

Changing minds and spurring action



**Philip
Dine**

The Friday before our Sunday rallies to save six-day mail delivery, we received lots of positive news coverage that provided momentum heading into the weekend.

CNN Money led with this: “The U.S. Postal Service must deliver the mail six days a week, said Congress’ watchdog arm in a Thursday legal opinion.” The first quote was from President Rolando.

The Associated Press had a good story, with our president the second person quoted. Reuters noted the role of pre-funding in postal red ink and quoted President Rolando. Bloomberg’s story was headlined “Postal Service Can’t Cut Saturday

Delivery, U.S. GAO says,” and it quoted Rolando before getting to the anti-postal Rep. Darrell Issa and Sen. Tom Coburn.

Sure, the news itself was positive, but the way it was reported gave us an added—and timely—boost. A couple of days later, following Sunday’s rallies, the reports also were accurate and favorable.

Not so long ago, reports on these twin developments—Congress, rallies—would have had a different tone. The Senate’s vote and the Government Accountability Office’s legal opinion would have been cast as obstacles placed by pandering politicians in the path of a responsible postmaster general seeking to trim costs. The rallies would have been depicted as self-serving efforts by unions. Conventional wisdom would have dominated.

So why—at a time when it matters so much because an informed public is critical as lawmakers deliberate—did we get such careful and nuanced coverage?

To paraphrase President Rolando, in another context (the 2010 Anaheim national convention): “Look around.”

The media’s evolution, with reporters and editors increasingly recognizing that our issues merit serious attention, stems from your persistence in explaining what’s really going on at the USPS.

It is, more specifically, because President Rolando accepts a last-minute request to discuss the congressional actions and the rallies on the nationwide Ed Schultz radio show Thursday, and because Region 15 NBA Larry Cirelli interrupts his Saturday evening before the rallies for an interview on a national SiriusXM radio show.

Because Wisconsin State President Scott Van Derven explains to his state’s newspaper readers the problems with

eliminating Saturday delivery, NALC Auxiliary President Linda Kirby reinforces his message to Wisconsin’s readers, and Janesville Branch 572 President Jeff Wagner helps blanket the Badger state with a one-hour radio interview.

Because Lawrence, KS Branch 104 President Andy Tuttle tells Kansas newspaper readers why retaining Saturday delivery is critical and because regional administrative assistants around the country are getting the message out, as Region 3 RAA Tony Hutson did in the *State Journal-Register* of Springfield, capital of Illinois.

Because Idaho State President John Paige and Palm Beach, FL Branch 1690 President Rick Abbarno inform newspaper readers in their states, while Cedar Rapids, IA Branch 373 letter carrier Andrea House educates University of Iowa students in *The Daily Iowan*. Because former NALC Executive Vice President Jim Williams takes part in a panel discussion webinar on Huffington Post Live, Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 President Bob McLennan gives readers of *The Buffalo News* the facts and St. Louis Branch 343 scribe Tom Schulte informs readers of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

The fact that this mention of some recent activity leaves out far more of you than it includes reflects the extent of your work to change minds and spur action.

Informed public opinion is indispensable to our goal of saving the Postal Service and protecting our jobs, and you’re having a cascading effect. Every letter or op-ed piece you write, each TV news show you’re interviewed on, every radio show on which you provide facts and perspective, each blog post in which you shatter prevailing myths, serves a dual function—it gets the message out and it prompts more of your co-workers to do the same.

As letter carriers, each of you has the community’s respect—and a voice that can make a difference. Now is the time to use it.

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