

Area Postmasters Take Oath Of Office In Chicago

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CHICAGO — Postmaster General Louis DeJoy recently visited Chicago to meet with local Postal Service leadership to discuss the ongoing implementation of the Postal Service's bold and innovative 10-year plan, Delivering for America.

Several area residents the 120 newly named postmasters working for the state of Illinois. Those included James Shelton of Alton, Kyarra Woods of Edwardsville, Melinda Partridge of Glen Carbon, Kasey Dowd of Gillespie, Stephani Patton of Glen Carbon, Stephanie Marable of Maryville, Patrick Streeval of White Hall, Annette Pierce of Belleville, Cleveland Williams of O'Fallon, Jennifer Carlock of Pochohontas, Andrew

Sertich of Highland, and Yolonda Lovelace of Troy. DeJoy administered the Oath of Office to the new postmasters.

Others nearby this area were: Michele Brow (Ramsey), Carmengiya Hall (Albers), Brian Westerheide (Columbia), Kizzie Austin (Millstadt), Gretchen Winter (New Athens), Andrew Weinman (New Baden), Mark McGeehan (Red Bud), Zachary Weinman (Sparta), Shelia Wiebler (Steeleville), Melanie Segelhorst (Pinckneyville), Keith Hamilton (Greenville), Felicia Jackson (Trenton), and Tremirra Salmond-Kerby (Coulterville).

“On behalf of the entire Postal Service, I congratulate these new Postmasters on their new roles,” said Postmaster General DeJoy. “Postmasters are important leaders of commerce in their local community, and I know each of these new Postmasters are committed to delivering the reliable service Illinoisans expect and deserve from the Postal Service.”

The History of the Postmaster Position

Originally, the word Postmaster was referred as the one who provided post horses. According to the Oxford Dictionary, postmaster means “master of the posts, the officer who has charge or direction of the posts.” William Penn established Pennsylvania’s first post office in 1683. However, the real beginnings of a postal system in the colonies dates from 1692 when Thomas Neale received a 21-year grant from the British Crown authorizing him to set up post roads in North America.

In 1707, the British Government bought the rights to the North American postal service, and, in 1710, consolidated the postal service into one establishment. The principal offices of the new British Postal Service were in London, England; Edinburgh Scotland; Dublin, Ireland, and New York. In 1737, Benjamin Franklin was appointed Postmaster at Philadelphia. He laid out new post roads, helped expand mail service from Canada to New York and instituted overnight delivery between Philadelphia and New York City, a distance of 90 miles. In 1774, Franklin was dismissed from office in 1774 because of his efforts on behalf of the patriots.

When the Continental Congress met in May 1775, they named Franklin as postmaster general for the 13 American colonies. From 1775 until the early 1800s, Postmasters were appointed by the postmaster general. In 1836, postmasters were appointed by the president, but this of course changed whenever a new party was elected. It was not until August 1970, with the signing of the Postal Reorganization Act, which to effect in July 1971, that the patronage system was finally removed from the postal service once and for all. Postmasters began being appointed on merit alone.

The act also permitted upward mobility for line employees, allowing them to be promoted to the position of Postmaster. Along the way, there have been several famous individuals, who have served as postmasters. In 1833, Abraham Lincoln was appointed postmaster of New Salem, IL. Other notable individuals who served as postmaster somewhere in the U.S. included abolitionist John Brown, businessman Conrad Hilton, novelist William Faulkner, and humorists Bill Nye and Mark Twain.

The Postal Service generally receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products, and services to fund its operations.

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