

Perspectives

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

P.O. prefunding a fiasco

To the editor:
A recent notice asking mail subscribers whether their newspaper arrived late suggests that your readers, like many in rural areas and small towns around the country, are feeling the impact of mail delays.

That's the inevitable result when processing plants are consolidated and mail has to travel farther to be sorted.

Some context may be useful – because the push to consolidate mail centers is only part of a broader attempt to degrade the quality mail service on which folks in Abbotsford and Colby and elsewhere long have relied. Some in Washington also want to end Saturday mail delivery, which would prevent your small businesses from receiving weekend checks and orders, and end door-to-door delivery, compelling residents (in Wisconsin's weather, no less) to traipse around neighborhoods daily in search of cluster boxes.

The proposed cuts in service are based largely on the following premise: Growing Internet usage to pay bills or send greetings causes the Postal Service to lose billions of dollars a year; taxpayers are on the hook, so services must be degraded.

That premise, however, is demonstrably false.

For starters, postal operations are profitable, and increasingly so. The Postal Service reported \$1.4 billion in operating profits in fiscal year 2014, a figure already surpassed halfway through 2015.

After dropping during the worst recession in 80 years, mail revenue is stabilizing amid an improving economy. Meanwhile, as folks in Unity and elsewhere shop online, skyrocketing package revenue makes the Internet a net positive – auguring well for the future. (Postal operations are financed by earned revenue, not by taxpayers.)

There is red ink at the Postal Service, but it's unrelated to the mail or the Internet. In 2006, a lame-duck Congress mandated that the Postal Service prefund future retiree health benefits. No other agency or company has to prefund for even one year; the Postal Service must prefund 75 years into the future and pay for it all over a decade. That \$5.6 billion annual charge is the red ink.

Yet, some in Washington hope to use this artificial financial "crisis" to dismantle a popular public agency (enjoying 80-plus percent approval), even turn its duties over to private corporations.

To do so, they need to convince you that services you rely on are the problem – hence, that your mail must be slowed, your delivery days reduced, your door service ended.

But degrading postal networks that have returned to profitability is illogical. It would needlessly hurt residents

and business owners. It would drive mail away, damaging the Postal Service's bottom line. It would ignore the actual problem – the prefunding mandate. And it would cost Wisconsin jobs. The national mailing industry, dependent on a robust, six-days-a-week Postal Service, employs 7.5 million Americans in the private sector – including 180,238 Wisconsinites.

Wisconsinites should urge their congressional representatives to preserve the postal networks while addressing the prefunding fiasco. Then the Postal Service, based in the Constitution and the largest employer of veterans, can continue to offer Americans the world's most affordable delivery network.

*Fredric Rolando
president,*

National Association of Letter Carriers

Power plan is a good step

To the editor:

On Aug. 3, President Barack Obama and EPA director Gina McCarthy announced EPA's release of the final version of the Clean Power Plan, establishing the first U.S. limits on carbon pollution.

We applaud the administration for taking this step. The Clean Power Plan will provide a significant opportunity to reduce America's dependence on fossil fuels by stepping up our commitment to renewable energy and greater energy efficiency.

The Clean Power Plan requires the nation's existing power plants to reduce carbon pollution by an average of 32 percent by 2030, an increase from the target of 30 percent proposed in the draft rule. States must submit implementation plan drafts by 2016, with final versions due in 2018. The final rule also includes incentives for states that invest in renewable energy and energy efficiency prior to 2022.

Energy efficiency investments benefit ratepayers, especially in low-income households and rural communities. Moreover, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory forecasts that an 80 megawatt wind farm can generate nearly 400 jobs, \$4.8 million in land lease payments, and \$6.3 million in new tax revenues for schools and services like local fire and police forces.

During the Clean Power Plan comment period, the Center for Rural Affairs helped nearly 1,100 rural and small town Americans submit comments in support of a strong carbon rule. As we review the final plan in coming months, we should all emphasize energy options that dramatically reduce emissions and protect our health, while keeping our hard-earned dollars closer to home.

*Lauren Kolojejchick-Kotch
Center for Rural Affairs*

Arguments for, against president's energy plan

There has been quite a bit of talk lately about President Obama's Clean Power Plan that he unveiled Aug. 3. The president's plan is designed to decrease carbon emissions by more than 30 percent in the next 15 years. While this is a federal issue, it does have an impact on Wisconsin, so I'd like to explain the plan, as well as the arguments for and against it for you.

The Clean Power Plan establishes national standards to limit carbon pollution for the first time in our nation's history. Currently, there are emissions standards for newly built power plants, but these new standards are the first for existing power plants, the largest source of carbon emissions.

The plan establishes pollution standards for power plants and each state will be required to design and implement their own plan to ensure that all power plants within the state meet the standards. Wisconsin will be required to reduce their emissions to 27 million tons of carbon dioxide, which is a 34 percent decrease from our emission levels in 2012.

Supporters of this plan believe that it is a public health and environmental necessity, stating that, among other things, the pollution caused by unclean power sources has directly caused the percentage of Americans with asthma to double in the past 30 years. Supporters also claim climate change resulting from this unclean power is causing extreme weather events like severe droughts, wildfires and heat waves. Supporters also contend that the plan will drive investment into clean energy, thereby saving

families money on their energy bills.

Opponents of the Clean Power Plan are concerned about a government overreach and massive costs that states will be forced to pay. Additionally, many have argued that the plan's intended goals are unrealistic and cannot be attained in 15 years. The National Economic Research Associates have estimated the cost of this plan to be more than \$400 billion, which will cause significant damage to our slowly recovering economy.

Sixteen states, including Wisconsin, have already filed suit against the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), asking them to halt implementation of the plan until it can be determined whether or not the plan is legal. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Kentucky) has stated that a Congressional Review may be undertaken to review this plan and possibly revise it.

As I mentioned before, the Clean Power Plan is a federally designed and implemented plan. As such, if you have any questions or comments, I encourage you to contact your federal legislators, whose name and phone numbers can be found by visiting house.gov or senate.gov and entering your address, or by calling (202) 224-3121.

The environment will continue to be a contentious issue for years to come here in Wisconsin and across the globe. If you have questions or comments about any state-related environmental issues, or state issues not related to the environment, you can always contact me at Sen.Moulton@legis.wisconsin.gov or (888) 437-9436.

BE OUR GUEST



BY
**STATE SEN.
TERRY MOULTON
(R-23RD DISTRICT)**

NOTABLE QUOTE

“With Marge (Carpenter) not complying with Ordinance 103 and telling me last month that it's none of my business, well, I'm afraid to say, it is my business and it is our business.”

**Scott Blume,
Unity village president,
regarding issuing fines against Carpenter**

CONTACT YOUR LAWMAKERS

The *Tribune-Phonograph* urges citizens who are concerned about delays in mail service to contact their elected representatives in Washington, D.C.

- **Congressman Sean Duffy** can be reached at his Wausau office, 715-298-9344, or go to www.duffy.house.gov/contact/email-me to send an email.
- **U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson** can be reached at his Washington, D.C. office, 202-224-5323 or www.ronjohnson.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/email-the-senator
- **U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin** can be reached at her Washington, D.C. office, 202-224-5653, at her Wausau office, 715-261-2611, or at email her by going to www.baldwin.senate.gov/contact

NEWS AND LETTERS SUBMISSION

The deadline for the current week's paper is 5 p.m. on Monday.

Letter Guidelines

We welcome letters from our readers on any subject of current interest. We request they be limited to 300 words.

We reserve the right to edit for length, grammar or libel. All submitted letters must have a handwritten signature, address and telephone number where the writer can be reached for confirmation.

Forward to the *Tribune-Phonograph*, 103 W. Spruce St., PO Box 677, Abbotsford, WI

54405. Fax to 715-223-3505, or e-mail to tp@tpprinting.com.

Community News

Community news for Abbotsford, Colby, Curtiss, Dorchester and Unity may be submitted directly to the *Tribune-Phonograph* at 103 Spruce St., P.O. Box 677, Abbotsford, WI 54405. Information may be sent via fax to 715-223-3505, e-mailed to tp@tpprinting.com, or called in to 715-223-2342.