

Using 3-Digit Meetings to Grow Postmaster Skills

Every Postmaster in this country is well aware of the ways that the current economic situation is directly affecting our jobs. One of most obvious ways that it has affected us is the cutback in training. For many of us, our annual Postmaster meetings are a thing of the past, as are training days in general. The only training we get is at our desks, in front of our computers while we wait on our customers and perform countless other tasks. This training is simply ineffective. The LEAGUE has a way to remedy that situation.

I was elected this summer in my home state of West Virginia as the state president. I have so many plans and ideas for my state but the first obstacle that I realized had to be tackled right away was the need for training. I know from listening to other LEAGUE leaders in various parts of the country that 3-digit meetings could be of great benefit to our members if they are planned well in advance and conducted in the right way. A successful 3-digit meeting must have all of the following components:

- A central location (and preferably at no cost).
- Since the meeting will probably be after work, it should be held where a meal can be purchased.
- Invitations or notices sent to everyone that is within driving distance. Make sure everyone is informed of the topic(s) of the meeting.
- Good educational and informative topics.
- Speakers well-informed on the subject matter and who can hold the interest of the Postmasters.
- A well-scheduled meeting with adhered to beginning and ending times.

My first official duty as state president was to appoint someone to a newly-created position, that of 3-Digit Coordinator. I appointed Cindy Cox, our state's Effective Service Chairman, because of the energy and dedication she puts into any task she is given. I also wanted to involve the administrator of

our website, Richard Shelton. He and Cindy are the co-chairs of our website and also can promote these 3-digit meetings there. I created a state broadcast email several years ago and will send out messages to our members about the meetings using that venue. I have tasked the 3-Digit Coordinator with lining up speakers for meetings, finding a meeting space and ensuring that speakers have good information to share with our members. I am not asking her to conduct the meetings, but to organize them.

As the state president, I will attend as many as possible as will our state board members. I plan to have our first meeting sometime in the fall, preferably in mid-September, with a meeting held at least each quarter. I also plan to have a meeting in as many 3-digit areas as possible and want to invite all LEAGUE members including Postmasters, PMRs, OICs and other EAS employees. I believe that we can all benefit from these meetings. The training that we will receive, along with the camaraderie of our fellow employees, will be good medicine for all of us and that is something we can all use these days.

The LEAGUE is *The Education Organization* and I strongly believe that if each state plans and organizes its own 3-digit meetings, we can go a long way in showing our members what this organization stands for. Using the 3-digit meetings, our state website



The Making of a 3-Digit Meeting

and our state broadcast emails, we are educating and informing the members in West Virginia every day.

LEAGUE leaders hold state and national positions to serve our members and what better way than to give them the information that they need and are so hungry for?

If you would like assistance in organizing and planning your own 3-digit meetings, please feel free to contact me.

—Linda Rumney
lindarwv@yahoo.com

Cindy Cox: In wild and wonderful West Virginia, the state branch has great leaders and team players that have helped us all professionally and personally. I felt honored when our state president asked me to be the 3-Digit Meeting Coordinator for West Virginia. I feel I was given this task because of my background of being chairperson for our Effective Service Committee and my experience with details that involved travel throughout our state. These meetings will be of great benefit to our membership and *The Education Organization* as a whole.

First, I took a state map and pinpointed strong LEAGUERS in 12 different 3-digit areas. These will be our proposed meeting areas with a chairperson and support staff. When choosing my chairperson for each meeting, I included LEAGUE members who were MPOO assistants. Because MPOO assistants have the greatest knowledge of their particular areas, we can adjust our training to the needs of the members. The people who agree to chair a meeting will be the ones responsible for making this educational experience work. As coordinator, after making my choices of where and who, I just suggest a broad agenda.

It doesn't matter if you are a PMR or a Postmaster, we must never stop learning and teaching others. In the meetings, start with the basics. How many of us take for granted that we know what the software program "Word" does, that copy and paste are a great addition in writing documents, spreadsheets and compiling presentations? How many know how to use the Global Address List to find anyone in USPS? How many more of us don't know the basics of what most take for granted daily that we do? Sometimes, it

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takes us all going back to basics to help in day-to-day functioning of our offices. These are great starting points for a 3-digit meetings. Never take for granted that you have reached the end of learning in USPS.

There is someone out there who needs the knowledge that you can provide and vice versa. I chose the chairperson and location of our first 3-digit meeting with the idea that it would set an example for the ones to follow.

I picked a very strong LEAGUE area in our state and my chairperson is a long-time LEAGUE leader and MPOO assistant. By doing this, I have ensured that our first meeting will be a huge success and pave the way for others throughout the state.

One of the greatest LEAGUE lessons I have learned is to meet your fellow Postmasters. As a Postmaster, we are managers of our offices and like our offices, we are each unique. When you have the opportunity to meet your peers, get to know them personally and also take notice of what they do professionally. Someone may be a great friend but lack professional ambition, while another may not be a social butterfly but has the very ingredients of action when called upon. It really does help to know your people in the LEAGUE and in the USPS. In the future, you may need an instructor or an appropriate subject for a particular pupil. Now, go out and “meet and greet” and let the learning begin!

Supporting a 3-Digit Meeting

Richard Shelton: “A picture is worth a thousand words.” If this old saying has any validity, my “LEAGUE Picture Folder” would have its worth in words of several novels. Since establishing the West Virginia LEAGUE website, www.wvleague.com, six years ago, I have collected more than 5,000 pictures of LEAGUERS in action.

I have been asked many times as to what I would attribute the success of the West Virginia site. The more than 82,000 hits the site has taken to date is the result of keeping the site fresh along with all the “smiling faces.” Everyone enjoys looking at pictures, be it a baby, a breathtaking vista or a fellow Postmaster. Back in 2003 when first thinking of the structure of our site, I decided that making it very visual would attract the most people and, while we had their attention, every now and then we could make a statement or promote an event. This formula has proven to work way beyond my original expectations. Our site is constantly reinventing itself.

Our latest innovation is the product of Cindy Cox, our website’s co-administrator. She has developed a page devoted solely to the education of our Postmasters. Appropriately named “USPS & You,” Cindy’s page offers links, downloads and insight into this ever-changing arena we call the Postal

Service. She constantly updates and highlights the latest we, as Postmasters, need to know.

This has been a great addition to our website and upholds our banner as *The Education Organization*. The website is there every day and every night, whenever one of our Postmasters needs a phone number, link, email address, educational tool or date of the next LEAGUE event. This is coupled with our state broadcast email system; the LEAGUE is constantly in the face of West Virginia’s Postmasters.

Our next undertaking, with the direction of newly-elected West Virginia State President Linda Rumney, is statewide 3-digit meetings. Shortly after National Convention, I posted an announcement on the website’s “News” page with times, dates, locations and agenda. The ball will really start rolling once we have our first meeting. I will attend, assist in the training and capture our LEAGUE in action. Once I post all the pictures of our first session along with the information concerning the remaining meetings, the buzz will have started. Success breeds success—knowledge breeds contentment—contentment breeds happiness—attend one of West Virginia’s 3-digit meetings and you may be the next “smiling face” everyone is looking at on www.wvleague.com. •