



# eNAPUS Legislative & Political Bulletin

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## Convention Gives Postmasters Chance to Query PRC



Rep. Jo Ann Emerson  
(R-MO)

In less than two weeks, NAPUS will convene its 104<sup>th</sup> annual convention, in St. Louis, MO. As part of the conference, the Government Relations Department will be conducting workshops on the status of NAPUS' legislative priorities, the 2008 Election, political action, and conducting an innovative straw poll on the Presidential election. We will host longtime NAPUS ally, champion of small Post Offices and hero to rural America, Rep. Jo Ann Emerson. In addition, Postmasters will receive greetings from House Federal Workforce, Postal Service and District of Columbia Subcommittee member Rep. Lacy Clay, and also Rep. Russ Carnahan. Finally, NAPUS delegates will be hearing from PRC Commissioner and Missouri native Tony Hammond, as well as the newest Commissioner, Nanci Langley.



Reps. Wm. Lacy Clay  
and Russ Carnahan  
(D-MO)

Reps. Emerson, Clay and Carnahan are all strong supporters of Postmasters and a viable Postal Service. Rep. Emerson co-chairs the Congressional Rural Caucus and is a member of the House Appropriations Committee. She is also the author of House Concurrent Resolution 13, which expresses the sense of the Congress that the United States Postal Service should provide high-quality postal services to all communities, including rural areas and small towns where post offices may not be self-sustaining, and should take all necessary steps to ensure that post offices are not closed or consolidated. Rep. Clay has been extremely active on the Postal Subcommittee, cautioning against privatization and actions that undermine quality postal services. Rep. Carnahan is a freshman member of the House, establishing himself as a loyal NAPUS friend.



PRC Commissioner  
Nanci Langley

Recognizing the importance of the Postal Regulatory Commission, its emerging relationship with the USPS, the new postal rate-setting regime, and the PRC's ongoing Universal Service Obligation study, NAPUS President Dale Goff strongly thought it would be a good idea to provide a forum about the PRC's role with Commissioner Nanci Langley. Ms. Langley has graciously agreed to tackle questions posed by NAPUS Postmasters at the Convention. Moreover, rather than limit those queries to those in St. Louis, we have decided to open up the questioning to all NAPUS Postmasters. Consequently, the NAPUS Government Relations Department has created a special website to which NAPUS members may send their questions: [napus.prc.question@gmail.com](mailto:napus.prc.question@gmail.com). It is our hope that NAPUS members will avail themselves to this opportunity. *For a question to be asked at the Convention, the Postmaster needs to identify him or herself, and their Post Office. In addition, the question must be received no later than 12 noon, on Tuesday, August 20.* We will name the questioner during the question period. Please be concise and topical. Therefore, we request that questions, including whatever preface is necessary, be no more than four sentences long. We will be posing as many questions as time permits.



PRC Commissioner  
Tony Hammond

## A Tale of Two Postal Services

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

Opening of Charles Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities*.

Last week, the Postal Board of Governors conducted a closed-door meeting. Subsequent to the meeting, Postal management reported on the exemplary Postal performance, while, also, provided a bleak financial picture. The question is how to reconcile these two conflicting characteristics of the Postal Service. Some postal observers have remarked, in jest, that it's easy to do better, if you have less mail to work.

The good news is that the USPS reported record-level on-time performance: 97% of overnight products reached their destination on time, 95% success for two-day service, and 94% for three-day mailed matter. Clearly, these numbers should reassure postal customers that mail is reaching their destination in timely manner. However, direct and bulk mail is not included in these numbers, so the large mailers are anxiously awaiting the implementation of the USPS "intelligent mail barcode" initiative, so they can verify numbers on their mail. The USPS states that the system will be in place by May 2009.

The bad news is that the USPS' third-quarter fiscal picture is ugly. The agency suffered a net loss of \$1.1 billion. In addition, its operating revenue fell by 2.4% and mail volume is down by 5.5%, as compared to the same period last year. Part of this *Postal Depression* can be linked to the sad state of the U.S. economy (e.g., high fuel and energy costs, lackluster economic growth and financial industry failures). However, ominously, PMG Jack Potter warned: "When the economy does rebound, mail volume may not return to previous levels." Despite the seriousness of the USPS finances, which, arguably, are attributable to "exigent" conditions, the USPS recently told Congress that it did not intend to file an "exigent rate case". Such a case would ask the PRC to approve a rate increase that exceeds the consumer price index. The next regularly scheduled annual CPI-adjusted rate increase will occur in May 2009.

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## Past Postal Privatization Proponent Prevails in Colorado Primary

On Tuesday, former CO Board of Education Chairman Jared Polis defeated former State Senate President Joan Fitzgerald by a 42%-38% margin, in the Democratic primary to succeed Senate Candidate Mark Udall (D-CO). This is considered safe Democratic seat. In 2001, Polis authored a paper promoting postal privatization: *Privatizing and Eliminating the Monopoly of the U.S. Postal Service*. It may be viewed at the Independence Institute website: <http://www.i2i.org/articles/4-2001.PDF>. At that time, Polis valued the USPS at \$94 billion. It is unclear whether Polis' valuation changed over the past seven years. In the same year as the paper was published, Rep. John McHugh conducted a hearing where former Rep. Dan Crane (R-IL) testified in support of legislation to privatize the USPS (HR 5702); Rep. McHugh challenged attempts to value the USPS. Indeed, with passage of Postal Reform and under present economic conditions, Polis might want to reconsider his arguments. Nonetheless, NAPUS is encouraging CO Postmasters to urge Democratic congressional candidate Polis to reconsider his views of seven years ago and support a universal governmental Postal Service.

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