

**National Association of Postmasters of the U.S. (NAPUS) President Tony Leonardi:  
An Advocate on Behalf of a New, Reinvigorated USPS**

“I firmly believe the post office will play a critical role in the future viability of this Service,” new NAPUS President Tony Leonardi tells attendees at Conference 2014.

It seems simple enough. “If our services are important, buildings won’t be closed. Our mutual goal as lessors and postmasters should be to make the post office relevant to the needs of the communities that they serve. The way to do that is through legislative action, providing post offices with opportunities to attract customers by selling products and services that communities want and need,” says Tony.

It’s no longer enough just to provide universal mail service.

And, post offices can do so much more. According to Tony, “We have hundreds of ideas. Wouldn’t you like to go to the post office to renew your driver’s license instead of the DMV?” NAPUS has offered Congress innovative ideas that will generate revenue. “We already know where you live; we already have the ability to verify identity, residential addresses. We can help our neighbors with debit cards, basic banking services like bill paying, making deposits and withdrawing funds,” he adds. The USPS Office of Inspector General says partnering with financial institutions for these services could generate \$9 billion annually. After a natural disaster, post offices can distribute FEMA and Small Business Administration cash cards.

The financial burden of the mandatory requirement to pre-fund 80% of its retiree health benefits over a 10-year period has hurt the Postal Service, which has been unable to make its last two payments and won’t make the one due September 30<sup>th</sup>. Plus, the USPS has over-funded its pension system due to old-fashioned and controversial accounting methods. The Office of Inspector General says the organization has made excess contributions of \$72 billion, although some disagree with that figure. There’s no dispute with the \$6 billion overfunding number included in the President’s FY 2015 budget. That money could be better spent on improvements.

“It’s hard to get Congress to act,” continues Tony, but he advises lessors to stay on top of postal reform and be aware of potential changes, and adds, “We need to make sure the right bill gets passed so we’re all making money and no one will be looking to close buildings.”

The POSTPlan puts small, medium and even large post offices in jeopardy, but reducing hours, and establishing village post offices using non-postal employees creates the impression that postal buildings are unnecessary. Not true. Instead, Tony suggests, “We need to focus on enhancing what’s available in the building.”

“Together we need to show how to maximize the use of post offices to generate revenue, thereby ensuring the post office remains relevant and supports a viable postal network.”