*Editor's note: The following is an editorial from MMC publisher and CEO Patrick J. Wood encouraging readers to contact their U.S. senators and congressional representatives regarding concerns over USPS service and costs. WNA members are encouraged to use all or part of the editorial as they see fit.*

**Please, Mr. Postman**

Dear Reader,

It’s no secret that newspapers have been attacked on all sides. The tech giants (Facebook, Google) co-opted our local news content and related audiences, redistributing our content without reimbursing us for it. Amazon and other web-based firms usurped large retail store channels and devastated their revenues. And the pandemic has temporarily or permanently closed many small- and medium-sized businesses that relied heavily on newspapers to bring customers into their stores.

This retail smack-down has forced newspapers to adapt or die. Our adaptation effort at Multi Media Channels has included asking key suppliers for a temporary rate cut to help us survive the pandemic. All of our suppliers have partnered with us in this effort, understanding that by helping us to survive, they insured their own future financial health.

Did I say all? No, it is all but one — the U.S. Postal Service did not give us a discount. A letter was sent to USPS Chairman Robert Duncan, Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, and U.S. Senators Ron Johnson, Tammy Baldwin, and Tom Carper. In response, we heard crickets and nothing else. The letter was re-sent to the above and follow up phone calls were made, eliciting one email response stating, “No doubt you will receive a formal response soon.” — government-speak for “Don’t hold your breath.”

The USPS is essential to millions of Americans, delivering medicines and other necessities. Since Jan. 1, MMC has diverted a quarter million community publications each week to the USPS. Our switch to the mail has resulted in many small-town post offices gaining an extra 10% of revenues. It’s an enormous expenditure for this small family-owned company.

Three issues are relevant to the symbiotic relationship between the U.S. Postal Service and newspapers: access, affordability, and quality of service.

 **1. Access.** Many communities, especially the smaller, more rural ones with little access to digital marketing channels, rely heavily on the local paper to maintain awareness of their business. The USPS is crucial to maintaining that access.

 **2. Affordability.** Some large mailers may be able to afford to pay more to keep the post office channel of distribution open and healthy; newspaper companies cannot. At the end of the day, it is the federal government’s responsibility to keep the mail moving. We believe the USPS should reduce periodical rates by 20% to 50% for newspapers for the next 12 weeks to help them manage through these most difficult of times. Without this temporary help, newspapers will be forced to cut delivery to some areas, cut the frequency of issues to be published, or close down for good. This would be a devastating loss for communities relying on these key pillars of local economic life.

 **3. Quality of Service.** Most Americans believe it reasonable to expect the mail — including their local newspapers — to arrive when it is supposed to arrive. In the absence of accountability, the post office is free to manage the flow of mail however it wishes. A mechanism or regulatory body to monitor quality of service should be put in place to ensure reliability and timeliness of the mail.

On the above basis, we are asking for your help. Please contact your U.S. senators and congressional representatives echoing these concerns. Use this column or parts of this column asking them to move these issues higher on their list of priorities since we depend heavily on the post office to deliver not only our local newspapers but also our medicines and other crucial supplies during the pandemic.

Patrick J Wood

Publisher and CEO

Multi Media Channels