



# The Hi-Lites



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(Proud Postal Press Association National Awards Winner)



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**Volume 42 Issue 5**



**Fighting For Our Existence...**  
**IS THIS THE END**  
**AS WE KNOW IT ?**

**Milwaukee Wisconsin Area Local**

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**Paul McKenna  
President**

*It seems as if all we have been talking about for the past three months is the Coronavirus 19 (COVID 19). I guess for good reason too. It is still a scary time and it looks like it will be a way of life for a while.*

Over these last several months, we have been dealing a lot with COVID 19 issues and trying to keep our members safe, as well as trying to spread news about the additional benefits if you need to take leave because of COVID 19.

In late March, Congress passed a new law called the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). In the new law, Postal Workers were entitled to some new additional benefits for time off of work if you meet the qualifying conditions. The law went into effect on April 1, 2020. The law gives Postal Employees two additional leave types that is covered under the guidance of FMLA.

Postal Employees with a qualifying circumstance as defined by the FFCRA will be eligible for up to 80 hours of Emergency Paid Sick Leave. Employees who have a child whose school or place of care is closed will be eligible for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), in which a portion of will be paid leave. *These provisions will apply from April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.*

## What is the FFCRA?

*"These provisions will apply from April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020."*

This new leave is in addition to leave employees are entitled to under the ELM. This leave type does not come out of an employees' Sick Leave Balance. In order to be eligible for this new leave, an employee needs to have at least 30 days in the Postal Service.

The qualifying conditions for Postal Employees are:

- Has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID 19
- Is experiencing COVID 19 Symptoms and is seeking medical diagnosis
- Is caring for an individual subject to an order described in (2)
- Is caring for a minor child whose school or place of day care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) due to COVID 19 related reasons

If you have a confirmed case of the COVID 19 virus, under this new law, you are entitled to up to 80 hours of Emergency Sick Leave, paid at 100% your normal rate.

If you are taking off for child care issues, you are entitled to up to 12 weeks FMLA leave provided that you have 12 weeks of FMLA leave available. Of those 12 weeks of FMLA, the first 2 weeks are unpaid and the other 10 weeks would be paid at the rate of 2/3<sup>rd</sup> pay of your

normal pay rate. You are allowed to use your 80 hours of Emergency Sick Leave in lieu of the unpaid leave. The child care leave can be used on an intermittent basis if allowed by your supervisor.

This brief explanation is a short version of what the actual law covers. For more detailed explanation, feel free to call the union hall or look up the law on the internet ([www.dol.gov/ffcr](http://www.dol.gov/ffcr)).

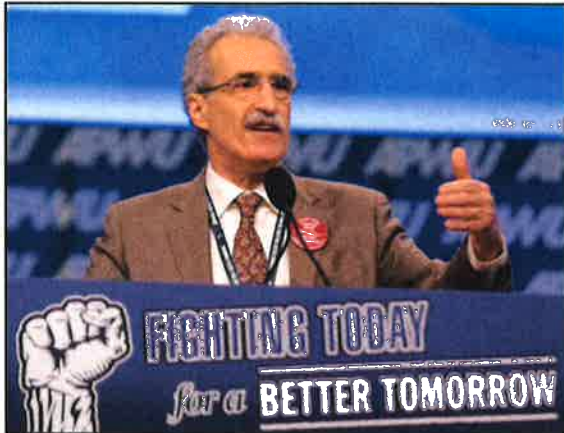
Now that the National Contract has been settled, the Milwaukee Area Local will start our local negotiations for our LMOU's beginning in July.

If you have anything at all changed in your local contract for your office, please contact my office or the steward or officer that takes care of your office as soon as possible.

With this being the last issue of The Hi-Lites until September, I want to remind all of you to take time off this summer to enjoy your family and friends.

Take that little kid fishing or camping. They will remember it forever. Please keep your social distance and be safe this summer.





**Statement:**

**President Mark Dimondstein,  
Appointment Of Louis DeJoy,  
The 75<sup>th</sup> Postmaster General  
Of The U.S. Postal Service**

Fifty years ago, postal workers waged a heroic nationwide strike to win better pay, benefits and the right to collective bargaining. This strike also recreated the United States Postal Service as an independent agency, designed to be free from the political patronage and cronyism that had plagued the old Post Office Department.

The APWU is deeply concerned with the appointment process to make Mr. Louis DeJoy, a multi-million-dollar major donor to President Trump, the next Postmaster General and whether the Administration has returned to the days of political interference and patronage. Since gaining its independence in 1970, the Postal Service's commitment to quality universal service to all the people of this country, at uniform and reasonable rates, has made the United States Postal Service the world's most affordable and reliable postal service and the country's most trusted and highest rated government agency.

Mr. DeJoy has a choice as he assumes the reins of our national treasure, enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, which has overwhelming popular support equally among Republicans, Democrats and Independents from the most populated urban centers to the smallest rural towns. He can choose to be a Postmaster General who implements the destructive plans of this White House: raising postal rates, cutting services, undermining stable union and family-sustaining jobs and selling the public Postal Service to corporations for their private profit. And if that is his choice, Mr. DeJoy will be met with stiff resistance from postal workers and the people of this country. Or Mr. DeJoy can prove true to his stated commitment to the public Postal Service, its employees and our mission binding the country together through universal service to all. If so, he will be a welcome addition to the postal family and our proud tradition of public service.

In this extraordinary time of the pandemic crisis, reliable, affordable and universal postal services are needed more than ever. The Postal Board of Governors made a unanimous request to Congress for immediate and direct financial assistance to the Postal Service. We hope that Mr. DeJoy will join in this essential request for emergency assistance to replace revenue lost due to the economic impact of the pandemic and to ensure continued public postal services.

When outgoing Postmaster General Megan Brennan announced her retirement, the APWU joined with other national organizations in petitioning the Postal Board of Governors to select a replacement "who is fully committed to universal service and the public ownership of the Postal Service." The people deserve nothing less. Through many Postmasters General and Administrations, the objectives of the American Postal Workers Union and proud postal workers have remained steadfast, as they do today: decent jobs, safe working conditions, job security, social justice, and an enhanced and vibrant public Postal Service for generations to come.



## New Postmaster General Is An Expert Job-Killer

by: Joe Piette

Much of the criticism of new Postmaster General Louis DeJoy has centered on his \$2 million in contributions to the Trump campaign and other Republican causes since 2016. DeJoy is in charge of fundraising for the Republican National Convention in Charlotte. These facts are cause for worry, but postal workers should be even more alarmed at his 35 years' experience in labor analytics—the art of eliminating as many jobs as possible. His company has a terrible labor record, rife with red flags including sexual harassment, discrimination, speedup, workplace injuries, excessive use of temps, misclassifying workers as independent contractors, and inadequate sick leave during the current pandemic.

### **ROBOTS PLEASE**

DeJoy, whose term begins June 15, is only the fifth postmaster general since 1971 not to come from within the U.S. Postal Service bureaucracy. His experience in supply chain logistics was clearly a factor in his appointment. DeJoy's New Breed Logistics (before it merged with XPO) was a contractor to the USPS for more than 25 years, "supplying the organization with logistics support for multiple processing facilities," the USPS announcement revealed. XPO Logistics does extensive business with the Postal Service (\$57 million in 2017), potentially putting DeJoy in the position of overseeing decisions that affect his personal financial interests. He served terms as XPO's CEO and board member before retiring in 2018; the company continues to rent warehouse space from him, and he and his wife own between \$25 million and \$50 million in XPO stock. The funding that the postal board of governors is asking from Congress includes \$25 billion for "modernization." What might DeJoy's version of modernization look like? Take a look at the website of XPO: "Our focus is on robotics, autonomous vehicles, automated sortation systems, drones and other cutting-edge technologies that speed goods through the supply chain.... Once startup is complete, our managers use XPO Smart™ labor analytics to optimize productivity." In other words, the company specializes in the science of weeding out any worker who's not super-productive and super-compliant, regardless of seniority or humanity. We can expect DeJoy to bring this same sensibility to running the postal service.

Postal workers have experienced "modernization" before. Every wave of technological innovation since the 1980s has eliminated some jobs and made other jobs more difficult. For instance, it used to be that each day a letter carrier would spend a few hours putting the mail in delivery order before going out on the route. Now most of the sequencing is automated. This technological advance should have made the job easier. Why not accomplish the same work, for the same pay, with less time and effort? But instead, management has used it to make the work harder—eliminating many jobs and forcing the remaining carriers to cover much larger routes. Letter carrying became much more stressful.

### **'ANTI-UNION ANIMUS'**

Not surprisingly, DeJoy has a bad labor record. While he was CEO, New Breed acted with "anti-union animus," the National Labor Relations Board ruled in 1994, when it avoided hiring Longshore (ILWU) union members after securing a contract to run a U.S. Army terminal in Compton, California. In 2013, a Tennessee jury awarded \$1.5 million to three temp warehouse workers at New Breed in a sexual harassment and retaliation lawsuit. The workers had been fired for complaining about a manager's "unwelcome sexual touching and lewd, obscene and vulgar sexual remarks." The employee handbook, which had sexual harassment protocols, was purposefully kept out of the hands of temps—who made up 80 percent of the workforce.

In 2014, the New York Times reported, four women working in a Memphis warehouse for New Breed suffered miscarriages after supervisors refused their requests for light duty during their pregnancies. Workers hoped that conditions would improve when XPO took over, but instead things got even worse—workers were now expected to pack 120 boxes per hour instead of 60, and got punished for too-long bathroom breaks. In 2017, a woman died of cardiac arrest on the warehouse floor, and workers around her were told to keep working. In 2018, two more women miscarried. Since 2000, XPO and its subsidiaries have racked up 16 wage-and-hour violations totaling \$35 million. They have also been dinged six times for employment discrimination, five times for labor relations, eight times for aviation safety, and 22 times for health and safety. (You can search a database of such violations for any company using the online Violation Tracker run by the policy resource center Good Jobs First.) The state of California has repeatedly awarded back wages to XPO truck drivers who were misclassified as independent contractors.

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Truck drivers, warehouse workers, and intermodal drivers at hundreds of XPO facilities worldwide held a day of protests on May 30, 2019, against abuses and wage theft. U.S. efforts were coordinated by the Teamsters, who have managed to organize a handful of XPO units; a warehouse in New Haven went on strike. "As someone who drives from Tijuana, Mexico to San Diego every single day to work more than 12 hours," said driver Jose 'Chema' Rodriguez, "it's ludicrous that I'm still unable to afford to live in the United States because of the compensation and benefits XPO has denied me by misclassifying me as an 'independent contractor.'" When the pandemic hit, the New York Times reported that XPO offered to "lend" workers up 100 hours of time off—but they would have to repay the time. The result of this stingy sick-leave policy: workers kept going into work despite "coughs and worse." A Miami truck driver told the paper that even if he got coronavirus, he would have to keep driving his 18-wheeler. On April 4, workers walked out of an XPO warehouse in Palmyra, New Jersey, over COVID-19 concerns, after three workers became infected.

### TIME TO FIGHT

Already the pandemic has caused the deaths of more than 50 postal workers and more than 85,000 people in the U.S., disproportionately people of color and the elderly. Thousands of postal workers have been sickened or have had to self-quarantine. We're in a struggle to save the postal service, during a presidential administration that is openly hostile to its existence. The threat to postal jobs and benefits comes at a time of historic unemployment, with more than 33 million new unemployment claims since late March. Perhaps one-third of the U.S. workforce has become jobless; many may never get their jobs back. The 38 percent turnover rate among non-career employees at the USPS in 2018-19 is likely to decrease now. Workers in these second-tier, permatemp positions (mail handler assistants, postal support employees, city carrier assistants and rural carrier associates) may be unwilling to quit—despite inflexible schedules, arrogant supervisors, the physical demands of the work, and working too many or too few hours. People will be desperate to feed and house their families. Front-line supervisors may become even more obnoxious, not just for temps but for all workers. But if workers can't walk away from the job, they might be more willing to fight for their rights on the job—much like workers during the great postal strike of 1970. The postal workforce at that time included many veterans newly returned from the Vietnam War, who came back angry—veterans were extremely against the war—and Black workers inspired by the civil rights movement. The rebellious spirit of the times fed into the rebellion in the post office. After the last few years of teacher strikes, Black Lives Matter protests, and the Me Too movement, I'm hoping such a spirit is percolating again.

( Joe Piette began as a clerk, became a letter carrier, and retired after 30 years in the Post Office in 2011 )



## **Top U.S. Postal Service Official Reportedly Forced Out, Vote-by-Mail Under 'Existential Threat'**

"Trump is intent on installing his partisan lackeys in control of the Postal Service while congressional Republicans try to force it into insolvency so they can privatize it." Deputy Postmaster General Ronald Stroman has reportedly been forced out of his position, throwing the leadership of the U.S. Postal Service into further chaos as the agency faces a potentially catastrophic financial crisis and efforts by Trump administration officials to impose draconian changes on the nation's most popular government institution.

*"Stroman was specifically key on elections and vote by mail—this is not a good sign."  
—Jessica Huseman, ProPublica*

The American Prospect's David Dayen reported Tuesday that Stroman resigned from his post earlier this week. "Sources indicate that Stroman was forced out," Dayen tweeted. Reports of Stroman's ouster came less than a week after the USPS Board of Governors announced its selection of Louis DeJoy—a leading donor to the Republican Party and President Donald Trump—to serve as postmaster general as the agency continues to navigate the Covid-19 crisis, which has resulted in a precipitous decline in mail volume. Current USPS chief Megan Brennan, who is retiring effective June 15, has warned Congress that the agency could face financial ruin by the end of September without a rapid infusion of emergency funds. DeJoy will choose the next deputy postmaster general.

"We are sounding an alarm regarding the departure of Ronald Stroman from the Postal Service," Kristen Clarke, president and executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, said in an emailed statement. "The Postal Service lies at the heart of democracy and is critical to the success of an unprecedented vote by mail system that is needed for an effective 2020 election season." "The Postal Service is also a lifeline for vulnerable people who are counting on mail delivery for medication, stimulus payments, and more," said Clarke. "Stroman's untimely departure signals deepening chaos and disruption inside the Postal Service at a critical moment during the 2020 election season."

Days before the USPS Board of Governors publicly announced its decision to appoint DeJoy, news broke that David Williams, the vice chair of the board, resigned effective April 30. Dayen, who has been reporting on the Postal Service for years, wrote last week that Williams' resignation is "distressing" because "nobody is more knowledgeable about the inner workings of the Postal Service than David Williams." "He was the longtime Inspector General who wrote the famous (to me, anyway) white paper in 2014 arguing for the return of postal banking," Dayen wrote. "Worst of all, my sources indicate that this was a resignation in protest." Williams was reportedly upset at the Trump Treasury Department's efforts to use a congressionally approved \$10 billion loan to force significant changes to USPS operations. According to the Washington Post, Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin "could use the loan as leverage to give the administration influence over how much the agency charges for delivering packages and how it manages its finances." "In recent days, the Postal Service's board has appeared open to some of the Trump administration's terms," the Post reported last week.

The 200,000-member American Postal Workers Union accused the Trump administration of exploiting the coronavirus crisis to privatize the agency. Recent behind-the-scenes machinations at the Postal Service could have immense real-world consequences as the U.S. barrels toward the November elections without a nationwide, universal system in place for mail-in voting, which advocates say is necessary to safely conduct elections amid the coronavirus pandemic. With Stroman and Williams gone, the USPS Board of Governors, which sets policy for the agency, is now almost completely controlled by Trump appointees. Stroman's departure leaves the board with five members, short of the quorum required to conduct business. "Stroman was specifically key on elections and vote by mail—this is not a good sign," tweeted ProPublica's Jessica Huseman in response to reports of Stroman's resignation. Stephen Wolf of Daily Kos Elections echoed Huseman's warning, calling turmoil at the Postal Service "an existential threat to voting safely by mail in November." "Trump is intent on installing his partisan lackeys in control of the Postal Service," said Wolf, "while congressional Republicans try to force it into insolvency so they can privatize it."

## **We Can't Afford To Lose The Postal Service**

by: Casey Cep, The New Yorker

### ***Republican leaders have long tried to kill the U.S.P.S. Now the coronavirus is helping***

For the past forty years, Republicans have been seeking to starve, strangle, and sabotage the U.S. Postal Service, hoping to privatize one of the oldest and most important public goods in American history. I am probably one of the least consequential things my mother has ever delivered. She has two other daughters, for starters—one's a public servant and the other is a special-education teacher. But she's also spent her working life delivering love letters, college acceptances, medications, mortgage papers, divorce filings, gold bars, headstones, ashes, and care packages. In her thirty-eight years as a rural letter carrier with the United States Postal Service, she's delivered just about everything you can legally send through the mail.

For twenty-seven of those years, she's driven the same fifty miles five or six days every week, starting out at the post office and tracing Rural Route 5, bringing letters and packages to her five hundred and forty-five customers. Her best advice from all that driving is to carry duct tape, which can fix anything, and can even be made into a leash if you happen to find a lost dog. Her best day, she says, was a few years ago, when a retirement community got added to her route—a hundred and fifty-seven new customers, with stories and the time to tell them. The retirement home comes early in her fifty miles, but some days she stops again on her way home for longer visits, or heads back there on weekends for birthdays and anniversaries or to welcome someone home from the hospital.

My mother is so close with so many of the people who live along her route that they have always felt like second or third cousins to me—people I knew I was related to even if I didn't see them very often. Mr. R. sent books home with her for me to read; the E. family pulled her jeep out of a snow drift and towed her back to the post office when her brakes failed; the F. family lost two children when their house burned down; Mrs. M. baked her bread and gave her iced tea in a to-go cup; the B. family had some landscaping work they wanted my father to do—and on and on through the years, a litany of routine or unexpected celebrations and tragedies and kindnesses. In the course of almost four decades, my mother has watched babies she saw come home from the hospital grow into adults who mail their parents Christmas letters with photographs of their own children, wondered whether a husband or wife or neither will stay in their house after a marriage ended, and seen grandchildren take over wheat farms from their grandparents.

Being a rural letter carrier suits my mother, and it enabled her to provide for a family like ours: it is a union job, with protections and benefits, insurance and vacation days, only modest raises but occasional overtime and reliable, transparent wages. It isn't all wonderful; I was an adult before I noticed that the official vehicles she and her fellow-carriers drive do not have air-conditioning, and that her joints are already arthritic, her knees busted, her shoulders and back chronically sore, her gait wobbled by the wear and tear caused by hefting fifty-pound packages of dog food and forty-pound boxes of cat litter that are supposedly cheaper on Amazon than they are at the local store. Still, it is a better job than she thought she would ever have, and it allowed her to keep us in braces, allergy shots, X-rays, books, clothes, and movies. Eventually, it got her credit good enough to get us savings accounts and credit cards and loans.

My father, who is older and had been working longer than my mother had, was a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers; my mother joined the National Rural Letter Carriers' union as soon as she was eligible. They knew that whatever they hoped for their children, they themselves would always be labor, not management. So we were a union family: my parents spent a few nights a year at local meetings, and if we went on vacation it was to wherever the annual union convention was held that year—usually the beach near where we lived, in Maryland, although one year we drove all the way to Maine. While we three watched the miracle that was cable television or played mini-golf with Dad, my mother put on her Sunday best and spent her days doing what I later learned a lot of other people's parents did all the time: attend meetings. To me, my mother suddenly seemed like an executive.

Unions are the most powerful advocate people like my parents have. That power is one of the reasons that, although the U.S.P.S. is by far the most popular government agency, it is the one most often threatened with extinction. My mother is about to retire, and I worry that the agency she has spent her life serving will be retired soon, too. The coronavirus, which has decimated the global economy, has not spared the Postal Service—and while shipping and package volume

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**Casey Cep...**  
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are on the rise, standard and bulk mail have plummeted, leaving the U.S.P.S. with increasing deficits. But if the coronavirus kills the Postal Service, its death will have been hastened, as so many deaths are right now, by an underlying condition: for the past forty years, Republicans have been seeking to starve, strangle, and sabotage it, hoping to privatize one of the oldest and most important public goods in American history.

Before they declared their independence, the American colonists decided that they needed a better way to communicate with one another. In the summer of 1775, at the Second Continental Congress, they created the Postal Service and named Benjamin Franklin its first Postmaster General. Where before letters or packages had to be carried between inns and taverns or directly from house to house, now there was a way for Americans to safely, discreetly, and reliably correspond across long distances. After the Revolution, when Congress ratified the Articles of Confederation, legislators included the Post Office in the ninth of those articles, and later enshrined it in the first article of the Constitution.

The Founders saw the Postal Service as an essential vehicle for other rights, especially the freedom of the press: one of the first postal laws set a special discounted rate for newspapers. But they also understood that a national post unifies a nation, allowing its citizens to stay connected and connecting them with their federal government. When Alexis de Tocqueville toured the young country several decades after its founding, he travelled partly by mail coach, noting in “Democracy in America” how “the mail, that great link between minds, today penetrates into the heart of the wilderness.”



But the mail didn't just follow American settlers into the wilderness—it also led to the transformation of the frontier. The constitutional authority that created the Postal Service allowed for the construction of post roads to link faraway cities; eventually, these ran all the way from Florida to Maine. A few of those essential byways survive, some of them obvious in their names, like the Old Albany Post Road and the Boston Post Road. Later, that authority was interpreted more broadly to justify federal investment in railroads and highways. During its long history, the Postal Service has delivered the mail by pony express,

mule train, float planes, ferry boats, motorcycles, skis, hovercrafts, and pneumatic tubes. There were only seventy-five post offices at the nation's founding, but by the time the Civil War started there were more than twenty-eight thousand spread around the country.

Two of the most popular features of the Postal Service today were surprisingly late innovations. Before 1847, it was hard to be a philatelist in the United States, because letters and packages were stampless: the postage was paid on sending or on arrival. It took nearly seventy years after its founding for the Postal Service to design adhesive, prepaid postage, in the form of a five-cent stamp featuring Benjamin Franklin and a ten-cent stamp featuring George Washington.

For an even longer time, the mail was delivered only between post offices, leaving customers to retrieve it themselves (which is why those offices regularly appear as a central setting in early American literature) or to rely on private firms for door-to-door delivery. But, midway through the Civil War, Congress passed a law providing for home delivery within cities, and Americans suddenly started putting street addresses on their letters, so that carriers could bring them right to the recipient's door. By 1923, the service was so popular that all patrons were required to have mail slots by their doors or boxes by the road, so that carriers could stop waiting so long for customers to answer the door in order to hand off the mail.

Another one of the Postal Service's most popular innovations has faded from public memory. For more than fifty years, local post offices functioned as community banks. Starting in 1911, the Postal Savings System allowed all Americans to deposit money at their local post offices, which then reinvested the holdings in local independent banks at set interest rates—originally two and a half per cent, with two per cent going back to the saver, and a half per cent covering the cost of the program. Private banks were the chief beneficiaries of the scheme, but, because they did not want competition for high-level accounts, the deposits were capped at a few hundred dollars.

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Millions of Americans, most of them immigrants or people without the means for private banking, opened savings accounts with a minimum deposit of one dollar. At the height of postal banking, in 1947, four million people had deposited more than three billion dollars. Many of the communities served by the Postal Savings System were working-class or minority neighborhoods with no private banks. Eventually, though, the caps on deposits deterred customers, the fixed interest rates made the accounts less competitive than private alternatives, and banks lobbied for the end of postal banking. In 1967, they succeeded. While it lasted, though, postal banking demonstrated one of the Postal Service's founding ideals: serving all Americans without prejudice or favor, no matter their Zip Code.

The Postal Service was plagued by patronage scandals for part of its history: as often happened with other political appointments, lucrative postal positions were sometimes doled out as favors. But, just as the U.S.P.S. had always been for its customers, it eventually became one of the nation's most egalitarian institutions for employment. Postal alumni include Abraham Lincoln and John Brown, Richard Wright and William Faulkner, John Prine and Brittany Howard—men and women from every state, from all circumstances, with little education or lots of it, working for a few hours a week or decades of full-time service, as clerks at the office, city carriers, rural carriers, tractor-trailer drivers, postal inspectors, sorters, delivery specialists, and postmasters. Today, the U.S.P.S. comprises nearly a quarter of the entire federal workforce. Nearly half of its six hundred and thirty-three thousand employees are people of color, and more than a hundred thousand are veterans. Together, the workers staff thirty-two thousand post offices and nearly five hundred processing and distribution centers. They handle a hundred and forty-two billion pieces of mail each year—nearly half of all the mail in the entire world.



With a lot of advertising and business correspondence going digital, mail volume in America was decreasing for years before the coronavirus arrived, even as package delivery soared thanks to the growth of online commerce. But the pandemic brought a much sharper dip: in April, Postmaster General Megan Brennan testified before Congress that volume is down nearly a third from what it was this time last year, and that, according to an agency estimate, it will fall by half by the end of June. More of us are shopping online during the pandemic, and we are shopping for more things, but many businesses have stopped advertising, billing, and shipping—all services conducted by mail. Without that bulk and business mail, the Postal Service expects to lose thirteen billion dollars in revenue this fiscal year.

Brennan was describing the agency's circumstances to Congress not because the federal government funds the Postal Service—it doesn't—but because it controls the Postal Service. Congress sets the postage rates, regulates which services the agency can offer, and legislates the rules for how it operates. Universal delivery is constitutionally mandated, and any time that a post office is closed or the cost of any service is raised, the change requires congressional approval. Federal oversight of the Postal Service took its current form following a strike in 1970, when, after eight days of disrupted service, President Richard Nixon changed the U.S.P.S. from a Cabinet department into an independent government agency. The idea was for the Postal Service to run more like a corporation, with direct congressional oversight but without taxpayer funding. At the same time, in exchange for collective-bargaining rights, postal employees agreed never to strike again.

By 1982, the Postal Service was operating entirely without federal money, and for a quarter of a century the new arrangement worked. But, in 2006, Republicans in a lame-duck session of Congress passed a law preventing the Postal Service from raising its rates for regular mail service by more than the Consumer Price Index. This change meant that, no matter the spike in fuel prices for the agency's vehicles, leases for its cargo flights, health insurance for its workers, or any other operating expense, the agency could not charge more than a few additional cents for its services every year. That's why your stamps still cost only fifty-five cents, and package-shipping rates are so much less than private alternatives. The regulatory change was seen as a gift to the Postal Service's competitors, who spend tens of millions of dollars lobbying Congress, and who take advantage of the cheaper rates by contracting some of their own deliveries back to the U.S.P.S.

That same law also mandated that the Postal Service pre-fund its employee-pension and retirement costs, including health care, not just for one year but for the next seventy-five years—an even more crippling requirement. The year that mandate passed, the U.S.P.S. had nine hundred million dollars in profits. It has not had a profitable year since. The annual cost of those pre-funded retirement benefits is more than five billion dollars, and critics of the mandate point out that

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*Casey Cep...*

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the Postal Service is the only employer forced to fund retirement accounts for employees who haven't yet been hired—or even born. Finally, after thirteen years of trying to repeal that mandate, Democrats got halfway there this February, when the House of Representatives voted to do so, but the bill has stalled in the Republican-controlled Senate.

Postmaster General Brennan's congressional testimony came after that repeal effort, and she noted the budgetary relief that would come from allowing the agency to return to pay-as-you-go retirement. That alone will not make the agency profitable, though; it is currently on track to run out of money by the end of September, and could potentially cease operations. Brennan requested eighty-nine billion dollars from Congress to shore up the Postal Service's finances for the next few years. That figure includes twenty-five billion to cover revenue lost during the pandemic; another twenty-five billion to upgrade infrastructure such as offices, sorting facilities, and the fleet of delivery vehicles; fourteen billion to pay off debt related to the retirement mandate; and another twenty-five billion in unrestricted borrowing should the agency need it.

It's a sizable investment, although, to put it in perspective, Congress has already given the private airline industry fifty billion dollars, when only half of the country takes a commercial flight in any given year. By contrast, the Postal Service provides critical services to every American every day, and is continuing to do so during this current crisis: facilitating the constitutionally mandated national census; distributing a hundred and thirty million copies of the C.D.C. guidelines for coronavirus safety; handling vote-by-mail efforts for primaries around the country (and almost certainly again this fall, for the Presidential election); and, in addition to all the usual mail, delivering groceries, wipes and disinfectants, and millions of prescriptions, including nearly all of those shipped by the Veterans Administration. The Postal Service does this well, a fact that is reflected in the nearly universal admiration it receives: ninety-one per cent of Americans have a favorable view of the U.S.P.S., higher than the approval for any other government agency. Among the populace, if not in Washington, it is seen just as favorably by Republicans as Democrats.

It's not hard to understand why. Back when the parcel post first started, in 1913, offering extremely affordable rates even for comparatively heavy packages, people trusted the mail enough to send their children via U.S.P.S. (An Ohio couple paid fifteen cents to mail their baby to his grandparents who lived a few miles away; an Idaho family mailed their four-year-old seventy-three miles.) In 1958, when Harry Winston needed to get the Hope Diamond to the Smithsonian Museum, he used the Postal Service. (The postage cost less than three dollars, but for an extra hundred-some dollars he added a million dollars' worth of insurance, just to be safe.) Encomiums about how neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night can stop the mail are true, but do not go far enough: carriers have also delivered through national crises, from the Unabomber's explosives to the anthrax attacks. Today, during the coronavirus pandemic, many postal employees have continued delivering without gloves or masks or sanitizer, providing their own as the agency tries to secure adequate supplies. Already, more than sixteen hundred postal employees have been diagnosed with the virus, and thirty have died from it.

The majority of postal employees are unionized, and their collective-bargaining rights are one of the many aspects of the U.S.P.S. that President Trump has proposed cutting. Indeed, it is the enduring power of the postal unions, at a time when public-sector unions have been so successfully weakened, that makes the agency such an appealing target to conservatives. Two years ago, Trump convened a task force to assess the Postal Service's future. Its recommendations included reducing worker wages and benefits, ending the agency's universal service obligation to deliver to all Americans no matter how remote their location, closing post offices, eliminating delivery days, raising the price of stamps and package delivery, and subcontracting mail processing. Taken together, those are the likely steps on a path to privatization, which would fundamentally change the character of our mail. With a private system, you might pay fifteen times more to mail something to your cousin in Alaska than to your sister in New York City; a radical magazine might be denied distribution entirely; a small business in Montana might have to drive a hundred miles to ship the neon signs it manufactures. As it is, compa-



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nies like UPS and FedEx contract out their “last mile” to the U.S.P.S. in many places, because delivering to remote areas is unprofitable.

What if, instead of less, the Postal Office was allowed to do more? It could offer consumer banking, the way that it once did—and the way that China, Japan, and more than a hundred other countries still do—with low-fee check-cashing and checking accounts, so that the millions of Americans who cannot afford traditional banking have an alternative to payday lenders and loan sharks. It could allow its carriers to provide regular, formal welfare checks and elder care for senior citizens, the way that French mail carriers already do (and that many American ones, including my mother, likewise do on an informal basis). It could supply public broadband around the country, meeting the overdue needs of rural and remote communities languishing without high-speed internet, making it a public utility the way that the city of Chattanooga has done for its citizens. U.S.P.S. employees could become notary publics for document signings, sell hunting and fishing licenses, and renew driver’s licenses and vehicle registration, as a kind of extension of other state and federal agencies. There are plenty of ways for the U.S.P.S. to bring in additional revenue, and this—along with being liberated from the pre-funding mandate for retirement benefits—would allow the agency to become profitable again.

But it’s worth remembering that, when the founders established the Postal Service, profitability was not the goal. As with public education and public libraries, self-sufficiency is not the measure of the agency’s success. Postal employees like my mother have always considered themselves public servants: they deliver the mail, but also tend to the common good. So much of what she has done on her rural routes six days a week for nearly forty years has had nothing to do with the envelopes she leaves in mailboxes or the packages she drops off on porches. Once, one of her elderly customers did not answer the door; her car was there, so my mother knocked on the doors and windows, then let herself inside and found the woman on the floor, stuck between her bed and the wall of her bedroom. She had been trapped there for two days, not able to get up, waiting for someone to find her.

Stories like that one are not uncommon, and it is good to hear the adjective “essential” finally being applied to the people, like my mother, who have long deserved it, people who work for less money and more hours than they should, performing what is sometimes disparagingly called “service work,” when that it is exactly what it is: an act of service. President Trump may deride the U.S.P.S. as “a joke,” but, in fact, it is one of our most important accomplishments. The founders were right to realize that the Postal Service isn’t only a way of moving thoughts and goods from every corner of America to any other, but also a way of uniting one of the largest and most diverse nations in the world. At a time when too few things connect us as a country, and too few of us have faith in our public institutions, we can’t afford to lose the one we trust the most.

**SOLIDARITY**





**Larry Brown Jr  
Automation Director**

I am going to do something a little different here... I am starting my article off this month with a homework assignment for you. Everybody reading this should go and watch the movie, American Factory, currently airing on Netflix.

American Factory is about a Chinese Billionaire, Cho Tak Wong, that opens a glass making business, Fuyao Glass, in an old abandoned GM Plant in Dayton Ohio. Chinese businesses buy American companies all the time, so that is nothing to rave about. The reason this film is so good is because Wong, and the Fuyao Management Team, let filmmakers film everything. You get to see into the mind of a management team, this one specifically from China but with some American influence, tasked with getting the “overconfident”, as they say in the film, Americans to be productive. The term overconfident was used to describe Americans because, as they explained in the movie, Americans have been told that we can accomplish anything since a young age. Because of this, they described Americans as being similar to donkeys. Donkeys like being touched in the direction their hair grows, if you try to brush them the opposite direction, they kick you. They believe us Americans have had our egos stroked since we were children, to the point where, we only want to hear what we want. Which makes it al-

## American Factory

*“375 million people will need to find new work by the year 2030 because of automation...”*

most impossible to manage us.

***“We can’t manage them. When we try to manage them, they threaten to get help from the Union.”  
– Chairman Cho Tak Wong.***

Insert, Union Avoidance Firm. You get to see an organizing attempt firsthand as the “lazy” American workers file safety complaints for unsafe working conditions. One example is the extreme heat that the workers had to endure. One Chinese Manager said that the Americans are afraid of heat, while the film shows a worker cleaning inside a machine where it was 210 degrees. (...*The worker said he spends about 10 minutes per hour in there...*) You also get to hear from former GM workers, stating how their wages went from \$29/hr for their factory work down to \$12/hr at the Fuyao plant. You witness a man that had never had an on the job injury in his life file his first claim once he started working at Fuyao Glass. Coincidence? Maybe, I don’t think so.

The film shows us Fuyao Management’s attempt to thwart an organization effort. There is a scene in the documentary that shows a private meeting at the Fuyao Plant with Chairman Cho Tak Wong. The company leaders were concerned about a campaign to persuade Fuyao workers to approve a UAW-represented bargaining unit. Wong said he would close the plant if the workers created a bargaining unit. This in itself, is a violation of the National Labor Relations Act; this violation, along with the numerous employees that they show were tar-

geted and fired for supporting or assisting a unionization effort.

In December 2017, Fuyao Glass paid nearly 1 million dollars to an Oklahoma-based consulting firm that boasted of helping companies in the art of “union avoidance,” according to a document filed with the U.S. Department of Labor. American Managers at Fuyao, gave meetings and service talks to the workers explaining why they, the workers, should not want a Union. They said it would be illegal for them to talk to management if they unionized, as if the Manager/Employee relationship was so great to begin with. Meanwhile, the workers only talked of feeling disrespected, and how they could never even just ask a simple question to their Management counterparts. (...*Sound Familiar?*) The firm used scare tactics to convince most of the younger workers at the plant to vote NO to the Union. Ultimately, it seems as if it worked, as the vote failed, 868 NO 444 YES. We hear Wong again, speaking on why he hired American Managers in the first place, “We thought we could pay high salaries to the Managers in exchange for their trust.” All of the American Managers were soon fired and replaced with Chinese Management. Later we hear from one of the fired Managers, the same Manager attempting to explain why the workers should not unionize, express his new thoughts of how, “They really need a Union in that place.” Ironical?

***“Nothing has changed as far as people working hard in America. The only thing that has changed is the***

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*people at the top deciding to rewrite the rules, to take advantage of the [hard-working] people, to make things in their favor at your expense.”—UAW representative.*

I wrote an article, I believe in September of last year, where I referenced a bunch of news outlets speaking on businesses that had received a stimulus of sorts, by way of the tax cuts that were afforded to them by the Trump Administration’s tax reform bill. This tax reform bill lowered the top corporate income tax rate from 35 percent to 21 percent. Numerous businesses were asked if any of the newly acquired money would be used to give back to the workers, in the form of wage increases or bonuses? Nearly all of them said **NO**. The money went to bonuses for their top executives, and shareholders in the form of stock buybacks. Nothing for the people that actually do the work.

In a totally unrelated event, during the pandemic we are faced with now, a CEO named Larry Connor, the owner of a Miami real estate investment firm, The Connor Group, made a companywide announcement, that he had made \$1.6 million on the stock market in the span of eight days. The best part about it was, he then informed his employees that he would be paying out every dime of it in bonuses to them, for their work and dedication throughout the coronavirus outbreak. All non-high salaried positions in his company would be get a bonus ranging from 2,000 to 9,000 dollars. One of Connor’s employees, a senior maintenance mechanic that has been with the company for 13 years said, “Family comes first, I love that about this place. They’ve always made me feel that they care not only about me, but about my family’s health and well-being, that’s what keeps me here.”

One takeaway from the movie that should be spoken about, is the workers did not want to be rich. They were happy with their \$2/hr raise that was given to them, after the failed organization attempt and at the request that they work harder for it, of course. The workers did not feel appreciated by the Chinese Management team. They did feel appreciated by GM before they closed. **Feeling appreciated matters!** More hard work should not be its own reward. Can Management appreciate me going to work, head down, doing a repetitive job, over and over and over? One Gentleman in the movie stated, “The working conditions are not favorable and doing the same thing over and over begins to weigh on your mind and your body. You start wondering if you have the stamina to do this every day.” People need to feel appreciated and that is what Management does not understand. Yes, I am talking about us now. Our Superiors, our Managers. Has anyone here in the plant attempted to put in a hardship, or a change of schedule. How did Management make you feel when you asked for that request? Like you were asking for the sun, the stars and the moon, just to trade an off day!

A newer supervisor was talking to me about how she tries to tell all of her employees thank you after a day of work because she knows that no one else in Management is saying it. That is disturbing. When our former Plant Manager would walk the floor and act as if he was too good to acknowledge any of the workers. That is disturbing. (...endless examples, but I’ll stop...) I am not saying that Management has to give us \$10,000 bonuses, but since I am the Automation Director, how about just giving us a partner? Stop attempting to make it look like I am a “lazy” worker when I file a grievance for working alone. Especially since the contract says normal staffing is two people. They do not see how disrespectful this practice is to you as a worker. This practice is not only disrespectful because they want you to do the work of two people, and they get upset because, the Union won a grievance that says that have to pay you for doing the work of two people, it is disrespectful because it is an unsafe practice. When we sent up the first of the one person grievances we had letters in the file, going back and forth, between former PMG Patrick Donahoe and OSHA, stating that OSHA understands that these machines are known to hurt people when they were slower, shorter, and also one tiered. OSHA asked Donahoe, since the new machines coming in were bigger and faster, and the slower/smaller machines were known to cause injuries to the workforce, what precautions was the Post Office going to make to assure that these machines did not injure even more people? Donahoe’s response was, we will follow all safety precautions giving to us by the manufacturer and OSHA. Well, the first precaution given to the Post Office by the manufacturers and OSHA was to have at least two, **if not more**, people on the machine whenever it is running! What happened? A simple line from one of the American Managers in the movie, before they were fired, would better explain. “We would all say, at every level of the company, that we want to be safe. **Unfortunately, safety doesn’t pay the bills.**”

As it pertains to us in automation, it looks better for their BPI when you run the machine by yourself. One person doing the work of two people. That is what they care about. Not your safety, because if safety were a concern it would not be as much of a fight as it is to get them to utilize two people. They would not use every excuse in the book to try and say that you are not working as hard as you can when you are by yourself. They would pay you in a timely manner when they did have to, as a result of you working alone. All of this goes hand in hand with that feeling of respect, but you can-

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**Brown jr...**

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not get this across to them because all they know is numbers. Numbers never lie, except when they do.

As much as I would love to harp on this one subject and hold on to my Union bias, because the last thing you want to do is sound like Management, being a steward, we should care about those numbers also. The numbers going through the machines and those BPI numbers. The only “numbers” it seems we care about are the numbers of hours of overtime we get. Everybody has their eyes on the overtime call. Everybody wants to know why this person is getting overtime on this tour, and why they weren’t called for this and what’s going on over here? Was I bypassed? This is your right, to work overtime. I get it, we all care “so much” about our money. My question is, how can you care “so much” about overtime, but not “so much” about the place that you work for, that enables you to have the overtime you value “so much?” (*... What comes first, the Chicken or the Egg?*)

There was a scene in the movie where the Americans Managers take a field trip over to China, to see how the plant out there operated. They were amazed at how harmonious the workers worked with each other. It was then, we found out that all of the workers at the China plant had to be in the Union. The Union and Management worked closely with each other. Shimeng, who is chairman of the workers union at the China plant, stated that, “We need our workers to fight for Fuyao’s success. We are all in the same boat. Keeping the boat safe means everyone is safe. If the boat sinks, we all lose our jobs. It’s quite simple.” We should not have to be on the brink of the boat sinking to actually care about the place that we work for. Do you know the number one question I get since the world has been closed because of this pandemic? (*...besides questions about the 80 hours of leave because of the coronavirus...*) The question I have been getting the most is, do you really think that we are going run out of money and close down? It is quite funny, because the last time people were concerned this much about us closing was when they actually wanted to close the Milwaukee Plant, back when they were consolidating P&DCs. Why can’t we feel this way about our jobs all the time. Why aren’t we concerned to keep it, all the time. We would work a little harder and come to work a little more if the concern were there, (*...once again most of my cases are discipline cases for attendance...*) but that disappears as soon as we feel we are in the clear from something happening again; we revert back to our old ways of only caring about ourselves, not thinking about the whole United States Postal Service and the big picture.

I don’t have to speak on the new automation machines that probably will be coming to Milwaukee in the future. Most of you guys tell me about them. All the MDO’s seem to have seen them in action. We don’t have to speak on the new Flat Sorter machines that we don’t have because they won’t fit into this building. You know, the ones they claim don’t require a single clerk to run them. What I can speak on is forcing the hand of someone making the decisions about profitability and productivity. We all hear about how the people examining all of these numbers, that determine how many jobs we have, have never stepped a foot in this building. That is the reason we are having all of the new service talks about closing the gaps of idle time on the machines. Once again, we all work, I know that, but proving that to someone that doesn’t know you, or even care to know you, is a different story. All they see is that a machine wasn’t running at a particular time. If there were two employees on it, and the machine didn’t have maintenance issues, why wasn’t it running?

The movie ends with a subtitle that reads, “375 million people will need to find new work by the year 2030 because of automation.” The Chairman, Wong, is walking through the plant with his management team, as they inform him of all the jobs they have eliminated with the use of robots. I think back to a conversation I had with Greg Preuss back when I had just a few years in. We were looking at the plans for the new building when it was first introduced. I was excited. A new building. What could be better? Greg told me, you never want to see that new building built, because when it is, a lot of jobs are going to be gone. (*...P.S. our new Postmaster General is an expert Job Killer. Re-read that article...*)

We just want the respect that we should be getting from our superiors that continuously make us do more with less. Maybe then we would be more concerned with acknowledging that we are all in the same boat. The Union and Management need to work together. When the Union points something out to management, we shouldn’t always have to hear Management say Article 3. Listen to what we are attempting to share. The Union’s job is to ensure the contract is being followed and the Union has shown management that we are willing to work with them on numerous occasions. That shows respect. We want it both ways. Sometimes, respect is worth more than money.

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**Jeff Worden**  
**North Sectional Director**

*Normally, I would write about how to enjoy yourself by taking a vacation. This summer though will be very different! With the current pandemic, this summer will be less enjoyable than those of the past. Recently, I heard that "Summer Fest" has been postponed until a later date. The traditional July 3<sup>rd</sup> and July 4<sup>th</sup> festival and fireworks has been canceled... well for the time being. Major League Baseball (at this moment) has no "start date" in sight.*

But, for the USPS it is work as usual and that is good! The problem facing the USPS is that they will run out of money soon. The USPS is asking Congress for a "relief package" to keep the USPS afloat during these unprecedented times.

The problem is that President Donald Trump has stated that he won't give a "Stimulus package" to the USPS unless the USPS raises prices on

stamps, parcel, package, etc....

Fact is the US Postal Service (notice the word service) is a service to the American people. The Postal Service, (especially during these difficult times) is delivering medicines, stimulus checks, face masks, food, hand sanitizer, etc... While many businesses are closed, the post office is the only real source of how to get these necessities to every house in every city/town in America! Also, I don't believe that the "pricing of postal products" should have anything to do with keeping the postal service vibrant during these difficult times!

Wisconsin, U.S Senator Tammy Baldwin and Congress woman Gwen Moore understand the mission of the US Postal Service and it's importance to the American Public and are fully behind the USPS and the need to for the monies needed to keep the United States Postal Service going through these difficult times. If you would like to contact Senator Tammy Baldwin, you can call her Wisconsin office at (608) 663-6300. Her Washington office at (202) 224-5653.

## Summer Is Here

*"...President Donald Trump has stated that he won't give a "Stimulus package" to the USPS..."*

If you would like to contact Congress Woman Gwen Moore, you can call her Wisconsin office at (414) 297-1140. Her Washington office at (202) 225-4572

If you still want to know what Wisconsin has to offer for summer and the rest of the year, You can call the Wisconsin Department of Tourism at 1-800-432-8747. Also, you can call the Wisconsin Dells Visitors Bureau at 1-800-223-3557.

Since all information will be mailed to you via the United States Postal Service, you just know it will be delivered fast and right to your mailbox!

If you have any questions just give me a holler at (414) 530-7186. Since this is the last Hi-Lites until September I hope everyone stays safe and try to enjoy whatever we can of this coming summer. TAKE CARE.



**John Miceli**  
**Treasurer**

(U.S. News & World Report)

***Ways to cope with  
a market sell-off.***

A stock market crash is inevitable. That's just the way things are. Markets go up and markets go down, as seen in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. However, the worst thing you can do during a stock market crash is to panic and make emotional decisions that could lock in losses. If you set up your mindset to move forward during a stock market crash, you can avoid decisions that can wipe out your portfolio's value. Click through the slideshow for some ideas to help long-term investors resist emotions and stay the course.

***Be prepared.***

One of the best things you can do is be ready for the next downturn. Remind yourself that eventually there will be a stock market crash. This can help you mentally steel yourself when the sell-off actually comes. Plus, you can also prepare by using something like a bucket strategy or some other mechanism that helps protect your portfolio – or at least a portion of it – during a downturn. That way, even if you do need cash during a downturn, you're already positioned for it, and the impact is a little bit smaller.

***Review long-term trends.***

Take a look at long-term trends. Sometimes investors get so caught up

## Tips To Stay Calm During A Stock Market Crash

*"The worst thing you can do is make a fast decision based on the fear of the moment."*

in the short term that they're not paying attention to what's been happening over the long term. Yes, it's scary to see volatility in the short term. In fact, it can be downright unnerving. However, if you look at long-term trends and remind yourself that, over the course of a decade or two the overall trend is higher, it can help you stay calm when things are down.

***Remind yourself  
that a recovery is likely.***

As you review the long-term trends, you'll see that recoveries are part of the deal. So, as a crash comes and as the stock market is losing, and as your portfolio value plummets, remind yourself that there will probably be a recovery. You don't want to sell at a bottom and lock in your losses. Instead, remind yourself that a recovery is probably on the way, and if you can hang on, you have a chance to reap the benefits.

***Remember that you  
have a plan.***

If you're struggling during a stock market crash, take a step back and remember your plan. Creating an investing plan can be one of the best ways to help you stay on track, even when things look bleak. Don't abandon your plan so quickly. Your plan was solid when you made it and probably still is. This is especially true if you have an asset allocation strategy that takes into account your risk tolerance. Now is not the time to make decisions that undermine your plan.

***Avoid decisions made in fear.***

Fear clouds your judgment. The worst thing you can do is make a fast decision based on the fear of the moment. Remaining calm during a stock market crash takes a bit of self-awareness. Get in the practice of evaluating why you feel a certain way and recognizing your own feelings. This is something that takes time and energy to master, but it can be worthwhile. Even during good times, make it a point to recognize what you're feeling, identify the reasons behind it and then avoid making decisions. Any situation where you're in a highly emotionally state – no matter what that emotion is – can lead to poor decisions.





**Mark Krueger**  
**Motor Vehicle Director**

An area that everyone forgets, which is another very essential department in the USPS, is the Vehicle Maintenance and Fleet Service (VMF). We keep the mail moving. VMF employees keep a fleet of various equipment serviced and maintained for all of us to get the mail out to the public daily. Our staff is dwindling and getting older each year.

The staffing of new employees has become a challenging issue. As employees that have a vast amount of knowledge retire, the USPS has done little to replace them. Instead, management has sub-contracted this work out.

We need to start developing creative and aggressive recruiting ideas in order to replace those retirees. People from the military and those who are recent tech school grads are prime candidates. They need to sell the benefits of highlighting our health insurance, TSP, working schedules covering three tours, uniform program and no tool expenses.

These are areas that management has failed in and have done nothing to improve. Our fleet is continuously being updated with new vehicles. The service has done nothing to train our employees since the training center in Oklahoma has closed. This has resulted in no new training, all large vehicles bigger than three ton trucks

## Short Staffing In The VMF

*"The continuation of outsourcings is being done due to the lack of the service attracting new employees."*

and all semi-trailer repairs have all been outsourced.

They haven't developed any new programs that give the employees knowledge of the new hybrids. There are no electronic scanning equipment in the work area, just one terminal in the supervisor's office. It would make more sense to have tablets for the employees at their work area. Because they won't update the Wi-Fi to accommodate these things for the employees. No longer are vehicles being painted because they felt upgrading the paint booth wasn't worth it, even though it is functional. The work is now outsourced and the area is used for storage.

The continual outsourcing of work is strictly because, quite frankly, Management is not doing a good job of attracting new employees. Recruitment needs to be done to fill the open slots that have been vacant for some time. If this is improved, and they do get some recruits in here, there still needs to be an upgraded "Bench Test" that is administered to potential employees before they are offered a position. The current test is very outdated and should be changed to reflect the new equipment that the employees will be working on. We should also schedule this newer updated test to all current employees, that may have a mechanical aptitude, a few times a year. This way current employees can pursue a new career if they wished. This could also lead to a mentoring program for new hires, with current employees, to assist these individuals as they start a new career. We also need push for "New

Training" for all current employees to be successful at their position.

These are many of the issues we face going forward, which need to be addressed immediately. The cost of outsourcing our work is enormous. If we continue to have vacant slots in the department we may face reversion of these positions. Once the slots are gone we all know they won't be coming back.

We all need to protect our careers. Those in other crafts that may be interested, or just looking into becoming a VMF employee, you need to talk to those in the department and express your interest in it. I strongly encourage maintaining our union jobs within our installation.







**Greg Becker**  
**South Sectional Director**

*While Duty assignments posted for bid to career clerks have been reduced through reversion, etc; it seems that management has utilized more and more non-career PSE personnel. It can only be concluded that management has made a concerted effort to reduce duty assignments and replace with PSE hours in some locations. I believe that the contract has been violated at these locations.*

As a Steward and Officer, It is my responsibility to investigate these violations in my areas. I have been investigating and filing grievances at the Brookfield office. Franklin/Hales Corners is being investigated at this time. Management forgets that they have negotiated language which must be complied with, unfortunately, it frequently takes three steps of the grievance procedure for them to adhere to the contract.

The basis for these grievances is in several areas of the National Agreement. Article 37.3.A.1 reads, "EVERY EFFORT WILL be made to create desirable duty assignments from all available work hours for career employees to bid." This language was so contentious that the APWU and USPS disputed the interpretation of the above language in National Dispute.

RE: Q10C-4Q-C 15066902/HQTC20150219. The parties resolved this dispute on November 24,

## Management Must Make Every Effort To Create Desirable Duty Assignments

*"...maximizing our desirable Duty assignments at all offices for career employees to bid, and ultimately helping to promote our PSE's to career positions..."*

2015.

The language in Article 37.3.A.1 includes the language, "...from all available work hours...". This means that overtime hours, grievance settlement hours, NTFT, etc. can be used to create desirable duty assignments. In addition, PSE hours must be included. All PSE's can benefit from this contractual language as PSE's could be promoted to career into duty assignments through the Residual Vacancy Memorandum.

The language in Article 37.3.A.1 is not the only language that helps create jobs. Article 7.1.B.4 states, "When the hours worked by a PSE on the window demonstrates the need for a full-time preferred duty assignment, such assignment will be posted for bid within the section." This language is reiterated in the PSE MOU. The NTFT MOU also contains language to allow for the creation of Duty Assignments.

Grievances of this type require a lot of data. All work hours must be requested going back months. These work hours get imputed into a computer program created by the APWU called MDAT (Maximization Desirable Duty Assignment Tool). This program helps to graph the hours requested by the Union, and provided by management. Only management has access to the hours worked in TACs and we hope that a grievance isn't needed to receive this relevant information.

There is one more important person required to help prove our grievance. This person is You! Only you can provide us with the names of outside PSE's (or PTF's at level 20 and below) who have worked at your Associate Post Office. Normally, management will not provide that information if it is not requested in writing. Management will frequently schedule outside PSE's at your office and these hours are very important to add to the graphing. Better yet, a PSE can keep a record of all hours they work at their office and others and notify their steward of when they worked at a specific office. During one of my investigations, a non-member PSE gave me information on when he/she worked at a select office. This information will be imputed to fill hours on the graph and help prove our grievance.

The language in Article 37.3.A.1 and Article 7.1.B.4 are very important to maximizing our desirable Duty assignments at all offices for career employees to bid, and ultimately helping to promote our PSE's to career positions in the U.S.P.S. through the Residual Vacancy MOU. If you have a question about this or any other issue, contact me at 414-530-3449. Thank you.

# MEETING NOTICE

\*\*\* **GMM's Cancelled till Further Notice.**  
**Please Check APWU MILWAUKEE.ORG**  
**For Updates And Additional Info. \*\*\***

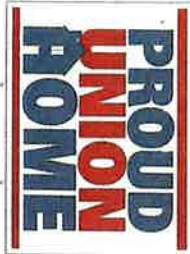
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