

USPS service standards



**Timothy C.
O'Malley**

repeatedly degraded its service standards and embraced a doomed strategy of trying to cut its way to prosperity.

“The key to service quality is something that USPS calls ‘critical entry time,’ which is the time when the Postal Service receives the mail.”

The key to service quality is something that USPS calls “critical entry time,” which is the time when the Postal Service receives the mail. Prior to Jan. 1 of this year, critical entry time in many locations was 7 p.m. on the day an item was first placed into the mail stream—that is when it’s actually mailed. But since Jan. 1, critical entry time has been changed to 8 a.m. on the day after the item was mailed, which is before a post office officially opens for business. This is a move that effectively adds a hidden extra day to mail delivery times. Many customers already have experienced late notices from their creditors as their bills were considered late due to these changes.

This is why it is so important to alert your congressional leaders to support H.R. 54, which calls on the USPS to restore the service standards that were in effect before July 1, 2012. Service standards and First Class mail *do* matter, and we cannot let these cuts stay in place. The service standards must be restored.

Customer Connect updates

A recent lead submitted by Flushing, NY Branch 294 member Gary Lam from the Whitestone Post Office result-

USPS has been rebounding from 2012’s low volume of 65.2 billion pieces of First Class mail to 2014’s volume of 67.8 billion. This is just shy of the 2009 total of 68 billion pieces. As the economy improves, our volume should continue to increase.

The concern we now have is that the recent change in service standards by the Postal Service may cause erosion of the mail stream as customers could see a decrease in service and decide to opt for a different method of communicating. Before July 1, 2012, the Postal Service’s standard for First Class mail was overnight delivery in most metropolitan areas and rural communities. But since then, USPS has

ed in a \$4,477,200 sale. His relationship with a Whitestone company called Pharmapacks, a startup business specializing in online health and beauty products, led to the sale. The USPS sales representative said that the lead provided by Gary resulted in many sales for USPS and helped develop a strong relationship with this company, USPS sales representatives, and the Customer Connect program. Thanks, Gary, for making this all work out. We appreciate your efforts.

As I mentioned in my March column, the Bluffton, IN, post office was recently recognized as a Customer Connect award winner. Bluffton’s NALC Customer Connect Coordinator Ray McEvoy said how proud he was to be a member of such a great team: “It just shows what we all can do to increase revenue.” He also spoke of the leadership provided to the team by Postmaster Brian Smith and Supervisor Jennifer Blackwell, by saying, “We’re all in it together.”

Great Lakes Area Marketing Manager Mike McInturf spoke of how remarkable their achievement really was. “In FY 14, nationally, \$27 million was generated through the Customer Connect program, \$2.2 million in the Great Lakes Area, and in the Bluffton Post Office, almost half a million dollars,” he said. Referring to what Postmaster Smith calls “the circle of influence” that exists in Bluffton, McInturf said the office was fully engaged in the Customer Connect program.

Naples, FL Branch 4716 member Michael Brown from the Naples Main Post Office obtained a Customer Connect lead from frequenting Panda Pavilion Chinese restaurant. While there, he started thinking about the amount of competition that there is with other restaurants. He enjoyed eating at this restaurant and he wanted them to stay in business.

Michael knew that the USPS offered a product called Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) that could help the business grow through marketing its services to the local area. He approached the owner and started discussing EDDM as an option for marketing. Each time he came in, he always made sure he shared information on the products. In August 2013, the restaurant owner was ready to move forward with learning more about EDDM, and then in January 2015 the business did its first EDDM mailing of 6,000 pieces. Panda Pavilion intends to send mailings weekly at an estimated annualized revenue of \$56,400.

I encourage all letter carriers to take part in the Customer Connect program.