that weren't enough, you provide exceptional service beyond what's in the contract, whether replenishing the nation's food pantries (as we'll do next month); saving your customers when disaster strikes; or playing an expanding role in homeland security. That latter is reflected in the remarks Region 6 NBA Pat Carroll was scheduled to make in late March in Louisville as that city joins the Cities' Readiness Initiative, with letter carriers volunteering to deliver medicines to residents in the event of a biological crisis—one more sign of our dedication to our communities, one more demonstration of the value of the unique universal network that is, and must remain, the hallmark of the U.S. Postal Service.

**And these days, letter carriers are meeting** yet another type of challenge. You are informing Americans about the actual financial situation at the Postal Service and about how politicians who helped create the problem can fix it—so we can continue to serve the country in the ways just cited.

Your efforts in this regard are outstanding, and keep getting bigger and better. As I'm writing this, I learn that the *Argus Leader* has just published a commentary piece by Brent Fjerestad, president of the South Dakota State Association, informing residents—and legislators—about pre-funding, the rise in shipping of Internet-ordered packages, the help of one of the state's U.S. senators, and the need for congressional action.

President Rolando had a letter to the editor in *The New York Times* explaining why degrading service wouldn't save the Postal Service but rather destroy it. The letter, read by virtually everyone who matters in this debate, was tightly reasoned enough that the paper let it exceed the word count by 50 percent.

That ran just a couple of days after Presi-

dent Rolando's letter in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* that explained the problems caused by pre-funding.

Each letter responded to an editorial, and that raises a key point. The editorial in the *Times* showed little understanding of the postal situation, while the *Inquirer* editorial was far better. But either type of coverage—a good story or a bad one, an informative editorial or a misleading one—gives us an opportunity to get our message out. That's what Brent did in South Dakota, when he responded to an inaccurate Associated Press story that ran in the *Argus Leader*.

There's a back story to the Philadelphia situation. We were alerted to the original editorial by retired letter carrier Steve Brown of Norristown, PA Branch 542, who doesn't let an article or editorial appear in the *Inquirer* without calling to read me every word of it (and then rereads it, to make sure I didn't miss anything). Carriers like Steve who inform us of what's going on are indispensable in the effort to provide the public with the real story.

President Rolando also had a letter to the editor in *USA Today*, responding to a front-page story about the mail that neglected to mention pre-funding, an op-ed piece in *The Press-Enterprise* in Rep. Darrell Issa's district in California, and a letter in *The Topeka Capital-Journal*.

Just a few other highlights: Region 5 RAA Mike Birkett gave context to a TV report by NBC affiliate KWWL in Waterloo, IA; California State Association President John Beaumont explained the financial situation so well on the National Public Radio program "To The Point" that the other guest, a conservative critic of the Postal Service, didn't know what to say; President Rolando emerged as the dominant voice on a two-part discussion on the Postal Service over conservative Radio America; Saginaw, MI Branch 74 President Brad McKenna had a column in the *Midland Daily News*; Seattle Branch 79 President Jo Ann Pyle outlined the problems with the Postal Service's cost-cutting plans on the Washington State AFL-CIO's news website; retired Auburn, ME Branch 345 member Bert Godin's lengthy letter to the editor of the Lewiston *Sun Journal* informed folks in Maine; and Arizona State Association Vice President Keith O'Brien was prominent in a story on MyFOXphoenix.com.

Let's keep this up—and increase it! 



PHILIP DINE

#### EDITORIAL STAFF:

Managing Editor Philip Dine  
Designer/Web Editor Mike Shea  
Internet Communications Coordinator  
Joe Conway  
Writer/Editor Rick Hodges  
Editorial Assistant Jenessa Kildall

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