

## 'Save Our Postal Service'

Benjamin Franklin (photo right) attended a "Save America's Postal Service" rally Sept. 23 at Portland's Pioneer Courthouse Square, sponsored by the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Branch 82.

Franklin is symbolic of the U.S. Postal Service, having founded it in 1775 and serving as postmaster.

On Sept. 27, rallies were held in every congressional district in the country to deliver the same message.

Today, as many as 3,700 post offices (41 in Oregon) are targeted for possible closure, and the postmaster general is calling for an end to Saturday delivery. Doing so would result in the loss of some 35,000 family-wage jobs. The postal service is a self-funded federal agency that is experiencing multi-billion-dollar losses. A primary reason for the operating deficit is a requirement imposed by Congress five years ago that the post office set aside \$5.5 billion a



year to pre-fund the medical costs for retirees 75 years out.

"The current postal crisis has been manufactured," said NALC Branch 82 President Jim Cook. "No other government agency is required to make such a payment for future medical benefits. If we did not have \$5.5 billion a year taken away from our operating budget, we would not be in

the financial crisis today. In fact, we would be \$700 million in the good."

Postal unions are asking their customers to write Congress and ask that they repeal the pre-funding requirement. "Many have heard reports about the USPS's financial crisis," Cook said, "but few know there are solutions that don't cost the taxpayer a dime."

## Young union members, Airline Pilots, bolster 'Occupy Wall Street' protesters

Eight hundred young workers, activists, and students attending the AFL-CIO Next Up Young Worker Summit last month in Minneapolis sent a letter of support to protesters in New York.

The Occupy Wall Street movement started Sept. 17 with a small group of mostly young people protesting corporate greed, bailouts, tax breaks for the super rich, and a political system beholden to the interests of Wall Street. It has slowly gained traction, with several thousand camped out in the financial district. Nearly 800 have been arrested. "...Next Up participants from around

the country stand with those on Wall Street who are making their voices heard," the letter said. "The future of our country depends on young people demanding the future we believe in. And we believe that Wall Street should pay for the damage they've done to our economy, our jobs, and our communities ..."

Several unions have joined with protesters, including the Air Line Pilots Association and the Transport Workers Union. Amalgamated Transit Union and United Steelworkers also have pledged to support the activists. More unions are expected to join the cause.

## AFSCME local co-sponsors 9/11 event

SALEM — AFSCME Local 2067, which represents City of Salem employees, was one of two dozen sponsors of "Field of Flags," a four-day commemoration of 9/11 staged Sept. 8-11 at the city's Riverfront Park.

"Field of Flags" featured over 5,000 U.S. and other commemorative flags staged in 11 different areas of the park. Local 2067 was the primary sponsor of Area 6, the Pentagon Field, and as such provided 125 banners for the event.

Throughout the park there were flags placed to commemorate each victim of 9/11, U.S. military personnel from the Northwest who have lost their

lives in the wars on terror, and two other special fields to denote Oregon police and firefighters who lost their lives in the line of duty.

"This was another chance for our local to reach out and participate in an important community event," said Local 2067 President Jack Tucker.

The local co-sponsored a similar event at the fifth anniversary of 9/11.

The Local 2067 contingent at the memorial also sold flags in a retail booth at the site. Proceeds from the flag sales went to a local child abuse prevention agency, a military personnel emergency relief fund, and other charities.

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