



POSTAL NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 20, 2003

Media Contact: Liz Carter (202) 268-5188
Release No. 015
www.usps.com

NATIONAL NEWSPAPER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE PRESENTED TO **U.S. POSTAL SERVICE EMPLOYEE**

National Winner Best Represents The Spirit of Benjamin Franklin

WASHINGTON – Wesley Davidson, postmaster for the Seymour, MO., Post Office has been selected as the national winner of the 5th annual Benjamin Franklin Community Newspaper and Postal Service Partnership Award of Excellence. The award was presented today to Davidson by Postmaster General John E. Potter and National Newspaper Association (NNA) President Jeff David during the NNA's 42nd Annual Government Affairs Conference at the Hyatt Regency-Capitol Hill Hotel.

The Benjamin Franklin Award of Excellence is presented to a Postal Service employee who best represents the spirit of Benjamin Franklin, one of our country's founders and a newspaper publisher, statesman and postmaster. It was Franklin's commitment and dedication to service that helped set standards by which community newspapers and the Postal Service operate today.

NNA member newspapers nominated local Postal Service employees. Judges in each state selected winners from those nominations. NNA's Postal Committee, chaired by Max Heath of Landmark Community Newspaper in Shelbyville, Ky., selected Davidson from among the state winners as the national winner.

"I congratulate Wes for receiving this award which honors postal employees who have done the most to strengthen the partnership between the Postal Service and community newspapers," said Potter."

"I also want to thank the Webster County Citizen newspaper for nominating him. I read the nomination letter from editor and publisher, Dan Wehmer, and was particularly pleased to read how Wes helped the paper solve problems—from helping implement a barcode system to improving service. Wes's accomplishments are an example of what we're accomplishing nationally with our Transformation Plan," Potter said.

In Wehmer's nomination, he stated: "As a newspaper editor and publisher for 13 years, I've dealt with numerous postmasters, most of which were excellent folks—both helpful and professional. Wes Davidson, too, fits this bill, but he also made it a point to go 'above and beyond' when I've requested assistance. I lean on him often for postal advice and he's always provided an answer," Wehmer said.

"That's not a one-time story. It's a many-times story. Never does Wes complain about my requests. Often he offers his assistance when I don't ask for it," he said.

Wes is a 15-year Postal Service veteran. He began his career as a rural carrier in Springfield, MO., and has been postmaster of Seymour since 2000.

"Needless to say, I'm thrilled" said Norma Claspill, Davidson's supervisor and Manager of Post Office Operations for the Postal Service's Mid-America District. "Wes is one of my best postmasters, very dedicated and loyal. This award is well deserved," she said.

Davidson is very active in his community and is a member of the Seymour Lions Club, Seymour Merchants Association and a volunteer for the Seymour Apple Festival. Wes and his wife Carla have two sons, Brandon and Adam, and one grandson, Matthew.

"I am honored to be selected to receive the prestigious Benjamin Franklin Community Newspaper Award," said Davidson. "To be recognized for an award for service to the customers by such an outstanding association is truly the highlight of my postal career. In small communities, newspapers are the lifeline to the customers. I am grateful to Dan Wehmer and the employees of Webster County Citizen newspaper for recommending me for this honor," he said.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that visits 137 million homes and businesses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$66 billion, it is the world's leading provider of postal services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume—some 207 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves 7 million customers each day at its 40,000 retail locations nationwide.