

Iowa State Association of Letter Carriers



President's Report

January 2009

As I write this month's article, we've just endured some of the coldest days on record here in Iowa. There was absolutely nothing you could do to get warm. Yet, the mail was delivered. Despite being layered up like mummies, numb fingers, toes and wondering if you still had skin on your face, letter carriers across the state once again stepped up and got the job done. All of this on top of the amazing number of snow storms that we continue to get hit by.

Unfortunately, some managers across the state decided that this was an excellent time to admonish carriers about their office and street time being to "high". Apparently it hasn't been bad in the office all day long and they have no idea what it's like outside. Perhaps they could look up from the computer for a couple of seconds and watch the carriers get ready to out. Long underwear, boots, extra body layers, gloves, etc... I suppose the computer doesn't figure any extra time for that. We're already aware that the computer doesn't figure any extra time for snow, ice, or wearing the extra 10 pounds of gear! Here's a suggestion for management - think about what you're about to say before you open your mouth! Want to lower moral and let your employees know how stupid you actually sound! Keep talking without thinking. Go right from your little computer and keep denigrating the employees that pay your salary. Perhaps we could get a copy of "How to Win Friends and Influence People" to scroll across the computer! By the way, a carrier I work with once referred to the DOIS computer as HAL. For those of you who are not familiar with "2001 Space Odyssey," HAL was the computer that tried to kill all the humans! Ok, enough of that for this month.

This past week, the city of Dubuque and its residents received some wonderful news. IBM will be opening a office in downtown and will be hiring at least 1300 people with an average salary of \$45,000 per year, in the very near future. While not only great for the city of Dubuque, its great for Iowa. It may help keep some of our youth from leaving the state to find work. As a Dubuquer and Iowan, I'm quite proud that a corporation like IBM has chosen to locate here. However, on the down side, IBM with billions of dollars of profits last year is asking for 52 MILLION in tax incentives from the city and state! Where is the outrage! We complain about welfare and food stamps! We complain about heating assistance and cheese giveaways, but when will the corporate welfare end? Cities bid against cities, states against states, all the while undercutting their own best interests. Southern interests derail the "Big Three" bailout,

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while they were eager to give multi-millions to the foreign automakers to locate in their states. Over a decade ago, congress passed welfare reform. Perhaps some laws need to be written about Corporate Welfare. Ok, enough of that too!

I'll soon be heading to Washington for the State Chairs Conference where I hope to meet with the entire Iowa congressional delegation. We'll first be briefed on the NALC and Labor agenda by President Young and the NALC Legislative Staff. Then, over to the Hill. I'm sure that one piece of legislation will be H.R. 22, a bill to amend the Government Contributions for Postal Annuitants' Health Benefits. This bill, just introduced to the 111th Congress, will save the postal service billions of dollars per year. Only the USPS is asked to pre-fund annuitants' health benefits. It's only because of this payment that the postal service lost money last year, despite the price of fuel and the lagging economy. I hope to get all of our Representatives to sign on as co-sponsors of this legislation and may be asking you to assist in this matter in the near future.

Also on the list will be the "Employee Free Choice Act". This bill will make it easier (even the playing field) for workers to organize and unionize. Over the past several decades, both labor organizations and the middle class have shrunk. It's quite obvious that the two groups are intertwined. Many of us believe that only with a strong labor movement will the middle class grow and prosper.

Lastly, the upcoming February issue of the Postal Record will soon be delivered to your home. Will we read your name in there? As I've stated numerous times before, it's only with a balanced attack, on both the contractual and legislative fronts, will our membership continue to grow and prosper. We cannot be successful in negotiations if the rest of the labor force is floundering. So, if your name isn't listed, please take the opportunity to sign up and do your part to help us help you.

Mike Birkett
President,
Iowa State Assoc. of Letter Carriers
www.iowalettercarriers.org