

Postal Record

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Letter from the Editor

You've likely seen the bumper sticker or heard the saying, "If you're not outraged, you're not paying attention"—typically tied to social injustices, government ineptitude or the like.

These days, one could apply that to the situation with the U.S. Postal Service—"If you're not informed, you're not paying attention." (Or, indeed, keep the word "outraged.")

During 25 years as a reporter, I watched as major institutions—those I covered most closely were the labor movement, the military, Congress and presidential administrations—sought to define a coherent message and disseminate it in ways that would resonate. Let's charitably say they did so with varying degrees of success.

Rarely did I witness a union, or the Pentagon, or a White House of either party, do what the NALC has been doing, from President Rolando to rank-and-file members. He, and you, have put together a simple but powerful message that jolts people by shattering the conventional wisdom; you've made it credible by basing it on verifiable facts and not dubious assertions; you've distilled it into a few logical points that drive it home; you've shown people why the Postal Service matters to everyone and therefore why they should care about what you're saying; and you've provided plausible and practical policy solutions.

You've stayed consistent with the message even while evincing the flexibility to tweak it as new financial data is released or the congressional situation evolves. And you've done all this in disciplined and coordinated fashion.

It starts with a union president who tirelessly seizes every opportunity to reach the public, and who imparts the sense to each interviewer or reporter—and their audience—that he truly welcomes this particular chance to dispel the misinformation and get the facts out.

And it extends to our regional officials, our branch leaders and legions of letter carriers, who each month raise the bar a little higher.

Am I overstating what's being done? You be the judge.

President Rolando heavily influenced the Aug. 10 Associated Press story carried in hundreds of newspapers nationwide about the USPS third quarter financial results, by noting that the figures made our point about pre-funding being the chief culprit in the Postal Service's red ink. Earlier that week, he outdebated Rep. Dennis Ross (R-FL) on Laura Ingraham's nationally syndicated radio show, with an audience of 6 million. Later that same day, he was on "StandUp!" on

Sirius/XM Satellite Radio, which reaches a sophisticated political audience coast to coast. Just a few days before that, he spoke to 2 million listeners in an hour-long discussion about the Postal Service on National Public Radio's "Diane Rehm Show"—with tremendous feedback from callers to the show and, later, to NALC Headquarters—and he also was quoted in a *New York Times* story about the so-called USPS default on its pre-funding payment.

Heading into the national convention in Minneapolis (where the *Star Tribune* provided good coverage), President Rolando dispelled some myths about the Postal Service's finances in a much-discussed *Washington Post* op-ed piece that ran three days after he wrote the "Opposing View" to a *USA Today* editorial on postal issues.

A Rolando letter to the editor of Lakeland, FL's *Ledger* provided readers some additional context regarding the Postal Service's financial situation while pointing out contradictory statements by Rep. Ross about six-day delivery, and President Rolando's letter to the editor of *Federal Times* corrected a prior news item.

Meanwhile, Executive Vice President Tim O'Malley spoke to the nationally syndicated Jerry Doyle radio show's 4 million listeners; he also was on Washington's Federal News Radio. Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine was interviewed on CNN's "Situation Room" and Region 11 NBA Dan Toth was on WERE/America's Work Force Radio in Cleveland. Region 15 NBA Larry Cirelli was on WWRL's (New York City) "Mark Riley Morning Show" and Region 13 NBA Tim Dowdy was on the Working Family Radio Network.

They were reinforced by Branch 70 President Ricardo Guzman's interview with ABC's San Diego affiliate about the Cities' Readiness Initiative, Branch 47 Congressional District Liaison Cindy Kirby's letter in the *Denver Post*, Region 9 RAA Kenneth Gibbs' comments in a story in South Florida's *Sun Sentinel*, and more.

I said at the outset that folks still uninformed about the Postal Service aren't paying attention. Well, we have to reach them too, whether they're in the public, the business community, Congress or the administration. Let's deliver our message yet more forcefully, so everyone will be fully informed—and properly outraged—about what some would do to America's Postal Service. ✉



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