

How things change—or do they?



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The first of the large mail-order houses, Montgomery Ward, was established in 1872; Sears was established in 1893. Many other mail-order companies followed in subsequent years. Today, history repeats itself with companies like Amazon and eBay becoming the leaders. Only the names have changed. The service and the means of receiving the packages ordered are still the same.

Letter carriers have been the source for delivering products and packages since mail service first started. What makes the Postal Service unique is the fact that our services are reasonably priced, with friendly service and six-day

delivery.

USPS should be working to plan for long-term future growth of the package industry. How can we adapt to satisfy both the businesses and the public we serve? USPS should be looking now at restoring Parcel Post routes. By showing the people that we have the capability and can meet whatever the demand may be, our customers will always choose us as their means of delivery. What we don't want is to not be able to meet their needs. In the '60s, the Post Office Department virtually gave the business away to UPS. We should learn from that mistake and do what we do best: provide the best possible service.

There have been dramatic changes in our workforce since 2009. The number of career employees dropped from 620,317 in 2009 to 488,050 in 2013, a 21.3 percent reduction. This amounts to a considerable savings for the USPS. However, the USPS Headquarters employee total in 2009 was 2,811, and in 2013, the number was 2,967, an increase of 5.5 percent. It is sad when you see that growth took place at Headquarters versus the workers who perform the work and move the mail. This is something Congress should realize and look into. If reductions are made, they should definitely come from those who do not handle the mail and who make the highest salaries.

Many of the players in Congress seem to forget that the Postal Service binds our nation together and provides for American commerce to thrive. It is the people's post office.

A recent GAO and Postal Service OIG report has identified more than 100 deficit-reduction alternatives that could replace ending Saturday delivery, either alone or in combination with other cuts. None raises rates but does cut service. Of these proposals, 54 would not require any col-

lective bargaining or legislation by Congress. But are they of any value? It depends on who is talking.

Our position clearly is the simplest of all proposals and restores the Postal Service to what it was and should be: Eliminate the mandate adopted in 2006 requiring the USPS to pre-fund retiree health benefit costs 75 years into the future. This by itself would put the USPS back in the "black" and provide it with the ability to begin to recover. Then it would be good if Congress would give the overpayments back from the Civil Service Retirement System and the Federal Employees Retirement System. It is estimated that there is between \$50 billion and \$70 billion in overpayment in CSRS and about \$17 billion in FERS. This funding could be used in so many ways, like purchasing a new fleet of energy-efficient vehicles, performing repairs at existing facilities or providing equipment for our future package industry.

Congress needs to react and make the right decision to protect the Postal Service and preserve it for generations to come. They caused the problems in 2006, and they can fix what they did. Congress needs to follow the

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NALC plan for recovery and not listen to those who want to ruin the Postal Service and privatize it. Remember, the Postal Re-organization Act of 1970 did many good things for the people, for businesses and for the Postal Service. It brought new technology and provided for speedy delivery across America. The dramatic changes that have been underway for the past several years now have actually slowed the mail down. This is something that I hope Congress looks into and works to restore. Each piece of legislation has items that could dramatically affect us.

Be prepared, and when President Rolando calls upon us, please react and contact your congressional leaders. Don't sit idly by. As I mentioned earlier in this article, there are many forces with different agendas, each of which could have a drastic effect.