

Postal Service backs off plan to end Saturday mail

The U.S. Postal Service has backed off of its plan to end Saturday mail delivery, for now.

On April 10, the Postal Service Board of Governors overruled Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe's plan to go to five-day mail delivery. Donahoe announced in February that Saturday mail pickup and delivery would end, starting Aug. 5.

The announcement was met with stiff resistance from postal unions and some lawmakers, who said language in Congress' "continuing resolution" to fund government operations required six-day mail. [USPS receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and

services to fund its operations.]

Rallies to keep Saturday mail delivery were held nationwide, including the streets of Portland, where some 600 people marched on St. Patrick's Day.

Following a closed meeting on April 10, the postal board restated its support for a change to five-day delivery, but effectively conceded that the postmaster general's claim that he could ignore the continuing resolution was wrong.

In a press statement, USPS said that "although disappointed with this congressional action, the board will follow the law and has directed the Postal Service to delay implementation of its new delivery schedule until legislation is passed that provides the Postal Serv-

ice with the authority to implement a financially appropriate and responsible delivery schedule."

Fredric Rolando, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), said "postal unions were gratified the board "has seen the light on the law, but it is time for them to reconsider their entire 'shrink to survive' strategy."

USPS has already shuttered 114 mail sorting centers, with another 75 slated for closure this year. Nearly 170,000 jobs have been eliminated since 2006.

Postal unions are lobbying Congress to pass reforms that will grow service, not cut it. They say USPS' biggest financial problem stems from congressionally-mandated prepayment of future retirees' health care costs covering the next 75 years. The mandate, which is not required by any other government agency or private business, sets USPS back \$5.5 billion a year.

At the same time USPS said it would continue Saturday delivery, it asked all postal unions to re-open their contracts for concessionary bargaining.

Three of four unions were forced to go to binding arbitration within the last year, after USPS refused to come to terms on contracts that expired in 2010 and 2011. The most recent was in February, with the National Postal Mail Handlers Union, a division of the Laborers. NALC and the National Rural Letter Carriers Association received interest arbitration awards in January 2013 and July 2012, respectively.

Members of the American Postal Workers Union ratified a contract in 2011.

For the most part, arbitrators rejected USPS's proposals to freeze pay, eliminate cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), contract out work, and impose a two-tier wage schedule.

The Mail Handlers Union said it would support any USPS moves to increase revenue, including rate hikes "across all products not covering their costs."

The Mail Handlers and NALC have made the point for years that first-class mail, which is profitable even in a recession, is subsidizing bulk mail. But

the postal board and management has catered to the bulk mailers, letting them ship their mailings at below cost.

"To the extent, however, that the board is directing management to 're-open negotiations with the postal unions to lower total workforce costs,' the pursuit of such an alternative is unlikely to be successful," the Mail Handlers warned.

And the fight on Saturday isn't over: Rolando said President Barack Obama's proposed budget for the year starting Oct. 1 wants to shut Saturday service, too.

(Editor's Note: Press Associates Inc. contributed to this report.)

Texas Hold'em card tournament draws 72 players, raises \$4,818 for Doernbecher

Unions for Kids raised \$4,818 at its second annual Texas Hold'em card tournament March 16 at the Sheet Metal Workers Local 16 union hall in Portland.

The poker tournament is a spin-off of the annual Motorcycle Poker Run and motorcycle raffle sponsored by Unions for Kids, a 501(c3) non-profit founded 11 years ago by union members to raise money for Doernbecher Children's Hospital. To date, \$326,000 has been donated.

John Candioto, business manager of Local 16, coordinated the Texas hold'em event. Seventy-two players

participated and 21 businesses and/or union locals sponsored tables.

Members of Sheet Metal Workers Local 16 swept the top four places, with Daniel Kiraz finishing first. Next in order were Maria Gamon, Brian Lee, and Sean Hanrahan.

Tickets are still on sale for a chance to win a new Harley — a 2013 Heritage Softail Classic. Tickets are \$10 each, with only 5,000 sold. The drawing will be held at 4 p.m., June 8, following the motorcycle poker run.

For more information, call Lee Duncan at 503-260-5905 or email him at lee@unionsforkids.org.



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Letter Carriers Food Drive May 11

Letter carriers in the Portland metropolitan area and in Clark County, Washington will help "Stamp Out Hunger" on Saturday, May 11, part of the 21st annual National Association of Letter Carriers and U.S. Postal Service Food Drive.

Prior to May 11, plastic bags will be delivered to every household, along with a postcard reminder. All you have to do is fill the bag with nonperishable food items such as canned meat, fish and soup, cereals, pasta and rice, and leave it at your mailbox on the morning of Saturday, May 11. (Please do not include glass items, homemade items or previously opened containers.)

Letter Carriers will collect the bags and deliver them to drop points, where volunteers will sort the donations and forward them to the Oregon Food Bank. Food collected in Clark County will benefit Clark County hunger-relief agencies.

The Food Drive raises more than 1.5 million pounds of food each year for the Oregon Food Bank. It is the largest one-day food collection of the year in Oregon — and across the nation.

According to the Oregon Food Bank, an estimated 240,000 people get meals from emergency food boxes in an average month.

Bowling fundraiser April 28

The 24th Annual Labor Bowl Challenge benefiting the local Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) will be held Sunday, April 28, at Sunset Lanes, 12770 SW Walker Road, Beaverton.

Registration starts at 11 a.m., with bowling under way at noon.

Money for MDA is raised by individual fundraising and a silent auction. All proceeds will benefit the local MDA, which provides much needed support to over 1,200 local individuals and families living with neuromuscular diseases. Money goes to buy wheel chairs and braces for children, as well

as medical services, research and summer camps.

Since its inception in 1989, the Labor Bowl — coordinated by the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Branch 82, the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, and other participating Oregon labor unions — has raised \$339,721 for MDA.

For more information, or to register, call Jim Cook, president of Letter Carriers Branch 82, at 503-493-5903. To donate silent auction items, call NALC's MDA Coordinator Debby Burbank at 971-404-5384.

Northwest Oregon Labor Council recognition dinner set for June 8

Mark your calendars for Saturday, June 8, when the Northwest Oregon Labor Council hosts the 16th annual Labor Appreciation and Recognition Night.

This year's dinner and awards ceremony, which serves as a fundraiser for Labor's Community Service Agency, will be held at Milwaukie Elks Lodge, 13121 SE McLoughlin Blvd. Dinner tickets are \$20 per person. Raffle tickets also will be sold for \$1 each or seven for \$5.

The labor council is accepting cash and prize donations for the raffle.

Through May 3, the labor council also will be accepting nominations for persons to be recognized for their service to and with the labor community. Nominations also are open for the Del Ricks Community Service Award, recognizing one individual for their exemplary service to labor and the community at-large.

Nominations should be sent to: Northwest Oregon Labor Council, 3645 SE 32nd Avenue, Portland, Oregon, 97202-3019.

For more information or to order tickets, call 503-235-9444.