

Gem State News

THE IDAHO CHAPTER OF UNITED POSTMASTERS AND MANAGERS OF AMERICA

Insights from our President

Sue Ellen Law, Idaho State UPMA President

You Get Out Of It What You Put Into It

To start with I would like to take the time to thank those members who were able to make it to the State Convention in Boise, Idaho this year, July 7 – 11, 2023. Each year we ask members what topics you would like to have training on, and we do our best to bring that to the meetings.

This year as our State Convention was later in the summer and the mini survey was quickly approaching, the board felt it would be a good opportunity to go over what we had learned about the survey so far. At the time of the convention, we were all being pushed to make sure our carrier edit books were turned in and the route mapping was getting done so the mini survey could be executed with very little hold-ups. I would like to thank Marc Boyer for helping the members with any of their route questions.



Mr. Boyer brought his laptop to the conference and logged on to the live Postal site to show us how to problem solve the RRECS system.

The Idaho UPMA State Convention was very successful this year. Prior to the state conventions commencing, our national board asked every state to investigate the local by-laws and be sure to make any necessary changes to update them.

We happen to be one of the states who was still under the original bylaws adopted when the two associations combined into UPMA. Although the National bylaws have changed, the Idaho Chapter bylaws have never been updated from the original basic ones.

Continued on page 2



2023 UPMA National Convention in Denver, CO

VOTE NOW!!

For the 2024 Idaho State
UPMA Convention Site.
Information and QR Code
are on Page 3 of this issue!

Sue Ellen Law, continued from page 1

Members of the Idaho Chapter were issued a copy of the proposed changes in the last issue of the Gem State News and the members at the recent Idaho State Convention voted on the new bylaws. These changes were definitely needed and will better mirror the National bylaws, improving how we conduct our chapter affairs going forward.

As board members, while we appreciate those that were able to show up to convention, we also had higher hopes that more members would be involved. To be honest we all are getting told or asked, "What is the benefit of UPMA membership going to do for me." Well, to be honest, that can only be answered by you. You will get out of it what you put into it. If you feel that the chapter is not representing you the way you would like, perhaps instead of complaining you may want to get more involved.

We had elections this year and we were hoping that more new members would be involved and become part of the next terms executive board. Although that did not happen, we continue to have a strong executive board with members who want to represent you. We hope to see more members attend the next convention which will be held in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho May 31 - June 2, 2024. The more people involved, the stronger our organization will be.

As Dr. Colins stated at this year's National convention, he has a good relationship with UPMA and will strive to work on issues from the field. However, if you are not using the right chain of command by initially contacting the national office to resolve issues, you are not doing yourself any favors. We must follow the Consultation Log. This log is available to you as a member on the national UPMA website, www.unitedpma.org. There will be frequent changes to the log, so we have been advised to pull a new log for each problem/concern. Your UPMA representatives are here to help you! That is a huge member incentive. Although you are contacting a rep, you will need to take the first step and fill out as much of the Consultative Log as you can. Reach out to your representative if you have any questions when completing the log.

As we are concluding the 2nd mini mail survey, I hope all is going to turn out better than the 1st survey did. I am optimistic that the importance of doing a fair day's work for a fair day's wage is becoming the way our carriers view their jobs and they also understand the importance of doing the job correctly every day. This is the new way for their evaluations and to cheat at it is to cheat themselves. As we get ready for Peak season, I wish you all the best and for those that are leaving the service I wish you all the best as we close out the year.



Let Your Choice Count!

The 2024 Idaho UPMA Convention will be held in beautiful

Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, May 31—June 2, 2024

The Idaho Executive Board located two different sites where the convention can be held.
Please vote for the site of the 2024 Convention by scanning the QR Code below.

Hurry, the poll closes September 28, 2023!

Choice #1:

Coeur d'Alene Casino Resort & Hotel

- Rooms—\$148.00/night
- Daily conference room fee—\$300/day + 20% service fee
- Located approximately 45 minutes from Silverwood Park
- Airport Shuttle available
- Catered dinner available
- Website:

[The Best Casino Resort | Coeur d'Alene Casino Resort Hotel \(cdacasino.com\)](https://cdacasino.com)



Choice #2:

Staybridge Suites Coeur d'Alene

- Rooms—\$315.00/night and \$325.00/night
- Daily conference room fee—\$250/day
- Located approximately 30 minutes from Silverwood Park
- Website:

[Extended Stay Hotel in Coeur d'Alene | Staybridge Suites Coeur](https://staybridgesuites.com)



With either of the above choices, if enough people interested in a possible dinner cruise on Coeur d'Alene Lake contact us, we can add it to our agenda. Please email misssywoowoo@gmail.com if interested.

VOTE HERE!



To vote, scan QR code or go to
<https://fast-poll.com/poll/results/6beb54a8>

Khrista Holman, Secretary/Treasurer

Employees Are Not Numbers!

We are not numbers, and neither are our employees! We want good numbers and good employees, right? Well, we must ask ourselves how do we get what we want?

The topic I heard more than once at this year's National Convention was that we must treat people the way we want to be treated. I heard this from both Postmaster General, Louis DeJoy and Dr. Collins; each said they do not and are not talking to their employees the way we have been talked to.

"How do we fix this?"

The number one question from the attending members revolved around this question. According to the two speakers, the most important thing we can fix is how we deliver the message. Stand up for yourself and others. Be the voice for your fellow EAS on telecons if they are out of control. Be the voice of training and encouragement for your employees and not just the voice of criticism or discipline.

We are going through so much change, that it naturally becomes second nature to take the easy way out and assume the worst. It is easy to demand your expectations and assume everyone knows what you want. Be the trainer and the team leader we have all needed at one point or another. The leader we need now! *No one* is a mind reader and if we give an unclear message regarding our expectations, we will not get the numbers we need.

I have found that if I come to work for my employees, my employees will come to work for me. They will get



***Sue Ellen Law, Amye Ground-Madsen and Khrista Holman
in front of the Denver Courthouse***



the numbers we are seeking if we give them the tools and information needed.

Think about situations when you are only given secondhand or incomplete information. It causes confusion of what the expectation is. Or, when we are told after the fact of procedures, which we should have been performing last week, but now are being informed we are on a list for not completing that action. Not to mention, we are now being given direct orders to issue Investigative Interviews and discipline for everything.

We must follow our direct orders from our upper management (MPOO) just as they must follow direct orders from above. This is true for everyone, but being told what kind of discipline we issue should not be a preconceived notion. We have the right to train, or discipline, as we feel the correct way to handle each problem comes to us. The main thing I would like to stress to all members is to keep a full paper trail of all the action you are or have taken.

If you are called for an Investigative Interview, fill out the Consultative Issue log. This is new and can be found on the UPMA page at www.unitedpma.org. One of these should be filled out by any UPMA EAS that is having any kind of trouble and sent to our current Idaho UPMA President, Sue Ellen Law in Glens Ferry, Idaho. It is a step-by-step procession of the chain of command which we need to follow to have our voices heard.

In conclusion we cannot take everything personally. We need to be the voices and leaders our employees need. If we are not getting what we require from our leaders, take the lead in voicing what you need. Make sure you are asking the questions and passing on the information and documentation for everything good or bad, as well as protecting yourself along the way.

We as Employees Matter

We just returned from the National UPMA Convention in Denver Colorado, and I am so glad that we get to travel to different states each year. By noticing the differences in each state, it makes me really appreciate my home even more! I also love getting to hear from our Postal Headquarters people during each National Convention.

We tend to get so glum and down in our offices with all the negativity going on and issues with upper management pushing the numbers, that it's refreshing to hear our Headquarters people being so open and polite. They really want us to love our jobs and be respectful of and respected by our leaders. Although that does not always seem to be the message passed on by our upper management, I believe the top leaders strive for us all to be treated with dignity and respect.

***I only have nine years before I can retire,
and I've been counting down!***

I want to enjoy my job every day and be happy to work for the postal service; however, realizing I have started a countdown makes me grasp the idea I am not very happy with the current atmosphere at work. I hope our top leaders can help the current atmosphere improve. I will try from my side as well. I need to stay positive and help my manager to be a better person also.

Keep your head high, stay positive, and be a good leader for your team! We all get bogged down



Auntie Beth Riddle with Shannon Ferraro's son, Milo



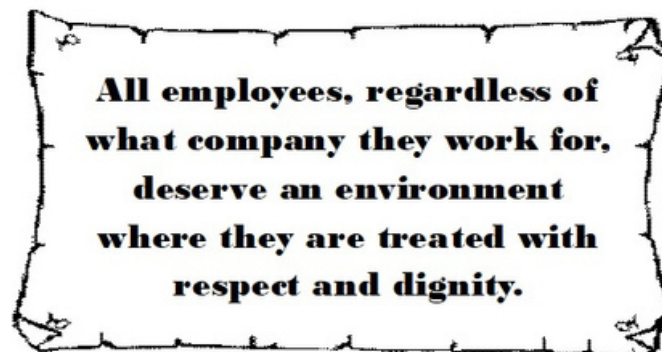
sometimes, but just know that this company wants you to be respected and treated well. The people matter to our top leaders and that was very encouraging to hear. Our MPOO's and District folks sometimes tend to forget we are people because they are searching for numbers. It is the people that matter.

Reach out to our UPMA state president if you are having issues in your office and she will take it up the line. Our State President can talk with the District Leaders and encourage them to change the atmosphere so we can all enjoy our jobs more.

Our next state convention May 31 - June 2, 2024, will be in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho and I am hoping that you all will attend! I can tell you without a doubt in my mind that if you do not attend State Convention you are missing out on great training, networking, people building, and receiving help in your own offices. Be sure to go to page 3 of this issue and vote for your site choice for 2024!

Please consider attending the National Convention next year in Orlando, Florida as well. It would be a great time to attend with your family to incorporate a National Convention with a family vacation, as Disney World and Universal Studios are nearby.

With Grace and Praise to God



Shannon Ferraro, VP, Legislative/PAC

UPMA National Convention in Denver

Greetings Idaho UPMA. I hope this newsletter finds you all healthy and happy. The UPMA National Convention was in Denver, Colorado this year. I have not been to the National Convention for a couple of years now; two years ago, due to Covid and staffing issues, and last year because I had a baby, Milo. I am fortunate to have been able to have Milo with me at the Convention this year and to have our Headquarters employees entertained by his outgoing nature and throwing of a ball. It was very refreshing to be encouraged by the fact they are aware we all have families and want us to be able to spend time with them.

The speakers from Headquarters spoke of duty realignment, as in not so much on a Postmaster's plate. When it came to pay talks, Deputy Postmaster General Doug Tulino stated last year he asked us to stay tuned and brought us a 3% pay increase. This year when asked to give us 5% pay increase he stated again, I ask you to stay tuned.

The Postal Service is now able to charge more for our services because of changes in legislation. We have been playing catch up with the other industries



whom offer similar services. Mr. Tulino's statement provides hope that with the increase in price, will come an increase in pay. We are still working on getting changes to legislation as it is an ongoing process. Your funds donated to PAC are strategically used in a bipartisan manner, to help supporters of the Post Office and necessary changes.

Please do not forget to give to PAC. You can sign up for PAC donations to come directly out of your check in the amount of your choice by filling out the e-pac form. Be very mindful to not lose sight of the important things in our lives and know there are people that understand and are working for each and every one of you.



Above: Doug Tulino, Deputy Postmaster General, Shannon Ferraro and her son, Milo

At Right: Shannon Ferraro checks out one of the brand new EV Postal Delivery Vehicles



Finding Your Zen with a Furry Critter

Each year, the UPMA National Convention committee sponsors an organization. This year, we were honored to sponsor the National Mill Dog Rescue. After loving on some of the rescue dogs that the rescue organization brought to Denver, and having a conversation with the executive director, Theresa Strader, I was inspired by some of the positive effects pets can have in our lives. I reflected on the past several years and concluded that my pets have been an extremely important part of my life, not just for company and entertainment, but to alleviate some of the stress I have encumbered. In a fast-paced world where stress seems to be a companion, finding effective ways to alleviate stress has become a crucial pursuit for many.

When I retired, I found that I still could not overcome the stress I had endured while working. Though there are various methods available, I feel I undervalued the immense source of stress relief that pets can offer. I have been incredibly blessed to have my three small dogs to help me in my transition from working for the Postal Service, to being a retiree trying to find a new purpose for my life. Whether it is a wagging tail, an excited hello, or a nuzzle of affection, I have recognized that the presence of my dogs has remarkable effects on my mental and emotional well-being.

Upon some research, I learned the connection between pets and stress relief is not merely anecdotal. Scientific research supports the notion that interacting with animals can have a positive impact on our stress levels. Interacting with pets, such as petting a cat or playing with a dog, triggers the release of oxytocin. Oxytocin promotes feelings of trust, connection, and overall well-being, which can help reduce stress and anxiety. It has been referred to as the love hormone, which is so telling of the unconditional love pets give.

Furthermore, the presence of pets can lower cortisol levels, a hormone associated with stress. Studies have shown that compared to non-pet owners, pet owners tend to have lower cortisol levels during stressful situations. Spending time with a beloved pet can help buffer the body's stress response, leading to a calmer state of mind.



One reason our pets help us feel warm and fuzzy is that they give us unconditional love and acceptance. Pets offer a non-judgmental and unwavering source of love and acceptance. They do not care about our flaws or stresses, rather they simply provide comfort and companionship, creating a haven from the challenges of daily life.

Pets, particularly dogs, encourage physical activity through walks, playtime, and outdoor adventures. Engaging in physical activities with pets not only provides exercise but also encourages a deeper connection with nature.

Choosing a pet that fits with your lifestyle, preferences, and available time is important. I prefer to have smaller dogs who can fit in my lap when I'm enjoying some down time or ride along in the car when I go on adventures. Other people choose larger pets to go on walks or bike rides with them. While the benefits of pet companionship are numerous, owning a pet is a long-term commitment that requires responsibility and care. Factors such as the pet's size, energy level, and grooming needs should be considered to ensure a harmonious connection. Shelters and rescues are a wonderful place to find your hearts companion.

In a world filled with various stress-relief methods, I have found the therapeutic effects of a pet's unconditional affection to be a natural and heartwarming method. From the calming presence of cats to the playful joy of dogs, pets have the remarkable ability to uplift our spirits and provide comfort and support during challenging times. So, whether you're a devoted dog lover, a cat enthusiast, or an admirer of any other furry friends, remember that the positive powers of pets are always there to provide a well-deserved break from the stresses of life.



Hello Fellow and Future Retirees

For example, there will be a health benefit change effective January 1, 2025, which will be administered by OPM. You will be required to select a health insurance plan during the 2024 open season which starts November 11, 2024, and ends December 9, 2024. If you do not select a plan, a plan closely fitting your current plan will be selected for you. Plan options and premium information will be available in fall 2024. More information will be forthcoming as time gets closer and you will be able to compare plans at that time.

The Idaho Chapter retired is becoming active again and I would like to hear from you. Your dues will go to keep the chapter going so we might want to have an event in your area. Did you know that we have a



You will see in this newsletter that next year's state convention will be in the Coeur D'Alene area May 31 - June 2, 2024, and I am offering you my personal invitation to attend. Also look for a post card coming from the retiree board as we get the retiree chapter going again. My phone number is 208-201-8047. Call me any time.

I like to see old and new people at these events.
ARE YOU ONE OF THEM?

Dory Wright Memorial Scholarship

The Dory Wright Memorial Scholarship is a wonderful tradition that has continued for many years, in which a large number of students have benefited over the years.

This scholarship fund is almost out of funds.

Because the scholarship is such a wonderful cause to help deserving students attend a higher level of education, please consider donating to keep it going.

Reach out to Ginny Greger, Retiree Secretary/Treasurer or Diane Jensen, Retiree President to make a donation.



Juan Garcia, Retiree Vice President

Come to Convention

The 7th National UPMA Convention was held in Denver, Co August 26 – September 1, 2023, and I just returned from attending.

Edmund Carley, UPMA National President, welcomed us to Denver, and deeply emphasized that increasing UPMA Membership should currently be our priority. The more members we have the louder our voice.

President Edmund raised another important issue. As Managers, we need to be good leaders and mentors so when our employees are entrusted to take on leadership roles, they are best prepared to accept those roles, as well as understand what they are getting into.

On Monday, August 28th, we heard from the Postmaster General, Louis DeJoy. He pointed out that we need to be ready for change. The Postal Service has been stagnated for too long and change is necessary to prepare for the future. It will require good management and leadership to achieve optimization of the changes. We will have digital disruption, package service issues and so on. PMG DeJoy



***Postmaster General, Louis DeJoy addresses the attendees
at the UPMA National Convention in Denver***



cautioned us to not let the modifications take away from the USPS' main priority which is getting the mail out to our customers. The Postal Service is building upon ground transportation so it can utilize all the resources which are already in place. This will go a long way to provide better service once implemented and save the Postal Service money.

My suggestion on learning the inside happenings on what is going on at the Postal Service, would be for you attend a convention! Come to our annual state convention, or better yet, attend a National Convention. Attending either option will immeasurably increase your information and training for the USPS. We look forward to recognizing you as a first timer!





The Idaho Chapter participated in their first States Night, handing out Huckleberry Taffy, Idaho Potato Candy Bars, Huckleberry Gem Candy Bars, GoGo Squeeze packets, Idaho Freeze Dried Hashbrowns and other Idaho novelties. It was a success!



First night Banquet and National Awards



Denver Capitol



Western Banquet, Final Night of the Denver Convention



Denver Courthouse

Making Memories in Denver, Colorado

MEMBER BENEFITS

Benefits of Joining UPMA as a Postmaster, Manager, Supervisor or EAS Professional

- ✓ UPMA is the only management organization that can represent you at Postal Headquarters on specific Postmaster issues, including the planning and development of pay policies and schedules and fringe benefit programs.
- ✓ Annual national and chapter conventions that offer training to help you be successful.
- ✓ National officers serve one term only in their current positions.
- ✓ As an active member, you have the privilege to vote and hold leadership positions at all levels of the organization.
- ✓ A national website—unitedpma.org—offering the latest information regarding the organization, legislative issues, online training videos and Postal Service information that affects your career.
- ✓ A national magazine and chapter publications that contain information important to you in your current position and will help you in your future endeavors.
- ✓ Annual national and chapter conventions that offer training to help you be successful.
- ✓ As a UPMA member you have access to the network of Adverse Action Member reps, should the need arise. As an active EAS member of UPMA for at least one year prior to the date of an initial proposed adverse action you are eligible for the Legal Defense Plan.



Scan the QR Code today
to fill out a PS Form 1187
and enjoy your
FIRST YEAR FREE!

Benefits of Joining UPMA as an Associate

- ✓ UPMA wants to help you meet your goals and is the premier management organization that allows you to become a member before being promoted to an EAS position.
- ✓ A network of active postal employees who will help prepare you to take advantage of opportunities for upward mobility.
- ✓ All national UPMA leaders and chapter presidents are current USPS employees.
- ✓ A national website—unitedpma.org—offering the latest information regarding the organization, legislative issues, online training videos and Postal Service information that affects your career.
- ✓ A national magazine and chapter publications that contain information important to you and in your future endeavors.
- ✓ Annual national and chapter conventions that offer training to help you be successful.

Idaho Executive Board thru December 31, 2023

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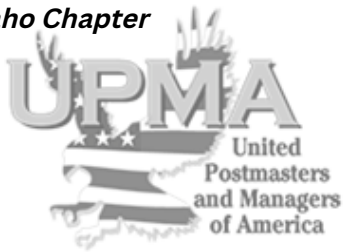
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Idaho Chapter



Pocatello in the Fall - Buckskin Rd