

Dave Ravenelle, executive director

UPMA Offers the Best Legal Defense Plan

Guided by our UPMA mission statement, National President Dan Heins and our Executive Board continue to focus on the quality and value of our member representation. It is our

mission to ensure our members receive competent, affordable representation from the beginning to the end of the investigative process.

Representation is a priority for UPMA. Our leadership has stepped up to the challenge by providing training at chapter conventions and reducing the cost of representation for members facing adverse action. These initiatives ensure quality representation and reduce the financial barrier to legal representation for our members.

Chapter member representative (CMR) training is being conducted at all chapter conventions this year by our national Adverse Action counselors (AACs). The standardized training, developed by National Adverse Action Program Adviser John Sertich, consists of three training videos, the first of which is currently available on the UPMA website.

You don't have to be a Labor Relations expert to assist a member who may need help. I urge anyone who has an interest in becoming a certified CMR to

view the videos or attend the training at your chapter convention. The knowledge you obtain is like first-aid training: you hope never to need it, but, if you do, it could save someone's career.

"There is no better way to protect Postmasters and Managers than by signing them to become members of UPMA."

issue, your role becomes one of trying to stabilize the situation and protect a possibly confused or intimidated member from providing incriminating written or oral statements. If the situation is less serious, your role of providing support and being an adviser during an investigation also is vital.

At the end of the day, the role of the CMR is where the rubber meets the road. The lack of an available CMR to respond to a member in need or the consequences of inadequately trained CMRs cannot be overstated. The initial, timely intervention, regardless of the severity of the situation, is key to success-



ful representation.

Members facing adverse actions (removals or downgrades) are eligible for UPMA's Adverse Action Legal Defense Plan (AALDP). The plan's fee recently was

reduced. The AALDP now requires members facing adverse actions to make a one-time deposit of \$3,000. Members will be charged only 25 percent of their attorney fees, up to a total cost of \$3,000. Any funds not used will be returned to the member. If a member's cost exceeds their initial deposit, UPMA will pay 100 percent of the additional cost beyond the \$3,000.

We need to stress our legal defense plan when we are promoting membership. If you are a new postal employee or a veteran, you know the value of your career and retirement benefits. It only makes sense to do everything in your power to protect them. Be specific about the benefits of having the best legal defense plan available to you.

The UPMA legal defense plan will not place a cap on protecting your career and guarantees your case will be handled by a qualified, effective attorney. When promoting membership, explain that the average case cost to protect a member threatened with removal is currently \$30,000. Ask prospective members about the effect that would have on their financial

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Twitter and more. Don't ever slander the Postal Service, your boss or your employees. Do not text instructions to your employees. There is a program that can change what has been written via text. Don't put yourself at risk.

Do not text on your devices.

One problem that seems never to go away is the temptation to borrow from the till. Do not ever "borrow" from the cash drawer—not even for a soda. Some Postmasters may borrow with the intention of replacing the money "later today" or "next week." Some may take a few dollars, others more. If you borrow money, you are stealing. Changing clock rings also is stealing. Use the correct paperwork, get it signed and pay employees correctly. *The Postal Service is not a bank and it is your responsibility to pay employees correctly.*

If you have any questions about a specific issue, use your reference manuals/instructions, call another Postmaster, call your MPOO or call one of your state reps. If you feel your first instinct is not correct, it probably isn't. Your chapter member representatives are experienced and possess a world of knowledge.

If it's the weekend and a problem still is bothering you, call an Adverse Action member rep and discuss it with them. We all are willing to listen any time and offer our advice. Our contact information is on page 5 of each issue of the *UPMA Leader*. No problem is too big or too small; give us a call. Consider making a copy of page 5 and posting it near your phone so the information is readily available. You never know when the OIG or Inspection Service will stop by for a surprise visit.

Just as importantly, attend a UPMA local, district, state and national convention. You are the wave of the future! Use the resources UPMA provides. Membership in UPMA is an excellent way to achieve success.

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plans for their retirement or their children's education.

As a member of UPMA, your legal cost is capped at \$3,000, regardless of actual costs. This type of security is priceless. Don't risk your career or financial future with a legal defense plan that has a maximum benefit of \$3,500.

Occasionally, I still get questions concerning Postmasters who remained in RMPOs and their eligibility for NPA. Postmasters who chose to remain in their post offices during the conversion to RMPOs in 2016 still are eligible to receive NPA payouts.

If the Postmaster reports to an administrative post office that is an EAS-18, the NPA scorecard for both Postmasters are identical and the score/payout is the same. But if the Postmaster reports to an administrative post office that is an EAS-20 or above, they may receive a different NPA payout than their APO Postmaster because their NPA scorecards are different. There currently are fewer than 100 Postmasters remaining in RMPOs (99 to be exact); 58 of them report to an EAS-18. The balance of them report to an EAS-20 or above.

In closing, there is no better way to protect Postmasters and Managers than by signing them to become members of UPMA.

In Our Prayers

... **Delma Murdock**, retired North Carolina Postmaster, whose brother, Billy Dowdy, died March 19. Cards may be sent to her at 4010 Mulligan Cir., Greensboro, NC 27406.

... **Randy Geier**, retired Postmaster of Campbellsport, WI, whose mother, Virginia, died March 30. She staffed the information booth at the 2003 National Convention in Milwaukee; Randy was the convention chair. Cards may be sent to him at 6012 Full Pail Ln., West Bend, WI 53095.

... **Ron Block**, retired Nebraska Postmaster and member of Signature Federal Credit Union's Supervisory Committee, whose wife Donna died April 9. Cards may be sent to him at 11030 Hidden Bluff Dr., McGregor, TX 76657.

... **Steve Vanderhoof**, retired Postmaster of Marshall, MO, whose father, James Vanderhoof, died April 9. He retired as a rural letter carrier with over 40 years of service. He served in the Army during World War II. Cards may be sent to Steve at 3261 E. Fox Grape St., Springfield, MO 65804-4793.

... **Kate Aulner**, retired Postmaster of Alexandria, SD, whose husband Ronald died April 15. Cards may be sent to her at 511 Walnut St., Alexandria, SD, 57311.

... **Kris Schmit**, retired Postmaster of Fredonia, WI, and former Sergeant-at-Arms Committee co-chair, who has been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Cards may be sent to her at N5900 Country Ln., Saukville, WI 53080-1007.