

NAPUS
MINNESOTA CHAPTER

The Gopher Postmaster

Volume 59, Number 1

January 2011

Happy New Year

12 Months of Happiness

52 weeks of Fun

Have a great year ahead!



Happy New Year



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Change, Change, and more Change!

Greetings to each and every one of you!

Well, we have now reached the year 2011. It just seems like time keeps flying by, unless you are driving through a blizzard to get to, or from, work and then time just seems to stand still. It was quite a storm we had here in Southern Minnesota in mid-December and I am afraid we will have the remnants of the ice to deal with for some time.

The year 2011 should be an interesting one from the standpoint of the United States Postal Service. First of all we are beginning a new era with a new Postmaster General. Mr. Donahoe has had a number of years to prepare for this having served as the Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Postmaster General; however, when you are the one at the top I am sure things will look a lot differently. I am sure we are in for some changes in our organization like we have never seen before. It is going to be essential that we, as Postmasters, stay on top of those changes and be willing to go with the flow, whatever that flow may be. It is also going to be more important than ever before that we share information with the employees that work with us in our offices. I am talking here about sharing information that we know is fact. I am sure throughout all of this we will be hearing a lot of rumors and speculations on what might, or might not, happen; however, I ask each and every one of you to sort out what are the facts, based on where you get the information and share that as is appropriate. Do not be the cause of more anxiety for your fellow employees, or yourself, than is necessary. As an organization we have all been through many many changes (especially in recent years) and we will be able to get through these changes, as well. Our new PMG has stated that he wants to build a more nimble Postal Service, so we will have to see what that organization looks like. Again, I urge you to make sure that you stay informed and that you try to verify whether the information you are getting is fact, or fiction.

One of the changes that we know is happening will be affecting those Minnesota Postmasters that are

located in the northwestern part of the state that is a portion of the Dakotas District. For those of you that have not heard, Dakotas District Manager, Clem Felchle, will be retiring on January 3, 2011. Clem has been the District Manager for a number of years and has set the direction for the District as he felt was best. As we all know anytime there is a change in District Managers things in the District change. So, as an organization we have been able to discuss issues with Clem on a regular basis and we look forward to having that same kind of relationship with whoever is chosen to take Clem's place. I personally, and on behalf of the Minnesota Chapter of NAPUS, want to wish Clem well in his retirement and thank him for his many years of service to Postmasters and to the Postal Service.

Over the next few months we are going to be hearing a lot of DUO. DUO is Delivery Unit Optimization and involves the movement of routes from one facility to another and the possible downgrading of offices. The final procedures of how the program is going to work have not been finalized by USPS Headquarters and the Management Organizations, so what the process will finally be is not known at this time; however, as we get more information we will pass this along to you. At a recent meeting with Northland District Manager, Tony Williams, both of the Postmaster organizations were assured that we would be given information on what the plans are for the offices in our District before any changes are made and will have the opportunity for input into the process. Again, when the guidelines are finalized and we know the direction the program is going to be taking, we will share that with you.

Another change that is going to affect us as Postmasters and the Postal Service, as well, is the change in the leadership in Congress in Washington. At this point we do not know exactly what this change will mean for issues that affect us as Postmasters, or for the United States Postal Service. It will be more important than ever that we stay vigilant and be ready and willing to contact members of Congress as necessary regarding issues that affect us as Postmasters and our future as the organization that we know as the United States Postal Service.

As we move forward, we can either embrace the changes that are coming, or we can fight it. While I am sure there are going to be changes that we do not agree with, as leaders in our offices we need to make sure that we are putting our best foot forward and making the best of whatever may come our way. Does that mean we will not question any decision, of course we will, that is our right and our obligation because the

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

future of the USPS belongs to all of us!

I hope that you all had a very Merry Christmas and are enjoying the New Year!

I leave you this month with this quote from author and consultant, Nido Qubein, "Nothing can add more power to your life than concentrating all your energies on a limited set of targets."

2011 Leadership Conference and Legislative Rally

The 2011 Leadership Conference and Legislative Rally is scheduled for March 12 - 17, 2011 in Washington DC. Your Minnesota Chapter of NAPUS will reimburse you for the early registration cost of \$130 to attend this worthwhile conference (you must register on your own and print the confirmation for reimbursement). Early registration ends on February 4, 2011.

Rooms at the Crystal Gateway Marriott are offered at a discount of \$203 per night for up to 4 people in a room. I have a few Postmasters looking for roommates - please contact me for more information. Additional information is available at www.napus.org, then look under conferences. You must make your own airline and hotel reservations. This past election year has seen many changes in our congressional representatives and it will be important to discuss our concerns with all of our representatives.

Anita Pfiefer

The Mission of NAPUS

- *To promote, protect and represent all Postmasters,**
- *To foster a favorable image of public service,**
- *To assure all users of the mail
the best possible service,**
- *To be an advocate with the
Congress of the United States, and**
- *To work closely with the United States Postal
Service in the development of strategies for the
enhancement of the
Postmasters and the Postal Service.**

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**Be Involved—
Attend the Leadership Conference**

Happy New Year !!

I hope that you and your family had a blessed and happy Holiday season.

Your Executive Board will be holding its semi-annual meeting at the Holiday Inn in St Cloud on Friday, January 14th. The Board will be reviewing the Chapter spending in 2010; discussing and voting on the 2011 budget; planning for the State Convention and other chapter business. Your Chapter financial accounts will also be audited at this time. Please contact your District Director or any other Executive Board member, before this meeting, if you have any concerns or issues you would like discussed at this time.

The mission of NAPUS is:

- * to represent, promote, and protect Postmasters:
- * to foster a favorable image of public service,
- * to assure users of the mail the best possible service;
- * to be an advocate with the Congress of the United States, and
- * to work closely with the United States Postal Service in the development of strategies for the enhancement of Postmasters and the Postal Service.

I want to remind all Postmasters that Minnesota NAPUS is your organization. It is what you put into it. You have an opportunity to be involved by attending the Leadership Conference. With the significant changes that occurred in the fall elections this year, Postmasters need to ensure that the issues, important to us, are being discussed with our Senators and Representatives. Attending this conference, also gives you the opportunity to hear from our NAPUS leadership as they update us on current topics.

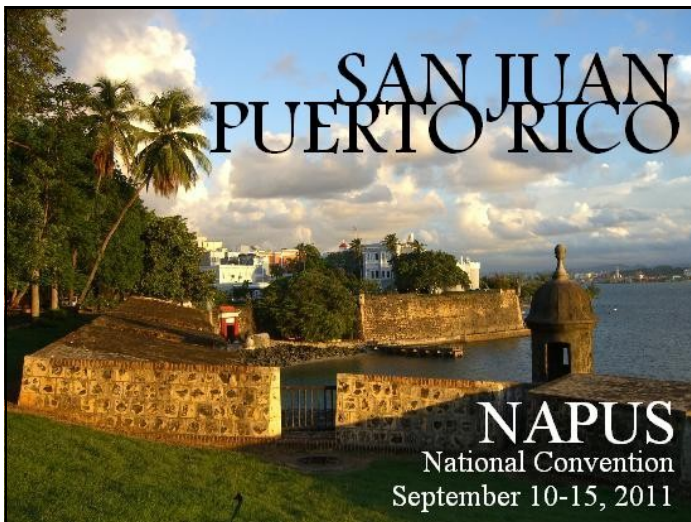
The Leadership Conference and Legislative Rally will be held on March 12th – 17th in Washington DC. The Chapter will reimburse \$130 of your registration fee – if you register by February 4, 2011 – that would be your entire registration cost.

You will find the hotel information on the NAPUS website – www.napus.org. I would recommend that you make your hotel reservations as soon as possible – there are a limited number of rooms available at the conference rates.

Be sure to complete a PS form 3971 for your files and submit a courtesy copy to your MPOO. If you are going to be on annual leave all week (Mon – Fri), you are required to submit the 3971 for approval from your MPOO.

I look forward to seeing many of YOU in DC this year !!

‘Be always at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let each New Year find you a better man’ – Benjamin Franklin



**MN NAPUS Financial Statement
As of November 30, 2010**

Regular Checking	\$ 5,954.30
Regular Savings	\$ 21,717.06
State Conv Savings	\$ 13,884.94
Legislative Savings	\$ 5,837.53
Conv 2000 Savings	\$ 565.50
Cert of Deposit	\$ 11,245.70
<u>Cert of Deposit</u>	<u>\$ 16,194.39</u>
TOTAL	\$ 77,853.42



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Legislative

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back to work as usual. Currently, H.R. 5746, the bill Rep. Stephen Lynch (MA) authored has 3 Minnesota co-sponsors (Keith Ellison, Tim Walz, and Betty McCollum). The legislation addresses the overpayment by the Postal Service of the CSRS pension obligation and the transfer of those to the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund. If you didn't include your representative on your Christmas card list, take time to call, write. or e-mail those that haven't signed on as of yet as co-sponsors. Contact information is available at www.thomas.loc.gov.

Another Christmas season past.

By now the holidays are over. The Christmas OT Tracker is done and the line at the window is no longer into the box section. Drop shipment skids of parcels are now back to normal volumes and the HCR no longer comes on Sunday. Just don't forget to reduce your floor stamp stock to the Quarter 2 levels as required for SOX compliance. With all this going on, hopefully you took time to enjoy the company of friends or family and had a Happy New Year.

With the holidays over, the Congress will also be

Another piece of legislation important to NAPUS is S. 3831, introduced by Sen. Thomas Carper (DE). President Rapoza addressed a Senate Subcommittee in December concerning this bill. While there are parts of this legislation that NAPUS supports, there are sections that are of concern for Postmasters. Changing the criteria for closing small and rural Post Offices is opposed by NAPUS. If you want your voice heard on this matter consider joining Minnesota Postmasters in Washington, D.C. March 12-17 for the NAPUS 2011 Leadership Conference. Feel free to contact me for any assistance in planning your trip to "Storm the Hill".



Gayle Ozment
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National scene.

Bob Levi and our National NAPUS officers stay informed on what is happening on the hill and respond to it but, they also need our help.

PAC funds are needed more than ever. Please consider investing in your future.

Invest in your future!

I hope everyone had a good Christmas and New Year. Christmas is a time for faith, family and friends. Christmas is also a time to reflect on the accomplishments of the past year and things we never got around to doing. With the beginning of a new year, we have another chance to improve.

This New Year, we must keep abreast of the demands put on the Postal Service by Congress. There are so many new legislators that have very little knowledge of the regulations and restrictions put on the Postal Service. They are in DC to cut, cut, cut with no understanding of what makes the Post Office work or the wages and benefits promised to its Postmasters and other employees.

This year, more than ever, it is everyones job to keep track of what is happening in DC and contact your legislator. Consider yourself a teacher, who has the job of informing the person representing you on the

PAC Contributions

NAME: _____

NAPUS Member ID Number: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Active Postmaster
Retired Postmaster Associate Member

Make checks payable to:
NAPUS PAC

Send PAC Donations to:
Gayle Ozment
PO Box 10
South Haven MN 55382-0010



Bob Rapoza
National NAPUS President
8 Herbert St
Alexandria VA 22305-2600

with incoming Chief Operating Officer Megan Brennen. She also was receptive to having monthly meetings.

I was notified late Friday evening that the final guidelines for the DUO process have been completed. NAPUS made great strides and accomplished a lot during this process. Most importantly:

- All our recommendations were taken into consideration. Many of them were incorporated into the final DUO Guidelines Handbook.
- As a result of NAPUS asking that the moratorium be continued while we worked through the consultative process, Postmasters avoided disruptions of their operations until after the holiday season.
- Postal Headquarters recognized our rights to engage in meaningful discussions during the consultative process, as outlined under Title 39.

It also was very beneficial to have convened the NAPUS focus group, which provided recommendations and questions to Postal Headquarters.

Now that the consultative process is completed, we expect DUO to be rolled out fast and furious, beginning Jan. 3. In preparation, NAPUS has posted the DUO Guidelines Handbook, along with the answers to our questions, on the NAPUS website. Training material also will be posted on the NAPUS website in the near future. Go to the NAPUS website and click on the DUO link.

We continue to post current information on the website as we receive it. Please encourage our members to visit the website often.

We also are in the process of working out the final agreement on the overtime FLSA issue for those Postmasters whose status was inadvertently changed from nonexempt to exempt in 2008. I am optimistic this issue will be resolved before the end of this year, without any litigation costs to NAPUS.

2011 is just days away! Be prepared for changes and challenges like we never have seen before.

Sharon and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your loved ones a happy holiday season. It's especially important this time of year to try and spend quality time with loved ones. Krystle arrived Saturday and will be with us for Christmas, returning to sunny California on Dec. 28.

We will bring in the New Year with Sharon's parents and the rest of our family in Hawaii; we leave for home on Dec. 29. We spent a limited amount of time with family during the Hawaii Chapter convention in July, so we are looking forward to spending quality time with them, as well as taking care of more mundane things, such as our regular medical and dental visits.

Wishing you all a Happy Holiday Season.

Robert J. Rapoza, National President

Update, Dec. 20, 2010

I know you all are into the Christmas rush, doing more with less. This is the first time in the past 44 years I have not been involved in a Christmas operation at a Post Office. I can appreciate the dedication and commitment Postmasters have throughout the year. But, when it comes to the holiday season, Postmasters rise to the occasion and go the extra mile to serve our customers.

On Dec. 7, *The Washington Post* printed an editorial that urged Congress to hold the Postal Service's \$50 to \$75 billion Civil Service Retirement System overpayment hostage, pending enactment of legislation that, in part, would close Post Offices. Attached is my response, a "Letter to the Editor," that appeared in the Dec. 11 edition of the newspaper. (see Page 7)

On Dec. 9, I sent an e-mail to the OIG's office, asking about the status of our Aug. 27 request for an investigation of the 2009 core requirements. I was notified on Dec. 17 the OIG is addressing the concerns of NAPS, NAPUS and the League in its current PFP audit. It expects to complete the audit in late spring and presently is working on identifying an appropriate sample size to conduct further interviews.

The focus of the audit will be to determine whether overall PFP ratings for FY 2009 were changed in a manner inconsistent with administrative rules and, if so, why. This information will be useful for our future discussions with the Postal Service and/or fact-finding appeals under Title 39. Please don't be misled into thinking the OIG's findings will result in changes to your 2009 core ratings.

On Dec. 13, the three management organization Presidents met with Postmaster General Pat Donahoe for about an hour and a half. We had a very productive meeting—most of which was off the record—sharing information. These off-the-record meetings help build credibility and trust. We agreed to meet on a monthly basis during 2011. The first Tuesday of each month has been set aside for these meetings. We look forward to becoming more involved in the planning process.

On Dec. 15, Sharon and I attended a reception for retired PMG Jack Potter. I had an opportunity to speak



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best, but the best value.

Remember the new membership contest announced at the National Convention. YOU as the signer for 1-3 new members, can have your name put into a drawing for a 50% reduction in registration for the 2011 National Convention in Puerto Rico – and if you submit 4 or more, your name will go into a drawing for FREE registration. The gift-giving season is not over.... But you have to do this quickly, as the drawing will be held at the Leadership Conference in March of 2011. An 1187 is also available at www.NAPUS.org.

Membership is down, as people are hesitant to make a commitment to join and pay dues ~ but remember that the first year FREE membership is still in effect. What a GIFT! Talk to the people in neighboring offices – let them know you are available should they have questions, and that NAPUS membership should be high on their priority list! Completing their membership application/1187 is one of the most valuable gifts they can give themselves – and their membership can be celebrated for an entire career and into retirement.

So get going and TALK! Head'm out! Sign'm UP!!! Please send completed 1187's to me to ensure that your name is in the drawing – be sure your name is on the bottom of the 1187!!!

Contact new Postmasters, OIC's and PMR's ~ sign them up, and send the completed 1187 to me: Kathy Foster, PO BOX 804, Bloomington Prairie MN 55917.

The Gift of Membership!

The Holidays are behind us, and we are looking forward to an exciting New Year! The gift giving and celebrating is over – or is it? It doesn't have to be ~ we can continue to celebrate our NAPUS membership and what it means to us day after day. And what a gift membership can be to those new Postmasters, OIC's and PMR's!

In the last issue, there was an 1187 for each of you to copy and have to invite a new member into our ranks. There was also a NAPUS/League dues comparison chart ~ our organization is not only the

The "Failure to deliver" editorial misdiagnosed the cause of the Postal Service's challenges and suggested treatment that makes matters worse. The \$8.5 billion Postal Service loss that the editorial mentioned stems primarily from a law that foists a \$5.6 billion annual payment on the agency to prefund retiree health costs. Also, the government raised the Postal Service's payment to the workers compensation fund by \$2.5 billion. Ironically, two nationally recognized actuarial firms determined that the USPS had been required to overfund its pensions by \$50 billion to \$75 billion.

The Post, however, recommended that Congress extort the USPS to secure its surplus pension contributions. In part, The Post recommended weakening a statute, enabling the USPS to close "unprofitable" post offices. This recommendation is problematic. First, post office profitability is meaningless, because offices deliver and distribute mail – inherently "unprofitable" services. Second, many "unprofitable" offices serve rural communities and are the communities' sole commercial and communications access points.

Third, closing all small post offices would save only 0.7 percent of the USPS's budget. Before cutting services, Congress should treat the "most trusted agency" fairly, and the Postal Service must trim its administrative overhead.

ROBERT RAPOZA, Alexandria

The writer is president of the National Association of Postmasters of the United States.

NAPUS TOP TEN

1. To be a part of something bigger than ourselves ... "Let's do together what we cannot do alone."
2. Representation
3. Training
4. Networking/Support
5. Motivation/Positive Feedback
6. Professional Advancement/Personal Growth
7. Credit Union/Mass. Benefits/Liberty Mutual
8. NAPUS Family/life long friends
9. Perks
10. PMR supplemental health plan



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Training Training Training

By now all managers in the Dakotas/Northland District should have received the Postal Retail Unit Sox Training. Found within this training was all the essentials to effectively manage your retail finances and stay compliant with the required regulations of the Post Office handbooks. I appreciated the fact that this training was presented in person over meeting place instead of just a course number and self reading. For me I always learn more by listening and taking an active role in the question and answer portion that follows the end of the training session. I hope this training is just a start of an effort by the Postal Service to standardize the activities of each office in the district and then the nation.

On the VOE training front for 2011, I was recently invited to participate in a survey of what field managers wanted for training this year. I look forward to seeing what headquarters pushes down for us in the way of VOE training. The list of required VOE training courses for FY 2011 should be rolled out sometime in January. You can follow VOE training requirements on your districts website via the Learning, Development and Diversity page. I know one size fits all training is one of the biggest complaints I hear in the field but that goes hand in hand with trying to standardize each offices operations.

By now all managers should have a good understanding of the operations of Learning Management Systems and E learning. One of the highlights of the LMS system I recently found was the Harvard Soft Skills courses available to all managers. The courses can be enrolled in by any manger, booked by you with approval of your manger, with a small cost going against your offices and without reimbursement from the district for hours spent training. The course's are not a direct connection to your daily duty but are designed for making you a more well rounded manager of your operation and make you more promotable in the future.

Below is just a short list of the most popular ones.

- [3620881](#) Record Retention
- [3620883](#) Independent Contractors and Temporary Employees
- [3620884](#) The Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002
- [3620885](#) Union Awareness

- [3620861](#) Documenting Discipline
- [3620862](#) Sarbanes Oxley: Whistleblower Protection
- [3620886](#) Code of Conduct Awareness
- [3620887](#) Workplace Ethics
- [3620889](#) Workplace Violence
- [3620890](#) Anti-Money Laundering
- [3620891](#) Export Controls
- [3620892](#) Conflicts of Interest in the Workplace
- [3620893](#) Rightful Employment Termination
- [3620894](#) Equal Employment Opportunity and Discriminatory Practices in Hiring
- [3620895](#) Privacy and Information Security
- [3620896](#) Procurement Integrity
- [3620897](#) FMLA Leave and More: An Overview of Legally Protected Leave
- [3620898](#) Code of Conduct (Customizable)

Harassment

- [3621586](#) Employee Sexual Harassment Awareness
- [3621587](#) Supervisor and Manager Sexual Harassment Awareness
- [3621588](#) Harassment in the Workplace
- [3621589](#) Supervisor and Manager Sexual Harassment Awareness – Multi-State Edition

HIPAA

- [3621582](#) HIPAA Privacy Rules
- [3620899](#) HIPAA: Electronic Health Data Transactions
- [3620900](#) HIPAA: Evaluating the Impact of the Privacy Rule
- [3621580](#) HIPAA: Implementing Privacy Rules
- [3621581](#) HIPAA: Securing Protected Health Information

HR Series

- [3621602](#) Promoting a Substance-free Workplace

Federal Government Industry

Federal Government Legal Compliance

- [3621590](#) The No FEAR Act
- [3621591](#) The US Constitution
- [3621592](#) Sexual Harassment Prevention for Federal Employees
- [3621593](#) Accessibility and Section 508 Awareness
- [3621594](#) Workplace Safety
- [3621595](#) Federal Enterprise Architecture
- [3621596](#) Federal Budgeting Process
- [3621597](#) Government Ethics
- [3621598](#) Proper Use of Government Charge Cards
- [3621599](#) Human Resources Flexibilities
- [3621600](#) Information Security Awareness
- [3621601](#) Privacy Awareness

Outside of these new courses you have over 1000 other course available in E learning for your career development opportunities!

On a final note, we will be well into the planning portion of 2011 State Convention at our upcoming state board meeting in mid January. This year's convention is in St. Cloud in June. If you have an idea for training that would be beneficial to all members of Minnesota NAPUS please pass it along to a state board member now so we can do our best to get it lined up for the State Convention in June.

Until next time may health, happiness and adventure be with you!



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to be implemented nationwide January 3rd, 2011 which is next week. Please take the time to look over this information and how it could affect you so that you can stay informed and keep your employees informed.

Also, the SOX Compliance audits are still in full swing and I believe this will be the way of the future. We must do everything possible to keep our offices and postal records in compliance. If you have any questions regarding issues of compliance, please contact any of your NAPUS Officers or Executive Board members and we will see that we get the answer to you. It is better to ask the question and be sure that you are performing the task correctly than to wait for an audit and fail.

I also want to encourage each of you to attend the NAPUS 2011 Leadership Conference held in Washington DC March 12th thru 17th. A copy of the registration for the Conference was printed on Page 9 of

Keep Informed!

I don't think there is any better advice that I could give you for this new year than to suggest that you keep abreast of all the new changes coming to the Postal Service and how they will affect you and your office directly. Please embrace these changes as the Postal Service moves forward to maintain its place in our nations economy.

We have been hearing a lot about the new DUO process (Delivery Unit Optimization) and I had planned to bring you more information in this edition of *The Gopher Postmaster*. However, I didn't want to miss any portion of the new process. I visited the National NAPUS website napus.org for more information and found that the DUO Guidelines Version 1.1 contains 69 pages of information, the DUO Process Checklist 5 pages, the USPS Response to Questions and Recommendations 7 pages and there is a DUO Training Guide which is another 12 pages. Although this may seem like a lot to read on the subject, it is a very hot topic for FY 2011. I would suggest that you visit the National NAPUS website and go over this information. Tracy Franseen, MPOO, Area 5, has been selected to lead the process for the Northland District. As of this writing, I have not heard who will be leading the process in the Dakotas District. This process is set



last months *The Gopher Postmaster* or can be found on the National NAPUS website napus.org. There is no better place to gather information about the changes that will be forthcoming from the Postal Service. It is also your chance to meet with your State Representatives and Senators on the Hill during the Capital Hill visits. This is your chance to get your voice heard and what better place to do that than in our Nations Capital.

There is so much to see and do in Washington. Please consider joining us this year.

Please make it your New Year's resolution to be more informed about your job and the changes in the Postal Service.

Take time during this Holiday season for you and your family.



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Visit our Minnesota website: <http://mnnapus.org>



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An Interesting Year Ahead!

Hello Minnesota NAPUS Postmasters, what a season it has been. We can definitely say we will have a white Christmas again this year. I just wanted to drop a short note and wish you a MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR.

It looks like we are in for a very interesting year. The DUO process is not going away and will start very soon. We are still in a hiring freeze. The future is a question mark in my mind. Where is it all going to end and when will things start again. All I can say is keep an open mind and always do the right thing. We need to keep our offices in good order.

Washington DC Legislative Conference is just around the corner in March so mark your calendar. I will see you then.



Keep in your thoughts and prayers

Wendy Smith, Postmaster of Saint Paul Park:
 Her father passed away this past weekend.

Frank Montemayor, husband of
 Modesty Montemayor, Postmaster of Hampton
 as he goes through chemo and radiation for his
 recent diagnosis of cancer.

The family of Marlene VanHorn,
 Postmaster Alberta MN,
 after their recent home fire.

Jan Wilson, Postmaster of Jeffers,
 mother passed away on 12/18/10.

Paul Johnson, Postmaster of Mankato,
 in the recent loss of his father
 Morris Johnson, Postmaster Retired of Renville
 who passed away Thanksgiving Day.



Morris "Morry" Johnson

Morris "Morry" Johnson, the retired Postmaster from Renville passed away on Thanksgiving Day. Morry was the father of Paul Johnson, Postmaster of Mankato MN.

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 Insurance Indemnity Policy**
 1-800-606-1071

NAPUS Pinnacle Motor Club
 1-800-366-1165

NAPUS Supplemental Insurance
 1-800-221-3083

**NAPUS Supplemental
 Retirement**
 1-800-368-3515



Gayle Ozment

**Postmaster Retired
Prior Lake MN 55372**

Email: kmaaug2005@yahoo.com

Enjoying Retirement!

After 5 years of retirement, I still recommend it to everyone.

This year has brought a variety of family events. My oldest granddaughter, who is a County Correctional Officer in southern Minnesota, got married in June. I can't believe I am old enough to have a married granddaughter. I think the chances of becoming a Great Grandmother are pretty good. What a thought!!! On the other end of the age spectrum, my 3 year old granddaughter and daughter-in-law lived with us for five months. I had forgotten just how much energy little ones have. Because they live in Texas, this was our first chance to enjoy her for a period of time. It really was a

good opportunity to get to know her better. My mother had health issues so I spent October and November with her in North Carolina. It was hard to leave their warmer weather and head north but, that is life.

Besides family events, Dennis and I drove down to Florida and spent three weeks visiting family and driving up the east coast. We spent a week in Vegas enjoying the nice April weather and many of the activities there. In August, we cycled around parts of Minnesota that I had not seen before. There is a lot to see here at home. In September, we drove our daughter-in-law and granddaughter back home to Dallas Texas where the weather was so nice. We got back home in time for me to go to the NAPUS National Convention in Michigan. As I mentioned before, I spent October and November in North Carolina and attended a conference with Dennis in Chicago on our return to Minnesota. On December 20th, we will drive down to Dallas for Christmas and have no plans for our return. That is the best part of retirement, you don't have to have a plan.

I hope everyone had a good Christmas and New Year. I also hope to see many of you in the up coming year. Stay safe and healthy.



Bonita Baltes
Area Director for Area 9 for
Postmasters Retired MN ND SD WI
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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

As the New Year rolls around, we once again are faced with many challenges. Even as Postmasters Retired, we have many challenging changes in our lives. We have a list of things that have to be done, and a list of things that probably will never get done, and of course our bucket list of things we want to do.

Since we are in our golden years the bucket list looks like the most fun to do. I know sitting here in North Dakota with all this snow, makes me think the quicker I can get to a warmer climate the better. Florida, Arizona or Texas look very inviting. Florida looks like the most inviting since I have been there the last three years. Old habits are hard to break. I certainly hope all of you have some interesting and fun plans for the next year.

I am planning to see all of you in DC in March. So if you haven't made your plans for the Legislative Conference please do so. See you there.

Sad news -

Earlier this week, Marlene VanHorn, Postmaster of Alberta MN 56207, lost everything in a house fire. Marlene, her husband & family managed to escape safely but lost EVERYTHING.

There has been an account opened for Postmaster Marlene and her family to help deal with this tragedy.

Donations can be sent to:

The VanHorn Fire Fund
United Farmers and Merchants State Bank
P.O.Box 341
Chokio, MN 56221-0341.

Donations can also be dropped off at any of the banks three locations in Chokio, Morris and Donnelly.

Any physical packages can also be addressed to Marlene at her office:

Marlene VanHorn
P.O. Box 9998
Alberta MN 56207

(as there may or may not be anyone around their rural address)

Article Deadlines

For the February Issue
Of *The Gopher Postmaster* is
January 20th, 2011

Periodicals

Dates to Remember

State Conventions

June 22-24, 2011—Holiday Inn
St. Cloud
June 15-17, 2012 Fair Hills Resort
Detroit Lakes

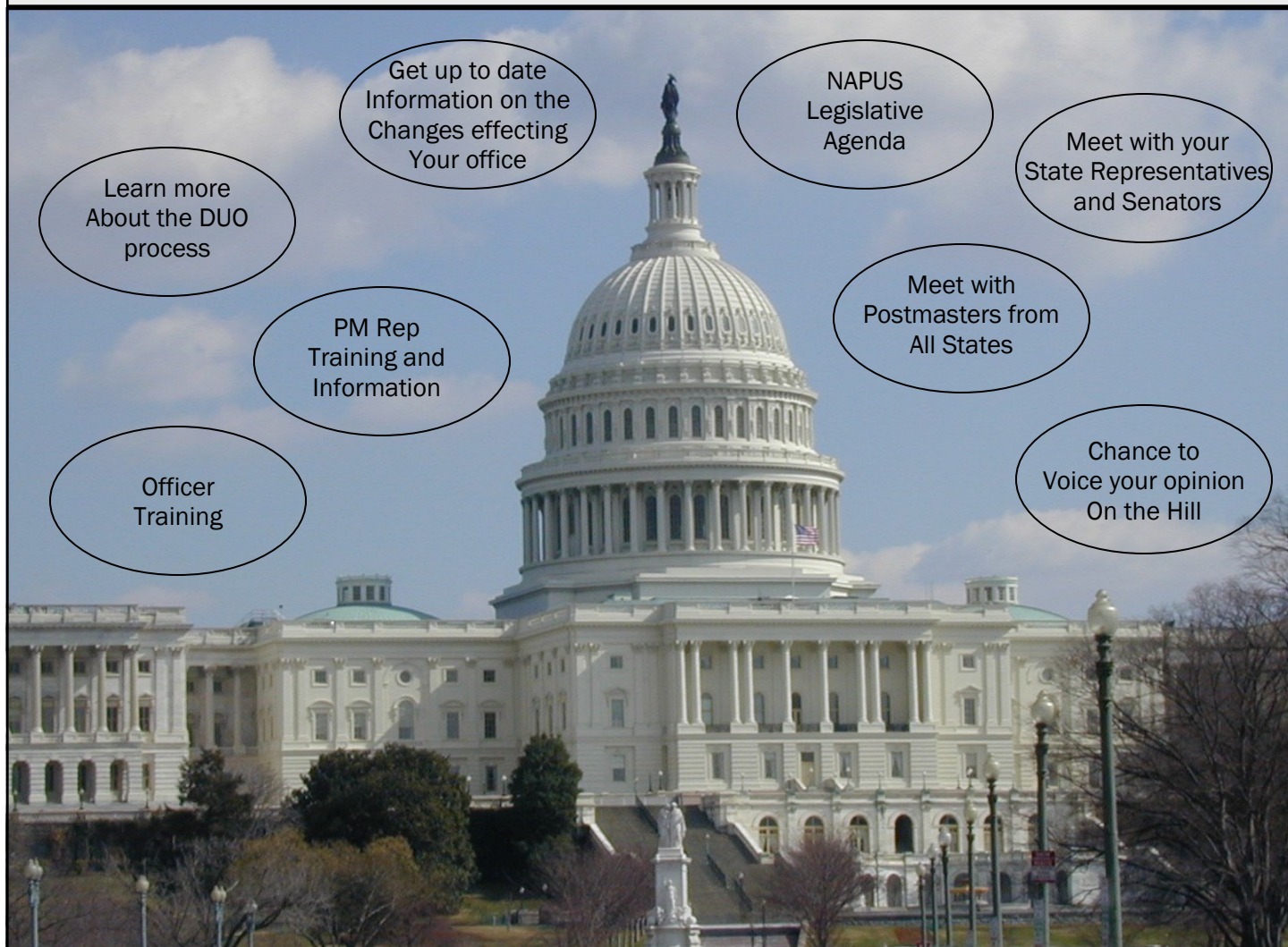
National Conventions

Sept 10-15, 2011—Puerto Rico
Sept 1-6, 2012—Oklahoma City,
Oklahoma
August 16-21, 2013 Bellevue WA

Leadership Conference

Washington DC
March 12-17, 2011
March 24-29, 2012
March 16-21, 2013

**Make your plans now to join us for the
2011 NAPUS Leadership Conference
March 12th to 17th in Washington DC**



Learn more About the DUO process

Get up to date Information on the Changes effecting Your office

PM Rep Training and Information

Officer Training

NAPUS Legislative Agenda

Meet with your State Representatives and Senators

Meet with Postmasters from All States

Chance to Voice your opinion On the Hill