



American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

1300 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005

January 7, 2009

William Burrus
President
(202) 842-4246

The Honorable Mayor Adrian M. Fenty
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 316
Washington, DC 20004

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Dear Mayor Fenty:

We applaud you for communicating with employees of the D.C. government on current issues and for providing them with helpful hints through an electronic newsletter. Unfortunately, however, the December 2008 edition of the *Insider* includes an item that is factually incorrect, and the recommendation it offers would cause harm to the nation's communication system and thousands of your loyal constituents.

The article, "Send Your Holiday Cards Electronically" would damage the United States Postal Service at a time when it is suffering from reduced mail volume and increasing deficits. Since the founding of our country, the Postal Service has fulfilled its constitutional mission of binding the nation together.

In recent years, electronic messages have replaced hard-copy mail for many business and personal transactions, but despite these diversions, mail continues to serve the communication needs of our citizens. Simply put, mail is woven into the fabric of our nation.

Over 9 million workers and 10 percent of the Gross Domestic Product is directly related to mail, so if the suggestion to send holiday greetings electronically is applied to other uses of the mail, the consequences to the economy, as well as to 700,000 postal employees, would be devastating.

The conclusion that converting holiday cards to electronic messages would have a positive affect on the use of energy ignores the fact that the Postal Service serves every home and business six days per week; the absence of these cards would not eliminate the daily visit to the home. In fact, the reduction of volume increases the cost of delivery for the remaining mail.

The Postal Service is firmly committed to making a major contribution to an eco-friendly environment, and in this age of limited personal contact it is debatable if an

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e-mail message, camouflaged as a holiday card, conveys the same message as a handwritten note of good cheer. And we note that paper and ink are less damaging to the environment than discarded computers.

We know the message was well intentioned, but we urge you to lend your support to the 7,000 postal employees in the metropolitan area by endorsing the continuation of communications by all Americans. not only those who are engaged electronically.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of William Burrus in black ink.

William Burrus, President
American Postal Workers Union

Handwritten signature of Dena Briscoe in black ink.

Dena Briscoe, President
Nation's Capitol Southern MD Area Local

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