

Fred Nelson (PostOffice) Air 1-13-12

Hi, Fred Nelson for Community Comment,

For a number of weeks, I have been a bit harsh in my criticism of the Postal Service. Let's look at some of the problems they cannot control. In nineteen seventy one, the Postal Service was reorganized as a "quasi corporation". They would operate as a business with no outside financial help and would be self-sufficient. It sounds good but there are flaws that have led to the predicament that they are presently in. The Postal Service cannot make rapid product and pricing decisions, as does the competition, but must go through a cumbersome process. The Postal Service is also required to pre-fund retiree health benefits which are managed by a separate government entity. The law requires them to fully fund the entire forty year obligation on a ten year schedule. The annual payment is five point five billion dollars causing the Postal Service to borrow from the U.S. Treasury. To make matters worse, the Postal Service has also been required to overpay into the Federal Employee Retirement System by eleven point four billion dollars over the past twenty one years. Their premiums have also been raised for two consecutive years. Compensation claims for the Postal Service are handled by the Department of Labor. A reimbursement for twenty eleven, amounting to one point two million dollars, is now due. You cannot have a viable business with such demands placed upon you. As I mentioned previously, there has been a six month moratorium placed on the Postal Service present plans for service cuts as requested by ten U.S. Senators representing states with large rural populations. I would imagine that this time will be used to address the problem of the prefunding and overpaying I just described. Ever since the introduction of a Postal Service corporation, the question arises: Do we want a business or a service? Under the present circumstances, the Postal Service cannot be one or the other and, in my opinion, is headed for disaster. It seems to me that a first step would be to authorize the Postal Service to become completely independent, as any business should be. Then we can find out just how efficient the organization really is. To continue to move toward reductions in service, that will especially impact the rural community, is not an intelligent business decision. If the present Postal Service cannot make it on its own, then consider some type of subsidized service. The idea that the United States still needs a postal network to help tie the country together is not yet dead. I am sure that there are people in our nation that would like to see the rural areas turned back to semi-wilderness with all citizens concentrated in urban areas. As most of you know, the rural community enjoys freedoms and independence that city dwellers will never attain. Freedoms are on the wane. Let's try and hold onto those that are left.

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