Union says UAF mail office should have looked up 1,200 addresses

by demotcole
12.03.11 - 10:33 am

A union seeking to organize staff members at the University of Alaska is objecting to the return of more than 1,200 pieces of mail with incomplete addresses, asserting that the university is "selectively" blocking mail deliveries.

The 1,200 pieces of mail from the union did not contain exact work addresses for the employees or the names of the offices in which they work.

A union official wrote to the head of UAF Mail Services charging that it was the job of the university mail office to provide the specifics.

"Looking up addresses, whether there are 12 or 1,200 for your customers – the UAF employees – is your job. And you simply chose not to do it," Sam Rhodes, Anchorage business agent for the Alaska State Employees Association, said in a letter to John Renfro, head of UAF mail services.

I don't know how many hours it would take to look up 1,200 addresses and write them down, but it would not be an easy task. At campuses where the mail room knows every address, it would be a different story.

In the interests of efficiency, the ASEA should be required to use the complete addresses. That is not too much to ask.

As far as the union claim to employees in an e-mail Friday that "If UA will block your US Mail, what else are they keeping from you?", the statement should be revised to say: "If UA will block your US Mail because ASEA did not use your address, what else are they keeping from you?"

Here is the letter, as included in the ASEA email Friday:

Mr. John Renfro, UAF Mail Services:

On Monday, November 28th, ASEA received over 1200 pieces returned by USPS from UAF Mail Services indicating with a rubber stamp your office placed on each piece: “return to sender, insufficient address.”

Art Golez with Anchorage USPS Bulk Mail, Fairbanks USPS Postmaster Hal Barber, and Donna Mauldin with the USPS Inspection Service all agree that the PO Box address ASEA used on our mailing was sufficient.

Your phone message to me yesterday indicated ASEA did not provide PO Box addresses on our envelopes, only names. That is untrue, and you most certainly know it. Every envelope was addressed as follows in this example:

Employee Name

University of Alaska Fairbanks
PO BOX 757500

Fairbanks, AK 99775-7500

You then further stated that, “We (at the UAF Mail Room) would have to physically stop and try to look up each name.” You then stated that you wanted me to know, “This surely wasn’t on purpose on our part, the addresses were insufficient.”

So, Mr. Renfro, how do you explain the fact that the mailing reached over 1000 UA employees at every campus across Alaska, except Fairbanks?

I have been in contact with the USPS Postal Inspection Service in regard to your decision not to deliver our recent mailing to UAF staff employees. USPS mailing guidelines are clear: “Mail addressed to a person at a hotel, school, or other similar place is delivered to the hotel, school, etc. If the person is no longer at that address, the mail must be redirected to the current address, if known, or endorsed appropriately and returned by the institution to the post office.”

You made a conscious decision not to allow our ASEA for UA mailing to reach over 1200 UAF staff employees. And your reasons for your decision are unacceptable.

Looking up addresses, whether there are 12 or 1200 for your customers – the UAF employees – is your job. And you simply chose not to do it.

Sam Rhodes

Organizer, ASEA for UA

ASEA/AFSCME Local 52, AFL-CIO

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