

The Hawkeye Heartlander

Upcoming EVENTS

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Jan./Feb. 2024

Volume 1/Issue 1

Iowa Board Members:

President: Greg Snow

Postmaster: Clarion

W) 515.532.3182 C) 515.371.1094

Email: snowteam6@yahoo.com

Past President: Jeff Arment

Postmaster: Conrad

W) 641.366.2646 C) 641.751.9141

Email: armje@mchsi.com

VP-Education-Richard Springer

Postmaster: Fulton, Il

W) 815.589.2020 C) 563. 249.4242

Email: moonlightingdj@mchsi.com

VP-Membership-Sherri Lingle

Postmaster: Manning

W) 712.653.3414 C) 712.579.8636

Email: sherrilingle4@gmail.com

VP Legislative/PAC-Jeff Stolz

Postmaster: Keosauqua

C) 641.919.4628

Email: keotapostmaster@hotmail.com

VP-Communications/Editor-Merri Burgart

Postmaster: Waverly

W) 319.352.4395 C) 319.240.6936

Email: lowaeditor2022@gmail.com

Secretary/Treasurer: Kerry Nichols

Headquarters: HR

W) 563.271.1112 C) 309.948.4133

Email: kerrysh12@gmail.com

Retiree President-Ellen Opperman

Retired from Bettendorf Post Office

C) 563.940.3979

Email: eopper1234@hotmail.com

Iowa Chapter Member Reps:

Aimee Quick: 641.521.9822

Merri Burgart: 319-240-6936

Greg Snow: 515.371.1094

Ellen Opperman: 563.940.3979

Sara Lindauer: 563.271.2815

Wanda Lenhart: 712-260-5025

Sherri Lingle: 712-579-8636

National Office Directory: www.unitedpma.org

National Office Number: 703.683.9027

Please send Address Changes to:

The Hawkeye Heartlander

c/o Kerry Nichols-Secretary/Treasurer

1519 7th Ave

DeWitt, IA 52742

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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

Congratulations, you made it through Peak Season, hopefully things have slowed down and are back to “normal.” You all should be proud of you and your employees; you all deserve more praise than anyone will show. I want to thank you for all the hard work you put in, from carrying City and Rural mail to the added clerk hours used to help provide the excellent service to our customers. I know it has been stressful, but you made it through! Pat yourself on your back, you deserve it.

The next big event for Iowa UPMA will be the first ever Tri-State Convention in Council Bluffs on April 26th through April 28th. Our District Manager is planning on having another training day on Friday the 26th. The tentative agreement is to have travel and the overnight stay Thursday night covered by the district. So make sure you plan on attending and then stay with us the whole weekend. We have great plans including additional training and exciting entertainment both Friday and Saturday night, including an amazing live band Saturday night, called Finding Dixie!

Please come enjoy the weekend with your fellow Postmasters, Supervisors, Managers and associate members. This should be an amazing experience having Nebraska and South Dakota join us in our Convention, 3 times the fun with the 3 states. The hotel is on the river and within walking distance to a large casino and also real close to the Omaha Zoo.

In January a few of us board members had the opportunity to tour the 2024 National Convention site of the Caribe Royale Resort in Orlando Florida and the resort is absolutely beautiful. The dates are August 25th through August 30th. The resort is very family friendly, onsite restaurants, an arcade, pool and a water park. Shuttles are also available to the major theme parks. The resort has amazing suites that have a sofa bed with plenty of room for families. Disney is just a hop skip and jump away, along with Universal Studios.

The Iowa board has continued to offer the \$500 incentive Stipend that is available if you come and participate in both the Tri-State Convention and the National Convention. This is great way to offset some expenses of coming to Orlando and learning more about what UPMA is doing for us. If you can share the suites then the cost for a wonderful time is cut in half!

The next topic I want to touch base on are the issues coming from all of you, is the selection process for Postmaster positions. What does your eCareer profile say about you and the position you are applying for? Does it follow the “STAR” format, which is Situation, Task, Action, and Result? Remember that the application must also include the qualifications that are required for the position, try to touch base on all the qualifications listed on the application. Doing this should get you past the Review committee and into an interview. The review committee has standards they must follow and missing one of the qualifications can knock you out of the running for an interview. If you did not get an interview, reach out to those members on the review committee and request the reasons and why their interpretation of your qualifications was not sufficient for the next step.

Once you hear their reasonings you can review your eCareer, make the corrections before the next opening and then send your profile to other people that have been on review committees and have them critique yours. Then you will be on your way to the next adventure.

I want to say again just how well you are doing for your employees and our customers. Without your hard work and perseverance in the face of adversary we would fail, and you will not let that happen. For that I applaud you. Always remember you are not alone, you have over 200 other Postmasters in your corner and fighting the same battle. Enlist your supervisors and your employees to help fight the negativity that we face in our day-to-day battles. If we band together we can all be successful. Don't give up, and don't give in!

I want to apologize if I have missed your call as I too am fighting the same battles you are and sometimes, I get busy and distracted. It is not intentional and I am finally getting caught up and getting my feet under me as President.

If you have concerns or issues, please give me a call, If I do not answer, leave your name and number and I will return your call. The same goes for all the Chapter Member Reps, they are there ready to help.

Greg Snow

515-371-1094



VP Education:

Rich Springer

Think Warm

Thoughts!

It's time to register for the 2024 Iowa/Nebraska/South Dakota UPMA Tri-State Convention, which is being held at the Holiday Inn and Ameristar Casino in Council Bluffs Iowa April 26-28. As always, walk-in's are welcome.

This year's registration is \$50.00, which will be reimbursed if registered by April 15th. You must check in at the convention to claim your reimbursement. Don't miss out on attending this year's convention with a reimbursable registration.

Your board has been working hard preparing for this year's convention; including excellent training, incredible speakers, unbelievable raffle items, great door prizes, fantastic meals and outstanding activities.

Be sure to volunteer to help out during the convention by selecting a committee on the registration form. We appreciate any and all help, as it takes many people to run a successful convention.

We will be voting on proposed National Constitutional and Bylaw changes, Central Area National Vice President as well as two Iowa Executive Vice Presidents and the Iowa Secretary/Treasurer. I encourage any and all active members to exercise their right to get more involved and run for a position. Casting votes is the best way for all members' voices to be heard.

Please take time to review the working program for the convention that is included in this issue of the Hawkeye Heart Lander.

Watch for more information about a golf outing on Thursday.

Stay warm my Friends!

Rich



Retiree President:

Ellen Opperman

Postal Service Health Benefits

Since Mother Nature prevented me from attending the National Membership meeting in Orlando FL, I decided I might as well snuggle in and knock out my article!!

Some of you may find this information repetitious, however, I feel it is my duty to keep the retirees abreast of all information regarding the new PHSB program, so here is the latest info that I have received.

You are required to select a health insurance plan in the PSHB Program during the **2024 open** season period from Nov 11, 2024-December 9, 2024.

PSHB plan options and premium information will be available in October 2024.

OPM will launch a new enrollment platform for health insurance. Information on how to make elections using the new system will be available prior to the 2024 Open season.

If you are an **annuitant as of January 1, 2025, and not currently participating in Medicare Part B**, you **ARE NOT** required to enroll in Medicare Part B to continue your health insurance coverage in the new PSHB Program. Participation in Medicare Part B is voluntary, however, enrollment in Medicare Part B may reduce overall cost for health care-related expenses and may provide a greater value.

Your covered spouse and eligible family members will also not be required to enroll in Medicare Part B even if they are 65 or older, however, enrollment in Medicare Part B may reduce overall cost for health-care related expenses and may provide greater value.

NOTE: If you are an **annuitant as of January 1, 2025, and are already enrolled in Medicare Part B**, 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 (typically at age 65) prior to January 1, 2024, and have not enrolled in Medicare Part**, you and your covered, eligible family members may be able to participate in the special enrollment period (SEP) for Medicare Part B that start on April 1, 2024. Those who enroll during the SEP will not need to pay the 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 are entitled to Medicare Part A (typically at age 65)**, you will have the option to enroll in Medicare Part B during a specific eight-month special enrollment period immediately following your retirement date. If you wish to enroll, you **MUST** contact the Social Security Administration (SSA) to initiate enrollment if you are over the age of 65.

As a rule, spousal and family member PSHB coverage is based on the primary subscriber's eligibility. If the primary subscriber is not required to join Medicare Part B, neither will the dependent family members. Likewise, if you qualify for SEP, so will your covered family members. (FACT SHEET- USPS)

I certainly hope that this information comes in handy for all the retirees and I will continue to share as it becomes available. It is also my plan to have our National Retiree representative at our State Convention bring us as up to date information as possible, so mark your calendars to attend!

Until next time.....Ellen

Dodge Riverside Golf Club

2 Harrahs Blvd
Council Bluffs IA 51501

I hope we can put together a successful golf outing this year. This outing is just for fun, so your level of golf is not important. Last year we had eight people and I hope we can double that number this year. Dodge Riverside Golf Club is nestled along the Missouri River and provides outstanding views of the Omaha Metro. Located just minutes from downtown Omaha, Dodge Riverside is an excellent golfing destination that provides an 18-hole, par 72 layout, outstanding food and drink at the Riverside Grille, and a relaxed atmosphere.

Dodge Riverside is 6,400 yards of subtle, rolling terrain. It is coupled with close proximity from green to tee, making it one of the best-walking courses in the Council Bluffs/Omaha area. We welcome walkers at all times and have confidence that you will find that experience enjoyable.

Thursday, April 25th

Meet at Club House: 12:30 (tentative)

Tee time: 1:00pm (tentative)

Please let Rich Springer know if you are planning on joining the golf outing.

Call or text 563-249-4242

Top 10 Reasons to attend the 2024 UPMA Tri-State Convention

- 10) **Lewis & Clark scenic overlook.**
- 9) **Union Pacific Railroad Museum.**
- 8) **Ameristar Casino with inside walking path from Holiday Inn Suites.**
- 7) **Beautiful view of the Missouri River from the convention center.**
- 6) **Three amazing days of reconnecting with old friends, making new ones and networking!**
- 5) **Three incredible meals and two nights of fun entertainment.**
- 4) **Training on the most up to date topics effecting Postmasters & EAS.**
- 3) **Iowa-Nebraska-South Dakota District Manager Lisse Garrett to speak.**
- 2) **Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium ranked one of the world's best zoos.**

National Convention Stipend

The Iowa UPMA Executive Board has developed a plan to offer a stipend of up to \$500.00 for any Iowa Chapter Member who attends both the 2024 Iowa Chapter Convention at the Holiday Inn and Suites in Council Bluffs and the 2024 National Convention at the Caribe Royale Resort in Orlando Florida.

Qualifications:

1. Iowa UPMA member in good standing.
2. Register and attend both conventions.
3. Payee certifies that they attended all general sessions, mandatory meetings and at least one training session, if offered at event.
4. Expense voucher must be submitted to the Chapter Secretary/Treasurer no later than September 20th, 2024.

Iowa/Nebraska/South Dakota - UPMA 2024 Tri-State Convention

April 26-28, 2024

Council Bluffs Iowa

First Name (as it should appear on your badge): _____

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Office _____ Office Zip _____

Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please note: one attendee per registration form. First Timer.

Title (please check the one that applies)

Postmaster/Manager Postmaster Retired Associate Member Guest/Child

Supervisor OIC PMR Title: _____

Holiday Inn & Suites-I-29

2202 River Road

Council Bluffs IA 51501

712-322-5050

Room Rate: - \$115.00/\$125.00 plus taxes (ask for the UPMA rate). Room block expires March 26th, 2024.

You are responsible for booking your own room.

Committee (please check the one that you would like to volunteer to assist with)

Hospitality Room PAC/Auction Sergeant at Arms/Teller Other: _____

Registration/Deposit Fee: (Please circle the one that applies)

UPMA Members On or before April 15th, 2024 – reimbursed* at check-in \$50.00

UPMA Members after April 15th, 2024 - non-refundable \$50.00

Non-Member USPS employees - non-refundable \$50.00

Guests and Children – non-USPS employees – non-refundable \$30.00

* All Iowa UPMA members will be reimbursed the registration fee only at the registration table during check-in if it was submitted prior to April 15th 2024, making registration FREE!

Please mail completed form, with payment in full, Check payable to **Iowa UPMA**, to:

Kerry Nichols, Secretary/Treasurer

Iowa Chapter of UPMA

FRIDAY APRIL 26, 2024

7:30am	Registration opens	Heartland Ballroom
8:00	Greg Snow– Iowa UPMA President - Call to Order Invocation Presentation of Colors Recognition of First Timers First timers - Pledge of Allegiance Opening Entertainment Presidents - Welcome Vendor Introductions	Heartland Ballroom Vendors located in General Dodge room
8:30	Lisse Garrett- IA-NE-SD District Manager	Heartland Ballroom
9:30	Break	
9:45	IA-NE-SD District Training	Heartland Ballroom
12:00	Lunch provided by IA-NE-SD District	Heartland Ballroom
1:00	IA-NE-SD District Training	Heartland Ballroom
3:00	Break	
3:15	IA-NE-SD District Training	Heartland Ballroom
4:30	Postmaster Installation	Heartland Ballroom
4:30	Hospitality Suite opens Room	
6:00	Dinner	Heartland Ballroom
6:30	PAC / Scholarship Auction	Heartland Ballroom
8:00	Games	Heartland Ballroom

SATURDAY APRIL 27, 2024

9:00am	Door Prize Drawing (must be present to win) Registration opens	Heartland Ballroom
9:00	Edmund Carley - National UPMA President National Articles and By-Laws Proposed Changes & voting	Heartland Ballroom
10:30	Break	
10:45	Brian McLaughlin- Legislative/PAC Skype	Heartland Ballroom

11:30	National President Candidate – Tony Leonardi National Vice President North Area Candidates Jim Maher & Jason Croshaw	Heartland Ballroom
11:50	Elections for National Officers	Heartland Ballroom
12:00	Lunch	Heartland Ballroom
1:30	Chapter Business Meetings Iowa – Heartland Ballroom Nebraska – Lewis & Clark South Dakota – Kanesville room	
3:30	Chapter retirees meeting Iowa – Heartland Ballroom Nebraska – Lewis & Clark South Dakota – Kanesville room	
5:30	President’s Reception - Cocktails cash bar	Heartland Ballroom
6:00	Grand Banquet Installation of Newly Elected Chapter Officers	Heartland Ballroom
7:00	Live music by “Finding Dixie”	Heartland Ballroom

SUNDAY APRIL 28, 2024

Please check out of your rooms by 11:00 on Sunday

9:00am	Door Prize Drawing for \$50.00 (must be present to win)	Heartland Ballroom
9:00	Memorial Service	Heartland Ballroom
10:00	PAC Report Raffle Drawing Closing Comments Adjournment	Heartland Ballroom

Hospitality Room serviced by Retirees in Room
Friday 430PM-6PM and 8PM-Midnight
Saturday 7PM-Midnight

Greetings to all of my fellow UPMA members. Please allow me to introduce myself! My name is Wanda Lenhart. I am currently the postmaster of the Cherokee, IA office, a Level 18B with 4 city routes, 4 rural routes, and 3, 4-hour RMPO's. I would like to take this opportunity to announce my intent to run for the secretary/treasurer position on the Iowa chapter's board, to be filled at the state convention in April.

Prior to the beginning of my postal career, I farmed and dairied full time with my husband and was raising our 3 boys. My postal career began on my youngest son's birthday (Sept. 23rd) in 2004. I was the PMR at my hometown office of Sutherland. While here, I was also dually appointed as a casual in the neighboring town of Paullina, and spent quite a bit of time filling in as a PMR in several local offices. Two years and one week later (my dad's birthday), I became a PTF clerk in the Hartley, IA office. While there, I crossed crafts and so had the opportunity to attend city carrier academy, become LLV trained and share the city carrying responsibilities with the PTF carrier. I was a year and half here and then in Feb 2008, I was privileged to be appointed to my first postmaster position in the Peterson, IA office. Almost immediately upon becoming a postmaster, I also became a member of NAPUS at the recommendation of the PM that I had originally worked under in Sutherland. At the time, Peterson was a Level 13 office. After spending a little over 2 years here, I was able to lateral back to the Sutherland office as the postmaster there. I remained the postmaster here, and also OIC'ed a Level 15 office and a Level 18 office and became the VP of membership on the IA NAPUS board. Then in 2016, along came Post Plan and turned my and many others like me, postal careers into a roller coaster ride. My office was downgraded to a Level 6 RMPO, which "backed me into a corner" to make a decision on whether to become a NTFT clerk or remain a part-time postmaster. Financially, it made the most sense to convert back to the clerk craft. Because I was no longer an EAS employee, I was now only an associate member, which also meant that I was no longer eligible to be on the NAPUS board.

During the "interim" or "grace period" of Post Plan, I became a rather "noisy" NAPUS member, taking my concerns about the lack of information regarding my and all of the other affected postmaster's options, all the way to the national NAPUS president and the USPS Headquarters at L'Enfant Plaza. I was extremely frustrated that the decision I was faced with making would have repercussions for my career and my family that would last far into the future yet the postal service was providing absolutely no details, options, salary info, etc. to any of the postmasters whose offices were being downgraded. I became a "squeaky wheel" and in the process acquired a list of nearly 20 other affected postmasters that were wanting and needing the same information that I was seeking, that I would update and share any tidbits of information that I received. I was also a bit "miffed" (okay, I was a lot of angry) that my title of postmaster that I had worked so hard for and was very proud of, could be arbitrarily just taken away from me. I decided then that even though it would mean that I had to leave my comfort zone and my hometown office that was 3 miles from my home, I was going to do what it took to become a postmaster again. I volunteered to OIC an office with 4 city routes, 7 rural routes, and 4 RMPO's that was outside of the 50 mile radius, in the dead of winter, and I was certainly in a little over my head. The knowledge and experience I gained from that experience was directly responsible of me being selected as the supervisor of the Cherokee office, a position that I began in June 2017. Following the retirement of the postmaster, I then was appointed to the postmaster position of the Cherokee office in April 2019.

In each step of my postal career, I have become increasingly aware that no one is going to watch out for you, or take care of you, or even necessarily care about you. I've learned that you have to be your own advocate and that you can't be afraid to stand up for yourself. The longer I work for the USPS, the more I continue to be that squeaky wheel. I have now decided that I would like to again become a member of my state organization's (now UPMA) board and become a squeaky wheel on behalf of more than just myself. The best way to get your voice heard is to become more active in UPMA as that is our (EAS employees) avenue to HQ and use that position to help influence and have a hand in shaping what the future holds for all postmasters and EAS employees. I would appreciate your support in helping me to accomplish just that. Please plan to attend the UPMA Iowa State Convention, along with our district counterparts, NE and SD, in Council Bluffs April 26-28 to exercise your vote for those positions that are open to become your voice going forward to the national level. I will be the first to admit that I do not, in any way, shape, or form, know all the answers or sometimes even know the question!! But I am increasingly not afraid to make some noise and rattle some cages to get those answers. Thank you for your support.

Wanda S. Lenhart – Postmaster Cherokee, IA Post Office

Kerry Nichols

IA Secretary/Treasurer

1519 7th Ave

DeWitt, IA 52742

Periodicals

Postage Paid

Madrid, IA 50156

Iowa

**Don't forget to send
registration in as well as
book your hotel room!!!**

Looking Ahead:

Articles for the Newsletter (March/April.) will be April 1st, 2024.

Submit to: Merri Burgart at iowaeditor2022@gmail.com