



# First Class Leader

**NAPS Branch 66  
Portland OR**

[www.napsnw.org](http://www.napsnw.org)

**April 2009**

## From the President's Desk

**By Dee Ann DeSimini**

*President, Branch 66*

These are certainly changing and uncertain times for employees of the Postal Service, especially so for those of us in management. I'm sure most of you have been hearing about jobs that have been abolished and rumors are floating around like ash from Mt. St. Helens. Working near ground zero as I do, I have learned to ignore most of the information that goes from tongue to ear at a fast pace. This week, some of your fellow NAPS members have been in Washington DC and have gone door to door on the hill talking to our congressmen and senators about issues of great importance to the Postal Service. They have told me that there is significant backing for HR-22 which is a bill to change the fact that the Postal Service has to pre-fund their future retiree health benefit costs. We are the only government entity required to do this.

I have included a list of the Congressmen and Senators email addresses so it will be very easy for you to write them and get behind this particular cause. One

of our new members wrote to David Wu and received a great email back, and it was a very simple thing to do. I encourage you to show your support in this way. We are also selling raffle tickets to support SPAC, the Supervisor's Political Action Committee. There will be three large monetary prizes awarded. The money donated goes toward backing the political causes that we support. In next month's newsletter we will get a report from those who attended the legislative conference.

I've also included an article about a manager who was demoted because she failed to effectively perform her labor relations duties. Please don't let this happen to you. If you are having trouble keeping up with all the demands that are placed on you, let someone know before it's too late.

Take care of yourselves in these stressful times. As crazy as my job can get, I am thankful everyday that I have a good job. Take a moment to think about those who are unemployed and the hardships they are enduring and be grateful for the jobs that we have. ☺

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## NAPS AT WORK



At the recent Legislative Training Session, Senator Jeff Merkley (left) met with NAPS Oregon State Representative Joe Lahmann, Vice President of Legislative Affairs, and Kathi Clapp, President, to discuss co-sponsoring the *Vote by Mail* bill being introduced by Senator Wyden.

### Upcoming Events:

**\*Thursday\*, April 16, 2009**

6:30 p.m.  
Membership Meeting  
Izzy's Pizza  
Buffet dinner for just \$6.00!  
1307 NE 102nd St, Portland  
(Gateway Shopping Center)

**Tuesday, May 12, 2009**

6:30 p.m.  
Membership Meeting  
Izzy's Pizza  
Buffet dinner for just \$6.00!  
1307 NE 102nd St, Portland  
(Gateway Shopping Center)



## Hang On! It's Going To Be A Bumpy Ride.

**By Kathi Clapp**

President, OR State Branch 940

By now, all of you have heard of the elimination of six districts and the reduction of 15% of District EAS positions and 1400 Supervisor, Distribution Operations positions nationwide. I have received numerous calls from people wondering if they should return to craft, take the VER, retire, and on and on. People are worried, upset and unsure of their future.

Is there any good news? YES!!! The good news is that we all still have a job. All too often, you see stories on the news about people who have shown up to work and found a padlock on the gate. That hasn't happened to the USPS. So far, the Postal Service has managed to keep us all employed. You may not end up with your dream job, but you still have your paycheck.

If you are an impacted employee, **APPLY FOR EVERYTHING!!!** You need a landing spot. You can always apply for a more desirable position when the remainder of EAS positions are opened up. Make yourself competitive. What have you done to be the most qualified candidate for a position? Why would someone want to select you for a vacancy? Make sure you can sell yourself and your skills. Attend upcoming workshops on eCareer so you know how to apply. If you are not an impacted employee, you still need to do the same things. Be ready when the opportunity comes up to apply for positions you want and to be the best qualified.

What else can you do? Act like you own this company. What CEO would be allowed to keep

their job if they were not requiring employees to be productively employed for the hours they are paid? Has anyone reviewed the services we are paying for? Have you considered trying to renegotiate prices? What purchases are you making? Are you continuing to make purchases as normal because that is how you have always done it? Are you making grievance payments because it is easier than spending time preparing the case? I know all of you are working harder than ever and the work is overwhelming. Try to keep it at work and not allow it to take over your personal life.

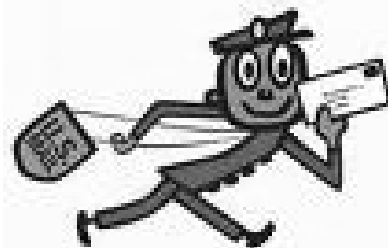
What can the Postal Service do? NAPS President, Ted Keating had several ideas he presented to US House of Representatives on 3/25/09. In brief, NAPS suggested the following:

- Pass HR 22
- USPS return to an organization structure of 5 geographic areas instead of the current 10 (elimination of 5 Area and the top management positions of those areas)
- USPS withdraws from the practice of buying homes for relocation of employees.
- Stop detailing employees to unofficial *ad hoc* positions
- Recalculation of the value of the USPS payments for CSRS fund, revisiting the 2003 calculations.
- Approving the USPS application for Medicare part B reimbursement for prescription drug benefits for retirees
- Relieving the USPS of its responsibility for payment of pension benefits associated with the military service of its employees.

One of the most compelling statements in Mr. Keating's testimony was "It is only one of the numerous problems that NAPS and the postmaster organizations have raised with USPS in light of the savings and management efficiencies that could be secured. **Like so many of our recommendations, they have been ignored by USPS top management.**"

My personal recommendation to save this company is "Listen and work with us." Eliminate unnecessary paperwork, programs, and oversight. Allow postmasters, managers and supervisors to manage employees and work hours instead of programs. Look where the real money is. Treat us with respect and value our hard work.

All of us know someone, or is someone, impacted by this RIF avoidance strategy. This probably is only the first wave. As we continue to lose mail volume, the downsizing will continue. Remember to treat each other with compassion and respect. At all levels of this organization, this is an extremely challenging time. Provide your employees as much information as you can, and remember, this is difficult for them also. In conclusion, is the ride bumpy? You bet it is, but we haven't driven over the cliff yet. Hang on. ☹️





## News From Salem Branch 275

**By Richard Ainsworth**

*President, Branch 275*

All branch 275 members, we are almost a quarter of the way through 2009. I will be attending the NAPS Legislative Training Seminar in Washington DC March 28 to April 1, 2009. The issues that we will be working on are as follows:

- Support passage of H.R. 22. This bill would provide critical financial relief to the U.S. Postal Service.
- Support passage of H.R. 958. This bill would permit FERS-covered employee to retain their sick leave retirement.
- Support the expanded use of Vote By Mail.
- Support passage of H.R. 1203 and S. 491. These bills would permit postal retirees to pay

their FEHBP premiums on a pre-tax basis.

- Support passage of H.R. 1157. This bill would protect the federal employment rights of military veterans.
- Support passage of H.R. 235 and S. 484. These bills would restore social security fairness by doing away with the 60% offset when you receive SSI or SSDI.

When I return from LTS, I will let you all know what is happening with these issues.

The five-state convention is scheduled for May 14 & 15, 2009 in Bend. Salem Branch 275 and Southern Oregon Branch 276 are the hosting the convention. V.P. Doug Peters, Danny Breadlove and myself will be attending the convention. I would like to have two or three of our members from the Bend area

attend also. If you would like to attend please contact me at [rcjcrij2@msn.com](mailto:rcjcrij2@msn.com).

The next branch meeting is scheduled at 16:30 on Thursday April 16, 2009. All members are requested to attend. The Postal service is going through hard times and it seems that senior management is trying to solve their problems on the backs of our NAPS members. Please watch out for your fellow members; protect yourselves and your fellow members by documenting everything that you are forced to do and by documenting all instances where you are required to supervise more than the new 25:1 ratio. If these situations are occurring, please bring it to my or Doug Peters' attention. ☐

## News From Eugene Branch 276

**By Bob Mann**

*President, Branch 276*

As we all know the Postal Service is not immune to the economic downturn (i.e., recession). Change will come faster than we can react. It's imperative that if it's even re-

motely possible that your position is impacted you should immediately update your 991 in eCareer. If you need help the Portland Diversity Team is ready to provide support. You should have been notified of new links for the Reorganization on the Portland District Webpage. For more information contact

[Eugenia.H.Parker@usps.gov](mailto:Eugenia.H.Parker@usps.gov) or [Shelly.P.Brown@usps.gov](mailto:Shelly.P.Brown@usps.gov)

The time to act is now! Don't be caught with your nose pressed to the glass as you watch everyone else. Change isn't always easy and we want everyone to land on their feet! ☐

## List Of Oregon Senators and Representatives

Member Name	DC Phone	DC FAX	Electronic Correspondence
Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR)	202-224-5244	202-228-2717	<a href="http://wyden.senate.gov/contact/">http://wyden.senate.gov/contact/</a>
Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR)	202-224-3753	202-228-3997	<a href="http://merkley.senate.gov/contact/contact.cfm">http://merkley.senate.gov/contact/contact.cfm</a>
Representative David Wu (D-01)	202-225-0855	202-225-9497	<a href="http://www.house.gov/wu/email.shtml">http://www.house.gov/wu/email.shtml</a>
Representative Greg Walden (R-02)	202-225-6730	202-225-5774	<a href="http://walden.house.gov/ContactGreg.Home.shtml">http://walden.house.gov/ContactGreg.Home.shtml</a>
Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-03)	202-225-4811	202-225-8941	<a href="http://blumenauer.house.gov/index.php?option=com_email_form&amp;Itemid=206">http://blumenauer.house.gov/index.php?option=com_email_form&amp;Itemid=206</a>
Representative Peter A. DeFazio (D-04)	202-225-6416	202-225-0032	<a href="http://www.house.gov/formdefazio/contact.html">http://www.house.gov/formdefazio/contact.html</a>
Representative Kurt Schrader (D-05)	202-225-5711	202-225-5699	<a href="https://forms.house.gov/schrader/contact-form.shtml">https://forms.house.gov/schrader/contact-form.shtml</a>



## Supervisor Demoted For Not Meeting Labor Relations Duties

**By Susan Smith**

*Excerpted From 3/11/09 FedSmith.com Article*

This case involves a Postal Service Manager who was demoted to a supervisory position because she did not effectively perform her labor relations duties. (*Vaughn v. United States Postal Service*, C.A.F.C. No. 2009-3008 (nonprecedential), 3/13/09) The facts below are taken from the court's decision.

Vaughn was the EAS-20 Manager, Customer Services at the Glenridge Post Office in Atlanta, Georgia. The letter of proposed demotion charged that Vaughn on several occasions had failed to give the union steward information or schedule formal level A grievance meetings as required in the agency's collective bargaining agreement.

Her failure led to the grievances going to a higher level B without appropriate documentation by management and without responses, leading eventually to final decisions and awards over \$28,000 in the grievants' favor. The Step B deci-

sions specifically called out Vaughn's failure to provide the needed information and admonished her to provide such information in the future. Vaughn also received several warning letters from her boss that spelled out the deficiencies and ordered her to fix the problems. (Opinion p. 2)

The agency deciding official sustained Vaughn's demotion for "failing to perform her duties in a satisfactory manner." She was reassigned to an EAS-17 Supervisor position at the Martech Station in Atlanta. (Opinion p. 2)

Vaughn's appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board met with mixed results. The Administrative Judge held that the agency had not sustained its burden of proving the charge of ineffective performance, holding that the agency's evidence was "hearsay, conclusory in nature, and insufficient..." (Opinion p. 2)

Unfortunately for Vaughn, when the agency petitioned the full MSPB to challenge the AJ's findings, the Board reversed its AJ and sustained Vaughn's demotion. (Opinion

p. 3)

Vaughn took her case to federal court. She argued that the evidence was insufficient to support the charge. The court disagreed. She also argued that the Board should have taken into account that understaffing at her post office excused her actions, to which the court replied, "We disagree." (Opinion p. 3) As the court points out, the Board did in fact consider this argument and concluded that the "alleged understaffing at the Glenridge Post Office" did not warrant mitigation of the penalty. (Opinion p. 3). As the court explains, "Because the Board properly considered this mitigating factor and found that it did not mandate a lesser penalty, we find no abuse of discretion in the Board's decision." (Opinion pp. 2-3)

This case shows once again that the appeals court will not lightly overturn the Board's findings on penalty. Vaughn's demotion stands.



## Legislative/Regulatory Update April 2, 2009

**By Bruce Moyer**

*NAPS Legislative Counsel*

### USPS Agrees to Slow Down District Consolidations

The Postal Service, as a result of discussions with the NAPS Executive Board on April 2, has agreed to modify the timing of the consolidation of six district offices, announced on March 20.

The district office consolidations are part of a series of measures responding to the economic recession that has rocked Postal Service revenues. As a result of the recession, mail volume will likely plunge from 212 billion pieces in

2007 to 180 billion pieces by September 30, the end of the current USPS 2009 fiscal year.

The Postal Service agreed to announce on April 28, 2009 its Phase One postings in connection with the abolishment of District Office positions and to identify all positions available for bidding prior to that date.

The Postal Service also agreed to comply with all legal requirements of the reduction-in-force (RIF) process, including notice to all impacted employees in the RIF-avoidance and RIF processes. The Postal Service also committed to provide NAPS with sufficient infor-

mation and briefing as these actions move forward.

### House Approves FERS Sick Leave Credit, TSP Reforms

NAPS scored a victory on Wednesday when the House of Representatives approved a change in civil service laws that would award credit to FERS-covered employees for unused sick leave in the calculation of their retirement benefits.

The new approach will provide an incentive to FERS-covered employees to conserve their sick leave, rather than use it up as they near retirement. This in turn will achieve management savings and promote

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## Legislative/Regulatory Update ... continued

productivity, to the tune of \$68 million a year. Unlike CSRS-covered employees, FERS-covered workers have worked under a use-it-or-lose-it sick leave rule since the creation of FERS, effective January 1, 1987.

The sick leave credit provisions, originally introduced in the House as H.R. 958 by Rep. James Moran (D-VA), was included, along with other provisions, in the Federal Retirement Reform Act of 2009, H.R. 1804, and approved by the House on a voice vote.

The provisions of the Federal Retirement Reform Act of 2009, H.R. 1804, were also added to a second measure, The Family Smoking Prevention and Control Act, H.R. 1256, passed by the House on Wednesday. That legislation provides the Food and Drug Administration with wider authority to regulate tobacco products. Adding the provisions of the Federal Retirement

Reform Act ensures that the tobacco control bill is fully paid for and does not increase the deficit.

Both House-approved measures -- H.R. 1804 and H.R. 1256 -- now move to the Senate. The TSP-related provisions that additionally were approved by the House would:

- Enroll new employees automatically in the Thrift Savings Plan;
- Create a Roth Individual Retirement Account option for TSP participants. The Roth IRA option, which has been in use in the private sector for a number of years, allows employees who make after-tax contributions to withdraw money tax-free upon retirement. The after-tax character of the Roth IRA will generate huge immediate revenues to the Treasury, providing a funding source for the FERS sick leave credit provisions and the tobacco regulation bill.

- Authorize the TSP Board to add self-directed investment window options for TSP participants;
- Remove rules that penalize CSRS employees for working part-time at the end of their careers and allow FERS employees returning to government, possibly after a stint in the private sector, to reinvest their retirement savings and claim credit for previous service (originally HR 1198, the Part-Time Federal Employees Equity Act); and
- Allow an individual who has returned to government service and who has received a refund of retirement contributions under FERS to deposit the amount that was received, with interest, to the credit of the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund (originally HR 928, the FERS Redeposit Act). ☰

## OR State Legislative Update

**By Joe Lahmann**

*VP Legislative Affairs, OR State Branch 940*

It has been a tough few months since our last newsletter and a lot of things happening for our legislators. Thank you to all that have taken the time to write our lawmakers and assist with HR22. The battle is not over and I encourage each and every one of you to visit the legislative section under [www.naps.org](http://www.naps.org) and click on the legislative tab on top. Go to "Take Legislative Actions Here". This link has an already composed letter for each of our issues that are coming up on the hill and all you have to do is fill out your name, address, and e-mail. It is simple, quick, and a great way for ALL of us to be involved.

Now for the news of what is

being taken to the hill. As I said in the last issue, it is time for our LTS (Legislative Training Seminar). This year we are bringing the following issues to the hill with us.

### Provide Critical Financial Relief to the U.S. Postal Service

NAPS supports passage of H.R. 22, which would provide critical financial relief to the Postal Service by permitting the Service to pay its share of current retirees' health insurance premiums out of the \$32 billion it already has deposited in the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund. No taxpayer funds would be used under H.R. 22 and the trust fund and retiree health benefits would remain secure. H.R. 22 would save the USPS approximately \$2.8 billion per year for the next

eight years.

### Permit FERS-Covered Employees to Retain Their Sick at Leave Retirement

NAPS supports H.R. 958, legislation to provide an incentive for federal and postal employees covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) to retain their accrued sick leave rather than use it at the end of their careers. The legislation would apply the same sick leave policy to employees covered under FERS as to employees under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS).

### Expand Voting by Mail

NAPS supports the expansion of mail-in voting, including the availability of no-excuse absentee

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## OR State Legislative Update ... continued

balloting in all federal elections. The "Universal Right to Vote by Mail Act" (H.R. 1604) would guarantee the right of any eligible voter to vote by mail in a federal election (meaning races for the House, Senate and the White House).

### Permit Postal Retirees to Pay Their FEHBP Premiums on a Pretax Basis

NAPS supports H.R. 1203 and S. 491, the "Federal and Military Retiree Health Care Equity Act." This bipartisan legislation would allow federal civilian annuitants, as well as active duty military personnel and retirees, to pay their health insurance premiums with pre-tax compensation (also known as "premium conversion").

### Protect the Federal Employment Rights of Military Veterans

Through its veteran's employment preference protection laws, our nation extends its appreciation to our veterans for their sacrifice. NAPS supports the "Veterans Reassignment Protection Act" (H.R. 1157), which would prohibit federal departments and agencies, including the Postal Service, from carrying out involun-

tary geographic reassignments of veterans during downsizing actions. The measure also would provide veterans the right of appeal of involuntary geographic reassignments to the Merit Systems Protection Board.

### Restore Social Security Fairness

The Government Pension Offset (GPO) can unfairly reduce or eliminate Social Security spousal or survivor benefits for an otherwise eligible retired postal employee. The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) can also unfairly reduce earned Social Security benefits by up to 60 percent for an otherwise eligible retired postal employee. NAPS supports the passage of the "Social Security Fairness Act of 2009" (S. 484 and H.R. 235) to alleviate the unfair impact levied against postal and federal retirees by the GPO and WEP.

Thank you all and look for an update next month on our visit to the hill. ☐

## Decoding the Code

The Zoning Improvement Plan (ZIP) Code was launched in 1963 to better handle increasing volumes of mail. The first number in the code represents a general geographic area of the nation, "0" in the east, moving to "9" in the west. The next two numbers represent regional areas, and the final two identify specific Post Offices. In 1983, the ZIP+4 Code was introduced. The extra four numbers enable mail to be sorted to a specific group of streets or to a high-rise building. In 1991, two more numbers were added so that mail could be sorted directly to a residence or business. Today, the use of ZIP Codes extends far beyond the mailing industry and they are a fundamental component in the nation's 911 emer-



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## Your Branch 66 Officers

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### The NAPS Newsletter

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Any member may submit an article for publication but submissions should be limited to 300 words or less. The decision to edit or publish submitted articles remains with the Editor, Branch 66.

If your address changes, please notify the Newsletter Editor. Address changes and articles may be submitted via regular mail or email to:

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