

EDITORIALS

Postal reform needed soon

Most people get mail Monday through Saturday. But what happens when the mail comes later than we expect?

We found out a few years ago, when the Postmaster General had to take away overnight First-Class and Period Now, we may be facing a new slowdown, if something isn't done by Congress very soon.

Who needs the mail, some people ask? We have the Internet now. But a lot happens in the mail, and a lot goes wrong when it is late. To begin with, mail is the backbone for about \$1.3 trillion in jobs, products and services.

And then there is the personal impact.

People send in their credit card payments at the last minute when cash is tight. The payment reaches the credit card company late, and credit scores take a beating. That causes loans for cars and houses to get more expensive.

Many people count on the mail for medicines. A missed dosage can mean a trip to the hospital.

Small businesses count on the day's mail to bring in cash from customers.

Some things just can't be emailed. It is hard to send your grandkid's birthday cake overnight by the Internet. Some farm supply houses use the mail to deliver small animals quickly. They certainly can't zap them across broadband, or allow them to die in a post office waiting for a mail truck. And then there are legal documents that have to arrive by certified mail. Also, I have to mention late newspapers, where sales coupons are missed and public event announcements arrive after the event. Newspapers like this one that rely on the mail for delivery to readers took it on the chin the past few years, with disappointed readers canceling their subscriptions.

We are at another crunch point. The U.S. Postal Service has a \$57 billion deficiency on its balance sheet, most of it caused by Congress. Fixing it may require the Postmaster General to close more post offices and mail sorting plants, eliminate mail-hauling truck routes and ground the air-mail. The mail would be slowed down even further.

The choices are tough, and Congress is never good at tough choices. Businesses that buy postage cannot afford big increases. Consumers cannot afford to pay more for slower mail. USPS wants to protect jobs for its workers.

Of course, USPS is not supported by tax dollars, but by postage. And no tax-payer money should be needed unless Congress lets the system deteriorate further.

There is a better choice.

A bill, HR 756, was sent to House Ways and Means Committee last March by the House committee responsible for overseeing the U.S. Postal Service.

The legislation would require about 77,000 retired postal workers who draw benefits from a federal benefits health fund to use Medicare instead. Medicare taxes were already paid for these workers. The Medicare fund owes these retirees their benefits anyway. It is just that this group has chosen a different benefit for themselves, which they were allowed to do. Now it is time for them to follow the practice of most private sector workers and draw their earned benefits from Medicare instead.

Commercial mailers would have to accept a small postage increase to pay most of the new cost to Medicare. But the benefits to the federal budget and to USPS would be substantial. Overall, the federal deficit would be \$6 billion less if the bill passed.

And the U.S. Postal Service would save about \$30 billion over 10 years. All that needs to happen is for House Speaker Paul Ryan to put the bill up for a successful vote.

If you are concerned about losing more mail service, particularly in rural America, contact your Representative and ask for a big push for HR 756 in September.

Matthew Paxton IV
NNA President
Publisher of the News-Gazette

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).

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 23

• **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, first floor conference room, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

THURSDAY, AUG. 24

• **Monmouth-Independence Networks Board of Directors** — 7:30 a.m., Henry Hill Education Support Center, 750 S. Fifth St., Independence. 503-837-0700.

MONDAY, AUG. 28

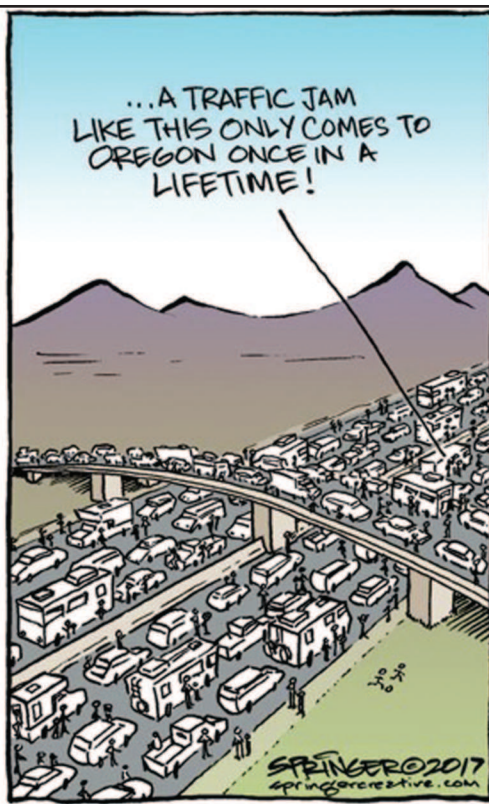
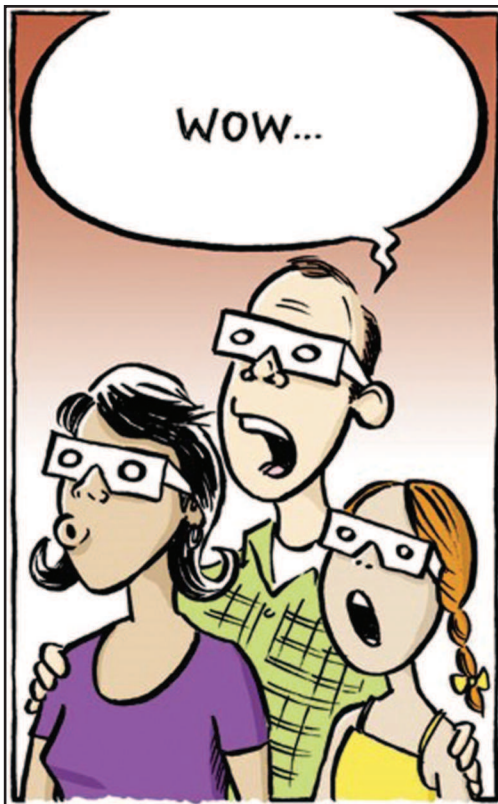
• **Independence Library Board** — 4 p.m., Independence Public Library, 175 Monmouth St., Independence. 503-838-1212.
• **Dallas School Board** — 6:30 p.m., Dallas School District office, 111 SW Ash St., Dallas. 503-623-5594.

TUESDAY, AUG. 29

• **Polk County Board of Commission work session** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, BOC office, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 30

• **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, first floor conference room, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

League thanks Boquist for session

This letter is to express the League of Oregon Cities' appreciation to Sen. Brian Boquist for his leadership during the 2017 legislative session in gaining passage of a \$5.3 billion transportation package that will result in significant benefits for all Oregonians.

The senator also played a critical role in efforts to negotiate legislative solutions to protect local flexibility, while ensuring accountability for public dollars being spent on local public improvement projects.

His efforts will help to ensure that local communities get the best value when making investments in local infrastructure.

In addition, Boquist was instrumental in the passage of a pilot program creating a more equitable property tax assessment method for new construction, and defeating harmful property tax exemptions.

Local governments and schools rely heavily on property tax revenues to fund their budgets. We thank Boquist for his achievements and contributions during the 2017 legislative sessions which benefit Oregonians living in cities.

Mike McCauley
Salem

Dallas citizens find success with help

In the process of trying to



sell a rental home in Dallas, a loan request from our buyer was denied by every possible lending service due to a zoning issue at this address.

We struggled through several layers of local authorities before our situation was brought before the Dallas City Council, and ultimately resolved.

We would like to thank those involved for their amazing efforts including Jeff Laeng, of Avenue Mortgage, Amber Archibald and

Windemere Realty; Chase Ballew, Jason Locke and City Attorney Lane Shetterly; and finally, the efforts of Mayor Brian Dalton and the council members, especially Council President Micky Garus, and councilors Jim Fairchild and Paul Trahan.

Our apologies if we left out anyone, but we attempted to stay within the maximum names allowed per *I-O* policy.

Larry and Nancy Wilson
Dallas

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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POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to: Polk County Itemizer-Observer, P.O. Box 108, Dallas, Oregon 97338

The Polk County Itemizer-Observer assumes no financial responsibility for errors in advertisements. It will, however, reprint without charge for the portion of an advertisement which is in error if the Itemizer-Observer is at fault.

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