

A PANDEMIC, A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND EFFORTS TO PRESERVE THE USPS AND UNIVERSAL SERVICE

WE ARE UP FOR THE FIGHT OF OUR LIVES.

Michael J. Hora, National Secretary-Treasurer



I would like to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the membership for the continued support shown to me as your National Secretary-Treasurer. I am humbled and honored to have been nominated and elected by acclamation on July 21, 2020. I greatly appreciate the continued opportunity and commit ongoing dedication to you and the organization. I would also like to offer congratulations to President Hogrogian and Vice Presidents Harris, Sapp, and Wilkin on their nominations and reelection by acclamation as well. I am honored to have an opportunity to continue working with them over the coming years. There will be elections this fall for Eastern Region Vice President and Western Region Vice President within their respective regions; I encourage all members of both regions to participate in our union's democratic process and vote.

If someone had told me a year ago that nominations would occur by way of a virtual meeting over the Internet, I would have not believed it. In fact, since the coronavirus, the NPMHU has embraced virtual SAMLU meetings, local Council and Board meetings, virtual local and branch membership meetings and even steward training sessions in many locals across the country. The pandemic and social distancing recommendations are not a reason to discontinue operations. The NPMHU has found a way to continue doing the union's work. I would like to commend the many locals that have stepped up, adapted and modified protocols to continue the work

of the organization. Out of an abundance of concern for the well-being of our convention delegates, guests, and staff, the National Executive Board made the decision to delay the 2020 Convention. The NPMHU Convention will be a shortened four-day meeting now set to begin on March 29, 2021. We have reached agreement to modify contracts with the convention hotel and off-site venues. The convention planning team is working on finalizing a modified program and will be sending updated guidance to all delegates in the coming months.

integrity of the services we perform. You cannot turn on the television without seeing a piece on the Postal Service. We are accustomed to being the line-item edit in legislation to which our issue is typically removed. Today, we are front and center because the American public is concerned about the degradation of service during a pandemic as we approach a national election. A significant number of Americans will vote by mail in the upcoming November election. We deliver prescriptions, checks, food, essential supplies and yes, ballots without regard to one's race,

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Mail Handlers and all postal employees are on the front line performing the public's essential services in the grips of a pandemic. The USPS was a top-rated government agency before the coronavirus, with 91% of Americans expressing a favorable opinion of the Postal Service in an April Pew Research Center survey. But never before have we been moved to media's center stage like that which is occurring now. The spotlight cast upon the Postal Service is shining much needed light on the reckless operational changes seemingly meant to disrupt and cast doubt on the

religion, address, income or political leaning, but we do need some assistance. The attention shown to the USPS sends a message that folks are watching. Whether a rally at one's local post office or a demonstration at the gates of a processing and distribution center, we are getting the message out. Consider that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called for a day of action to save the Postal Service in the fourth paragraph of a Sunday afternoon press release and Dear Colleague letter. With two days' notice, our members scrambled into action, organized protests

and participated in more than 70 press events with Members of Congress throughout the country. Many postal employees and incidental witnesses took time to provide evidence of mail delays to congressional representatives and staff in preparation for two hearings that occurred in August 2020.

It is concerning that Postmaster General DeJoy has stated during recent testimony that the USPS does not need the additional \$25 billion in funding that is included in H.R. 8015, the Delivering for America Act. This is in direct contradiction to the opinion of the USPS Board of Governors. Moreover, the PMG negotiated some very troubling terms with the United States Department of Treasury regarding access to the \$10 billion of borrowing authority provided in the CARES Act. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin incorrectly stated last month that USPS doesn't need the money because of a surge in package revenue. And President Donald Trump previously threatened to hold up the loan unless USPS agrees to significantly raise package delivery rates for e-commerce giants such as Amazon, a commonly espoused mantra intended to impact his arch nemesis and Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos.

Frankly, the USPS does not need another loan; the Postal Service needs funding through emergency appropriations without strings attached that enable the organization to function and satisfy our universal service obligations to every address in the entire country as required by statute. We are a service just like law enforcement, defense, or transportation. It is time to stop pretending that we are self-sufficient and can function without the support of the federal government. As a result of the pandemic, mail volume and revenue have plummeted. This does not change the fact that we still process mail and deliver to every address in the country.

It is often stated that the USPS should be run like a business. I could

agree if the Postal Service had the same liberties and options of those afforded to a traditional business. Our pricing and product structure is strictly controlled by oversight from the Postal Regulatory Commission. The USPS cannot make timely pricing adjustments to account for market changes. Have you ever purchased a cruise vacation and discovered that the cruise line placed a fuel surcharge on the price of your ticket? The USPS cannot impose a fuel surcharge to address market conditions like other carriers such as FedEx and UPS. To take this one step further, the USPS often delivers the last mile for FedEx and UPS, in part because it is not cost effective for private carriers to travel to every single house in the United States no matter how remotely located. So, other carriers rely on the USPS because we have the infrastructure and delivery network in place to make that delivery, and we are required to do so by law. Those that reside and operate businesses in densely populated metropolitan areas enjoy the competition of multiple carriers fighting for their business. However, those that reside or run a business in a small isolated community appreciate the obligation of a funded and operational Postal Service, often unaware that the USPS may be losing money servicing their community.

We are in the fight of our lives. President Trump has referred to the Postal Service as a joke, but the public knows different. We must accomplish several things from all this noise. Our very existence is in doubt and we must take steps to protect our future. We are continuing to meet with Members of Congress, we will attend events that keep postal issues on the front burner, and we must register and vote in the upcoming election. The attendees of our National Convention typically take up the matter of the NPMHU's formal candidate endorsements; however, because the 2020 convention has been

rescheduled to after the election, the task of presidential endorsement has been moved to the National Executive Board's next meeting, set for September 2020. There is no doubt about the endorsement, so I strongly encourage you to vote for the candidate that is not trying to eliminate or destroy the company that issues your paycheck every other week. We're with Joe.

Over the past few weeks, the NPMHU printed and mailed 2019 contracts to every dues paying member. We relied on Pay Period 15 of 2020 for purposes of this mailing. Extra contracts were mailed to each local union headquarters. Please direct individual requests for contracts to your local union.

Finally, a word about union dues and retroactive wage payments. The National Office recently implemented a regular membership dues increase in the amount of one dollar (\$1.00) per pay period - of which the Local Union will receive eighty cents (\$.80) per pay period. This dues increase was scheduled to be implemented in PP19-2020, to be reflected in paychecks issued on September 18, 2020.

The retroactive amount for the dues increase will result in a **one-time** collection of an additional \$21.00 representing the increase from PP25-2019 through PP19-2020. Most mail handlers will be debited \$47 on September 18, 2020 and dues will return to the new amount, \$26.00 for most, in PP20-2020. Additionally, the USPS has notified the NPMHU that the retroactive wage payment is tentatively scheduled to be paid in PP 22-2020.

Please remain focused on safety, and thank you for your continued support.

In Unity,



Michael J. Hora
National Secretary-Treasurer