

**EDITORIALS**

**We count on the mail**

I got the mail today. A couple of bills. A greeting card. Some catalogs. A newspaper. One package that my wife grabbed right away. (Wonder what that was?)

Lately, it occurs to me how completely I take for granted that I will get the mail tomorrow.

I've had my share of gripes about the mail. As president of the National Newspaper Association, I have fielded our community newspaper members' postal concerns all year. The mail is slower than it used to be. The U.S. Postal Service slowed it down by a day, at least, because of financial problems. Newspaper subscribers are unhappy because too often their papers are arriving late. Some local businesses have had problems with cash flow because of late mail.

Still, I get the mail every day but Sunday. Bet you do, too. If you follow the news, you know the U.S. Postal Service is in trouble.

Because so many people and businesses use the internet, there isn't as much mail to deliver. But we still expect the mail to come. At my newspaper, we look for it on Saturdays, too, because weekend mail is extremely important in small towns. (Congress considered ending Saturday mail, but thankfully it has dropped that idea for now.)

Beneath the surface, however, we see seismic, economy-rattling changes ahead unless Congress can pass legislation to lower the Postal Service's cost of doing business.

It carries more than \$50 billion of debt on its balance sheet. Fortunately, there are bills by Reps. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, and Elijah Cummings, D-Md, and several other House members, and by Sens. Tom Carper, D-DeL., Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., Mark Warner, D-VA, Roy Blunt, R-Mo., Jerry Moran, R-Kan., and Susan Collins, R-Maine, that would do the job.

Passing these bills is easier said than done. You may have noticed Congress is having a hard time these days getting anything passed.

This is what the bills have to fix.

A 2006 law imposed a requirement to put advance funding into a federal retirement health plan for postal workers. Other agencies don't do advance funding. They are on a pay-as-you-go system.

That requirement began to cripple USPS within a year or two after its passage. What the 2006 law didn't do was relieve USPS of also contributing to Medicare for the same workers, which many do not use. So there are two plans for many workers, when only one is used.

USPS has to double-pay, which is another way of saying you double-pay every time you buy stamps — for a total of about \$29 billion now paid into the Federal Treasury. The Chaffetz-Cummings and Carper bills would end the double-payment.

Retirees would go onto Medicare like the rest of us do, and the other plan would provide supplemental coverage. The Postal Service would be relieved of the debt it is carrying from the 2006 law because the funding will be complete.

Sounds so reasonable, right? Why hasn't it passed?

Because Uncle Sam likes keeping half of that double payment. Somehow, some think tanks inside the Beltway (and I say "think" with my tongue in cheek) believe by ending the double payment, USPS would be getting a bailout.

This is stopping your postage money from being unfairly collected and relieving a financial burden USPS did not deserve if Medicare was used as intended.

Saving this money may not mean much to you at a few pennies a pop, but to businesses, it is big money that could be used to create jobs instead of lining the federal treasury. Did you know that the mail is responsible for 7.5 million jobs and \$1.2 trillion in the U.S. economy?

Mail is important. But it has to be reliable and on time. Unless this legislation gets through, mail will get slower and eventually, we won't be able to take it for granted.

If you get a chance this summer, email your members of Congress a note asking them to pass these bills. Or better yet, send a letter by mail. Bet Congress takes that mail for granted every day, too.



By Chip Hutcheson  
*President/National Newspaper Association and  
Publisher/The Times Leader, Princeton, KY*



**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Thanks to all for great teen dance**

I would like to thank Bank of America for use of their parking lot. Also, Courtney and Gabe for the DJing and the other volunteers that worked the teen dance. Hope you had fun. See you next year.

*Merlin Berkey  
Squirrels Taxi Service Inc.  
Dallas*

**Dallas spending raises questions**

I do believe that the city council is long overdue for reviewing the expenditures of the city pool and how they can streamline those expenses.

However, not only do I find the timing suspicious, but after trying to stick the community with a \$10 million bond, and another bond 10 years from now to repair the city streets, I find it strange that now they have the money to buy the old Radio Shack property. I have not attended city council meetings to find out why, but you bet I'm going to start, and I would suggest the community does as well.

For some reason we have a governing body that feels bigger government is better government.

I would disagree. It needs to grow with the rate consistent with that of the growth of local business.

*Randy Wisnia  
Dallas*

**Thank you World War II veterans**

I spent some time with a World War II veteran recently; he was at the Battle of the Bulge, fought across the Rhine, saw friends injured and killed. I thanked him for his sacrifice and service, but soon realized that we are fast losing these special people. During our conversation, I saw a tear in his eye and it became evident that he truly appreciated the recognition of his service.

I strongly support recognizing all veterans, but feel it is imperative that we recognize the WWII veterans now before they are gone. If you know or see a WWII veteran, take a moment to thank them. Whatever problems we have in the world today would be a lot worse if these special people had

not stepped up for all of us. Thank you World War II veterans.

*Larry Bowen  
Dallas*

**Past time to put center on top of list**

We have been on a long journey. At least 10 years, I have been a member of the building committee. In our journey, we have had lots of detours and many dead ends.

We have worked hard to comply with the many rule changes and site changes. We have met them and now have the grant from the federal government for nearly \$2 million.

The site must be owned by the city. In our journey, we have had four different city managers and we are still in a small room behind the library.

I would like to appeal to the people in power at the city and the community development department (which will oversee the project).

Move this project to the top of the agenda. It is time.

*June Krause  
Dallas*

**PUBLIC AGENDA**

- Public Agenda is a listing of upcoming meetings for governmental and nongovernmental agencies in Polk County. To submit a meeting, send it at least two weeks before the actual meeting date to the *Itemizer-Observer* via email ([ionews@polkio.com](mailto:ionews@polkio.com)).
- WEDNESDAY, AUG. 10**
    - Polk County Board of Commissioners — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, first floor conference room, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.
    - Polk Soil and Water Conservation District — 6 p.m., USDA Service Center, 580 Main St., Suite A, Dallas. 503-623-9680.
  - THURSDAY, AUG. 11**
    - Polk County Fire District No. 1 Board — 6 p.m., Central Station 90, 1800 Monmouth St., Independence. 503-838-1510.
    - Falls City City Council — 6 p.m., Falls City Community Center, 320 N. Main St., Falls City. 503-787-3631.
  - MONDAY, AUG. 15**
    - Dallas City Council — 7 p.m., Dallas City Hall, 187 SE Court St., Dallas. 503-831-3502.
  - TUESDAY, AUG. 16**
    - Monmouth City Council — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.
    - Falls City School Board — 6:30 p.m., Falls City High School, 111 N. Main St., Falls City. 503-787-3521.
    - Polk County Board of Commission work session — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, BOC office, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

**WANT TO WRITE A LETTER?**

Letters to the editor are limited to 300 words. Longer letters will be edited.

Election-related letters of all types are limited to 100 words. Writers are limited to one election-related letter per election season. Election letters from writers outside of Polk County are not accepted.

Each writer is restricted to one letter per 30-day period.

Letters that are libelous, obscene or in bad taste will not be printed. Attacks by name on businesses or individuals will not be printed.

Letters to the editor that are obvious promotions for a business, products or services will not be printed.

The *Itemizer-Observer* does not guarantee the accuracy of facts presented by letter writers; dissenters are welcome to respond. Letter writers who disagree with other published letter writers should maintain a civil discourse and address the subject, not the author.

Letters, like all editorial material submitted to the newspaper, are edited for length, grammar and content.

Letters must include the author's name, address and telephone number. This includes letters submitted via the *I-O's* website. Names and cities of residence are published; street addresses and telephone numbers are used for verification purposes only.

Letters must be submitted from individuals, not organizations, and must be original submissions to the *I-O*, not copies of letters sent to other media.

Letters of thanks to businesses, individuals and organizations are limited to 10 names.

The deadline for letters to the editor is 10 a.m. Monday. Letters submitted may not be retractable after this deadline.

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