

# Lack of recognition for safe drivers takes its toll on morale



**Manuel L. Peralta Jr.**

**O**n quite a few occasions, I have been contacted by carriers or their friends asking for help getting management to give positive recognition in the form of a safe driver award. This month's column is dedicated to each and every letter carrier who deserves such an award but did not receive one when it was earned.

Apparently, many supervisors and postmasters feel that giving positive recognition for a job well done is not important enough to take up their valuable time.

They would spend whatever time it takes to investigate you on an infraction, but you hear crickets when you do something right.

## You're telling them how you feel—do they listen?

**Management at the headquarters level has spent much time and money studying how you feel as an employee.** In late 2014, USPS announced that it was moving away from the "Voice of the Employee" to "Employee Engagement." (I addressed this in my January 2018 column, where I touched on the importance of employee engagement and its effects on discretionary effort.)

USPS was so proud of this new direction that it included reference to the "Postal Pulse Survey" in its 2015 report to Congress. It said, "Creating a dynamic, highly engaged workplace where employees work with passion, perform at consistently high levels and drive innovation benefits both our employees and our organization..."

Great pitch, but what happened next?

The results came in—and we scored at almost the lowest levels ever recorded by the Gallup organization.

In subsequent reports to Congress, USPS repeated its commitment to making employee engagement a top priority. We are all still waiting for their breakthrough ideas on how to treat you better so that you, in turn, feel better about your employer and your working conditions.

Will USPS rein in managers who destroy morale on the workroom floor? Will USPS promote managers who care about workplace culture and the well-being of employees? Or will USPS continue to find ways to blame others for its failure to improve employee engagement?

## A good place to start

**Using safe driver awards as a starting point for giving**

positive recognition, I draw your attention to Section 842 of the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)*, which provides the following:

842.1 Participation: All eligible installations must participate in the National Safety Council's Safe Driver Award Program.

842.21 Recognition: The National Safety Council Safe Driver Award is the recognized trademark of professional drivers who have proved their skill in avoiding traffic accidents.

842.23 Participation: Postal installations having one or more postal employees operating postal owned, hired, leased, contract, or private vehicles in conducting postal business must participate in the Safe Driver Award Program.

842.25 Safe Driver Award Rules: For details on administering the National Safety Council's [NSC] Safe Driver Award Program, see the latest Postal Service version of Safe Driver Award Rules.

The NSC's award program explains how to determine eligibility for awards, as well as how to order awards cards and certificates and Million Mile award plaques.

If you have earned a Million Mile Safe Driver Award, your supervisor, station manager or postmaster should order it for you. Per *ELM* Section 843.4:

Presentation Ceremonies: Installation Heads must provide publicity and an appropriate ceremony for each incentive award.

## Deserve an award? Contact your branch officers

**As I close, I share a photo of Kevin Flaherty, executive vice president of Boston, MA Branch 34, with Jim Moody, proudly displaying the Million Mile Safe Driver Award that was presented to him by his postmaster in September.**

To all of you who deserve an award but have not received one, begin by contacting your branch officers. Bring along a copy of this page and ask for their assistance.



**Jim Moody, r., proudly displays his Million Mile Safe Driver award with Kevin Flaherty, executive vice president of Boston, MA Branch 34**