

The Hawkeye Heartlander



Sept./Oct. 2023

Volume 1/Issue 5

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Disclosure: UMPA is not a union. It's a professional association. It is an organization of people who hold proud titles. It does not discriminate by race, gender, or salary level. It is a vehicle, an avenue, a method, and a tool that can and does help, assist, benefit, and encourage members to be better Post Masters.



President:

Greg Snow

First off, I want to thank all of you that joined us in Denver for this year's National Convention. It was amazing to see you all and get to know outside of work! I hope you all had a great time! I hope to see all of you again next August and hopefully a lot more from Iowa. Our Iowa Denver showing was one of the bigger groups and that just tells you how great you are!

Next year's National Convention August will be in the sunny Florida location of Orlando at the Caribe Resorts from August 24th through the 30th. If you haven't already booked your Hotel, I would suggest you start booking now. All rooms are suites so it is a perfect time to bring the families!

A few things I want to mention that I took away from convention this year is to make sure you are well informed on the new health plans coming up in 2025. Open season will take place in November of 2024 and you **MUST** choose your plan, otherwise it will be chosen for you. It will be comparable to what you have now, but who knows you better than you, don't leave it up to someone else concerning your health!

The second thing is that we as managers have the same rights as craft when it comes to being treated with respect and dignity from our bosses. We have the right to not be bullied, humiliated, or even harassed and that is covered in the "Postal Service's Policy on Workplace Harassment" dated March 26, 2020. It states and I quote:

"Prohibited Activities Harassment is the unwelcome verbal or physical conduct, which is so severe or perverse that it interferes or changes the conditions of one's employment by creating a hostile, intimidating, or abusive working environment."

The best example given in training was: what would the result be if we as managers treated our employees this way? Would we have either a grievance filed on our conduct or an EEO? If so, then it is not appropriate and must stop immediately. The remedy can be removal of the manager from their current job position. The main thing that was suggested was to speak up and let the manager know that it is inappropriate, hopefully, it was not meant to be offensive and will be corrected. If it continues, contact a CMR and we can start a consultative log and move it up the chain of command. I hope we can all move forward and have a workplace that we can be proud of for years to come, this includes all levels throughout the Postal Service.

Now on to exciting news, October is Fall Tour time and we will be having 6 different locations throughout the state and would be thrilled to have every member join a meeting with us. We planned them for Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays in hopes that you can attend.

We hope to see you all soon and as always keep up the great work and feel free to reach out when you need assistance. You are not alone and we have a great organization backing you!

Greg Snow



Secretary/Treasurer: Kerry Nichols

Another National Convention behind us. I always find them enlightening. We had a great turn out for the training sessions. For those of you who went, I hope you found value in them. I have not had a chance to look at the surveys yet. There are 534 of them! That will help guide us toward what trainings we offer for next year in Orlando.

I appreciate any time the PMG takes time out of his schedule to speak to us as a group. I did have a first timer sitting next to me who had heard him speak in Des Moines and she said that he shared some of the same information. That being said, these are the items I took note of:

The USPS is spending \$50-\$60 million a month in extra costs because we are converting employees to full time. I live that in my every day life! In case you were not aware, for the month of August, the IA-NE-SD district hired 108 non-career employees, and converted 56 to career. We hired 27 PTF employees off the street and separated 17. If we back that up and add in July, we hired 321 non-career employees, converted 157. Hired 50 PTF employees off the street and separated 31. That is a lot of movement!

I heard him say that “the only ones who are going to save the Postal Service are the men and women of the Postal Service.” What did that particularly mean to me? The same thing I have always said. We are in this together. We have to treat our employees with dignity and respect, the same as we need to demand it from our managers. If you are reading this article, that probably means you are a UPMA member. We collectively live by that mantra. It is the managers and the employees who are not yet members who need the message and the mentoring. Be that mentor for someone. Lead them by example.

Then on to Mr. Tulino. The only note I really wrote about his speech (because he would actually rather just take questions) is that we are an organization of 635,000 people with a budget of \$23 billion in labor costs. “We are a people organization and people are the engine.” And for those of you who are wondering, he did admit that he is willing to tinker with NPA. He also admitted to not being tied to doing hiring just one way. Speaking of which, I had asked him in January for a National ad campaign promoting the USPS as a place to work to support our job fair efforts. When I saw him in Denver I asked him how it was going. He told me it had been rolled out and was already airing. He said he would send me a copy. In the meantime, if you happen to see it airing, that idea came from Iowa!

In a nutshell, if you have an opportunity to attend a National Convention, you should! It is always well worth it.

National Convention: Denver CO Fun





VP Education: Rich Springer

Next Chapter!

As I write this article, I am enjoying my first month of retirement. I had been planning on retiring some time before the end of 2023, but the recent attitude of management towards Postmasters helped me make a quick decision to start a new chapter in my life. Thank you USPS for the last 35 plus years of service, but now it's time for me to move on. I am grateful that because of my Postmaster position, I was able to be an active UPMA member and gain countless friendships along the way. I will soon be joining the Postal Blue Book Help team and look forward to helping other employees set themselves up for a successful retirement.

For the seventh year in a row, the Iowa UPMA Chapter was presented the "STAR Chapter" award at the National Convention in Denver last month. All the Iowa members should take pride in knowing the Iowa Chapter is among the top chapters in all of UPMA. The hard work and dedication of all the past and present members of the Iowa Executive Board as well as all the Iowa members deserve a round of applause. A special thank you goes out to Iowa Secretary/Treasurer Kerry Nichols for all her hard work in collecting all the information, creating an outstanding power point, and submitting our presentation to the National UPMA Office. Be sure to thank her the next time you see her. Way to go Iowa!

The 7th Annual UPMA National Convention in Denver was another memorable convention. We had over 900 attendees this year, with the highest percentage of attendees being active postal employees just eking out the retired members.

Guest speaker Postmaster General Louis DeJoy continued his commitment with moving forward with his Vision and ten-year plan to achieve financial sustainability and service excellence. The next phase of the plan is to consolidate the delivery operations of more than 200 post offices and other facilities into large, regional hubs. In total, the USPS plans to consolidate 500 facilities that USPS processes and moves mail through down to about 65 or 75 regional hubs over the next ten years. Achieving this lofty goal is paramount in developing and maintaining the huge fleet of electric delivery vehicles the USPS has started to order to replace the antiquated LLV fleet.

The 2024 UPMA National Convention will be in Orlando in August. Start making your plans to attend now. Please continue to watch for more information as the Iowa executive board will be offering a stipend to all our members who wish to attend. You only have to attend a National Convention once to realize how great of an experience it is and that you won't want to miss anymore.

Council Bluffs IA will host the 2024 Iowa/Nebraska/South Dakota UMPA Tri-State Convention, April 26-28. Please let one of the Iowa board members know if there is anything you wish us to include in the convention program so we can start making plans now for it. Watch for more information to come and start making plans to attend.

Fall Tour is just around the corner; plan to attend a meeting near you.

Chapter 2- Rich

First Timer's review of National Convention

My first experience at National Convention was very fun! I very much enjoyed networking with people that understand and relate to what I experience in my everyday work life.

-Nickie Cleary Pocahontas Postmaster

My 1st experience was FUN! I am so glad I signed up for the convention. The IOWA group was amazing and helpful. It was a great experience and the people and knowledge there was unbelievable. Looking forward to the next experience!

-Cindy Jones Emmetsburg Postmaster

Attending the 7th Annual UMPA National Convention held in Denver, Colorado last month was my first ever experience. I cannot help myself expressing immense pleasure to participant in such a delightful and organized event. Throughout the entire conference, First Timers were warmly welcomed, celebrated, and recognized. I had a great time. The first day, we were warmly welcomed by UPMA Officers and organizers. We were given the task to collect business cards as we met as many conventioners as we could throughout the week. It was a competition to meet the most people with the winner earning a prize. This was a good time. We were celebrated as one of the largest First Timer groups and formally recognized. Our new Iowa Chapter President Greg Snow led the First Timers and Retirees across the stage in front of nearly a thousand conventioners. That was a blast!

-Randy Snow Mount Ayr Postmaster



Retiree President:

Ellen Opperman Postal Service Health Benefits Plan

After returning from Denver and our UPMA National Convention, I wanted to share some great information regarding PSHB Program. Of course, the implementation of the new PSHB program will affect ALL postal employees and annuitants, but I have been receiving increasing emails from our retirees with lots of questions. My hope is that this will help clear some things up. Please understand that the program is still evolving and will right up until its implementation January 1, 2025.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ITEM IS TO MAKE SURE THAT YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION IN OPM IS CURRENT AND UP TO DATE!!! The program will be administered by OPM and all communication regarding the new PSHB program will come from them, so it is imperative that your information is correct!

You will be required to select a health insurance plan in the PSHB program during the 2024 open season period, which will be November 11, 2024 to December 9, 2024. If you do not select a PSHB plan during this time, you will be automatically enrolled in a comparable PSHB plan. PSHB options and premiums will be available in Fall of 2024 along with instructions on how and when to enroll.

The PSHB program requires certain annuitants to enroll in Medicare Part B to continue PSHB coverage in retirement. **If you are an annuitant as of January 1, 2025, and did not enroll in Medicare Part B**, you **are not** required to enroll in Medicare Part B to continue your health insurance in the new PSHB program as your participation in Medicare B is voluntary.

If you are an **annuitant as of January 1, 2025, and are already enrolled in Medicare Part B** as of that date, you **are** required to remain enrolled in Medicare Part B to continue coverage under PSHB.

If you are an **annuitant entitled to Medicare Part A as of January 1, 2024 and did not enroll in Medicare Part B**, you and your covered, eligible family members may be able to participate in the special enrollment program (SEP) for Medicare Part B that starts on April 1, 2024.

Those who choose to enroll during the SEP will not need to pay a late enrollment penalty. Eligibility letters will be sent to annuitants and eligible family members in early 2024.

If you **retire between October 31, 2024, and December 31, 2024, and you are entitled to Medicare A**, you will have the option to enroll in Medicare Part b during a specific 8-month SEP immediately following your retirement date. If you wish to enroll you **MUST** contact the SSA to initiate enrollment if you are over the age of 65.

This is meant to be a synopsis of available information that we received at National Convention. Please rest assure that lots of information will be coming directly to you starting in April 2024. We were repeatedly told that multiple mailings will be going out to all eligible annuitants in the next year which is why it is imperative that your contact information is correct in OPM!!

I would also like to suggest that you enroll in www.keepingposted.org newsletter if you do not already receive it. Lots of valuable information in it!!!

I hope that you find this information helpful. Hopefully there will be more information to share during our Fall Tour next month! I hope to see many of you there!

Until next time.....Ellen



VP Membership:

Sherri Lingle

Hello all!

We all made it back from the National Convention in Denver and WOW what a week!

Wonderful venue and training. Colorado did a terrific job!

Outstanding people to get to meet and learn from both about their experiences with growth and development and what they would like to learn more about.

Worth the experience, so many things to learn about and so many terrific people to meet and learn from. There were so many people from all over the United States, each sharing and participating in lots of activities and events.

We met a lot of people this year and enjoyed a lot of extra time to meet and greet. I believe we had our first associate members at the Convention. I enjoyed the visit with them both. They were both rural carriers. We sat and talked about what they enjoyed and if they would recommend UPMA to others. They both stated definitely, and that they never knew that they could participate in something like UPMA, and they were so glad that someone thought of them. This is what our organization is all about. People thinking of People. We all have a lot to share with the other managers in the Postal Service. It is the Teamwork, experience sharing & sense of postal family commitment, that makes up the United Postmasters and Managers of America. We had 39 from Iowa in attendance. It was so nice to see all the familiar faces and smiles.

From the very first morning there, sitting in the church service, a retired Postmaster sang a beautiful song that had many of us tearing up and shedding some tears. She sang with such a feeling of love that we could feel the true meaning of the song. We are one, and we are there for each other. We went white water rafting (twice), climbed waterfalls, went to a baseball game, and we went to the opening season football game. There was not enough time each day to see and to learn about all that the convention has to offer. Each year at the convention, I always think I will get to do more things and see more and learn more, and every year I feel like there should have been one more day. This was one of those conventions. People with one common goal, one common focus, one common love. Next one will be in Orlando so please watch for information and sign up to join us.

There are so many things that are changing and moving around with in the Postal Service many of us are saying to ourselves, "what are they going to tell us we are late one that we should have done yesterday there are more changes coming and there isn't enough time in the day for us to know today what we were supposed to know and do last week. If you follow. We will be doing the fall tour soon and we will be looking for ideas on topics that you all are interested in learning about. I am asking you to please send us your thoughts and questions and what do you think we can help you with.

Our Fall tour will start on Oct 17 thru 19th and then the following week Oct 24th thru 26th. We are hoping to reach as many of you as can make it. Bring a fellow postal employee, you never know who or where our next manager may be.

Please feel free to text me or call me at 712-579-8636.

Sherri Lingle Postmaster

Manning IA 51455



VP Editor: **Merri Burgart**

New quarter, new counts

Now that National Convention is over and we are heading in to peak season try and stay ahead of the counts that are due for the new quarter starting October 1, 2023.

Just a friendly reminder to make sure you are counting the right way and always counting with two people. You should always count with the owner of the drawer if possible as well as one more person.

After you have counted always make sure the clerk has the most up to date login and password in a sealed envelope with a designated witness assigned just in case something happens and that owner of the drawer is not present. Also make sure that after the count is completed you update the 3368-P with the most current count.

If you have an inactive clerk which is classified as a clerk that has not been active in 30 days they need to be counted: money and money orders transferred correctly and the drawer needs to be closed.

If there are any questions feel free to contact the finance department and they can assist you they are a great resource with always being willing to help out.



Iowa PAC: Harry Healey Support PAC!

Ah, we are into my favorite season of the year. No, not wabbit season, Elmer Fudd! College football season.

If you listen real close you can hear fans singing songs this time of year with words such as, "The word is fight, fight, fight for Iowa" or "Oh we will fight, fight, fight for Iowa State." And for you real die-hard Drake fans, "Fights like a bulldog for victory!" Hey, it could happen.

So, this is the time of year I hear you sing you will fight for Iowa or Iowa State or even Drake. And I ask you, will you fight to protect your earned benefits by setting aside a little money for UPMA PAC? You can go to <http://www.unitedpma.org> to do just that. Or, if you want, you can send me a check made out to UPMA PAC and I will send it in for you. My address is still 1219 42nd St NE, Cedar Rapids IA 52402-5734. If you fill my mailbox with UPMA PAC checks maybe we can "shake down the thunder" (words from my favorite college fight song) on Capitol Hill and remind our elected representatives that we are still delivering through excessive heat, hurricanes, floods and even holdups. As such we have earned and continue to earn those benefits.



VP Legislative:

Jeff Stolz

UPMA National Convention was a great time. I would highly encourage all that didn't attend to attend next year in Orlando, Florida. I learned so much and was able to network with many Postmasters from all over the country.

I had training on Legislative/ PAC. I learned so much about both. I will be attending monthly ZOOM meeting with the lobbyist group we use to keep us updated on what is going on in Washington DC. They shared what things they are really working on currently. Number 1 item is the retirees' benefits. They said next thing they will concentrate on is Postmaster pay.

PAC conversation was interesting. They shared with us the amounts that UPMA has yearly for PAC. It was about \$450,000. They shared a list of other organizations that use PAC money and we as an organization were pretty much middle of the pack. They said we really need to be around \$800,000 as an organization. I would highly encourage signing up for ePAC. That way it comes right out of your check automatically. Also PAC keeps track of your career contributions. At Washington D.C. they are trying to set up a "fireside chat" with one of the congressmen. You can attend this if you have a career donation amount of \$2500 or more.

I was fortunate enough to win the heads and tails game at UPMA National Convention. It really surprised me because at UPMA State Convention I am always out after round one. And It was funny because security at the airport in Denver stopped me and had to have a conversation with me about the amount of money I was carrying with me.

Again please consider going to Orlando next year for the 8th UMPA National Convention. It will be an experience you will never forget.

Jeff Stoltz

Iowa Legislative VP/ PAC

Jeff Stolz wins PAC game



Doug Tulino Deputy PMG & Sheila Soppe



More Fun in Colorado



State of IA for dinner



State of IA First Timers

Johanna and Lane Hill sightseeing



New Delivery Vehicle



State of IA dinner



The Hawkeye Heartlander

A message from a first timer:

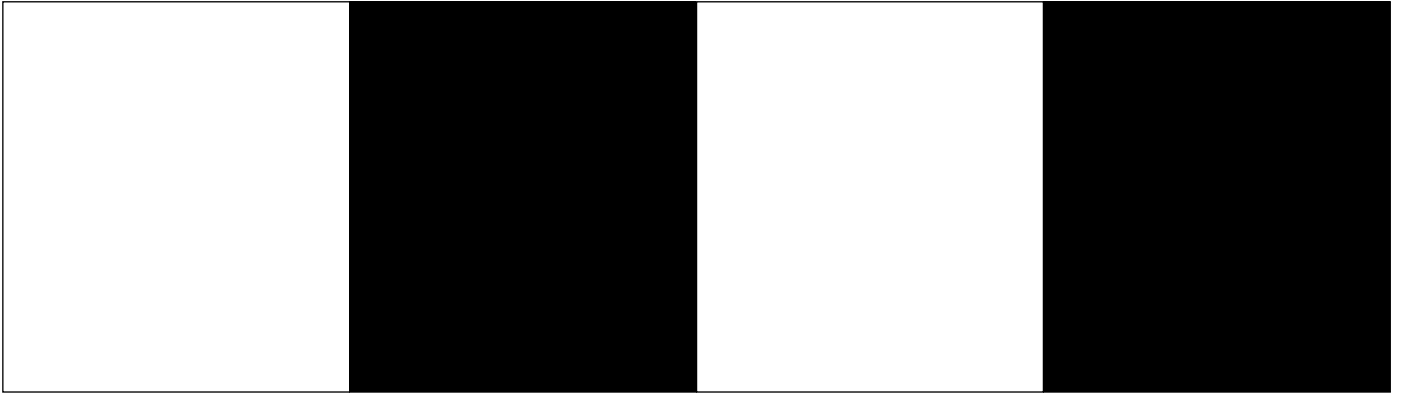
Sara Lindauer

Ahhh... Colorado! Oh how I missed you! I think this is my 5th time visiting. When I heard this year's national convention was in Colorado, I was ecstatic! I love the mountains. They are so massive and beautiful! Convention was downtown so you could catch me peering around buildings trying to get a glimpse of them. Luckily, I was able to get my fix as we took a day to travel to Colorado Springs. It was so nice just to gaze off in the distance and take a nice deep breath. Having that moment of peace was priceless.

One aspect I enjoy at national convention is the networking with other managers throughout the nation. I was able to talk to others about the environments they are working in. The craziness you all are working in is everywhere. You are definitely not alone in that regard. We heard from Louis DeJoy and Douglas Tulino. I appreciate the time they took to come and speak. However, all I got out of it was another rendition of the Delivering for America plan and the incredible progress that has been made. That's fine and dandy but I wanted to hear about how we are going to do to improve the work life of our employees. I think our executives are missing the target on improving the Postal Service by not investing enough in the people we have now. We need to focus more on teaching managers more on how to lead, coach, and motivate employees. There is far too much focus on hammering down and throwing out discipline. Needless to say, I was disappointed in the speeches given by these two gentlemen. I wanted to be inspired and given hope. That didn't happen.

I am in my last couple years in the Postal Service. I find myself hanging out with more and more retirees simply because they are friends that I have made over the years. The topic on tsp was brought up and I was asked what I planned to do with mine. I said that I thought about just leaving it so it can grow. Now that I listened to others and spoke to a couple vendors, I discovered that there may be better options that will result in drawing in a salary that is significantly more than what I am making now. No stress with more money – sign me up! Learning this was the highlight of my entire week! For all of you getting closer to retirement; you need to get to a convention and find out what's out there. Talk to retirees and to these vendors to see what options are out there! I think you will be pleasantly surprised! No one is going to approach you and provide you with this information. You need to pursue it!

If you can attend a national convention, do it. If anything, it will give you a break from your office. Even if you need to work remotely a couple hours a day just to keep things running smoothly, it's worth it. You need that support from others that are in the same situation you are in. You can get trained directly from people out of headquarters. Ask the questions that district doesn't seem to know. You never know what information you will get that will help you professionally or personally. Oh, and the food and entertainment are first class! It was nice to be spoiled for a bit!



**Fall Tours: Mark your calendar
now!**

**Fall Tour Sites: All
times are 6–9pm.**

Tuesday October 17th Pizza Ranch 104 N Runger Ave Sheldon, IA 51201	Wednesday October 18th Best Western Meeting Room 2023 7 th Ave N Clear Lake, IA 50428	Thursday October 19th The Edison Pub and Eatery 475 Northland Ave NE Cedar Rapids, IA 52402
Tuesday October 24th Jumbo Buffet 2015 E Washington ST Mount Pleasant, IA 52641	Wednesday October 25th Pizza Ranch 4954 86 th St Urbandale, IA 50322	Thursday October 26th Casa De Oro 900 Senate Ave Red Oak, IA 51566

Kerry Nichols

IA Secretary/Treasurer

1519 7th Ave

DeWitt, IA 52742

Periodicals

Postage Paid

Madrid, IA 50156

Iowa

Coming Soon-Fall Tours:

10/17-10/19/23 &

10/24-10/26/23

Looking Ahead:

Articles for the Newsletter (Nov/Dec.) will be Nov. 15th, 2023.

Submit to: Merri Burgart at iowaeditor2022@gmail.com