

Senate Workforce Development Committee  
HCR 3006

**CHAIRMAN WOBBEMA AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

My name is Cecile Wehrman. I represent the North Dakota Newspaper Association. I am hear to speak on behalf of the state's 73 member newspapers and their subscribers. Please accept this testimony **IN FAVOR** of HCR 3006.

Newspapers have long fought with the U.S. Postal Service to improve newspaper delivery and hold the line on costs, but poor postal service is hurting everyone in North Dakota.

The language in the bill itself does a fantastic job of highlighting all of the ways North Dakotans are harmed by poor postal service.

For my industry, the past three years have seen the worst service ever and a 53 percent increase in postal rates for periodicals. They've also changed the delivery standard for newspapers. Subscribers don't understand why their newspaper is not arriving in a timely fashion and our relationship with our customers is being harmed because we have no remedy to offer them -- only an excuse that it's the fault of the post office.

Would you consider a weekly newspaper "on time" if it arrived nine days after the publication date? You may not, but the post office does! There's never a refund, never an explanation when whole print runs of newspapers disappear, whether they're carrying sample ballots people want to see before an election or an advertisement about a once a year community celebration.

The current status quo seems aimed at keeping people in the dark, rather than fulfilling the purpose for which the postal system was created a couple hundred years ago -- to keep our nation's far flung citizenry informed of government actions.

Last summer, Sen. John Hoeven called a postal roundtable to address these concerns. The letters from publishers, attached to my testimony and on the table in front of you, were gathered for that meeting and outline the many issues our members have seen.

The Senator pushed for our association to have a phone number we could call when our newspapers get lost in the system. Today, as federal agencies come under the microscope, there is talk of bringing the post office back to a cabinet level agency. That could be a great thing -- or not -- but the level of uncertainty makes this resolution even more vital now, so the new administration is aware of the issues rural postal patrons face.

Everyone has their own postal war story, and I'll share just one. At NDNA several weeks ago, we had a letter returned. We couldn't figure out whose handwriting was on it. Finally we saw the reason: this piece of mail was postmarked 2017!!! It took MORE THAN SEVEN YEARS for it to be returned. The lady who originally sent it has not worked for us for some time. -- AND LOOK AT THE PRICE -- 42 cents -- compared to 69 cents today, with more raises promised.

In my personal life, I joke that if you want something to come in the mail quickly, put it in a box. Boxes seem to get more timely delivery than letters -- and sadly, better delivery than newspapers containing critical information for citizens.

We urge a DO PASS ON HCR 3006.

**TEXT FROM JILL FRIESZ, GS Publishing**, Seven papers in southeastern North Dakota  
Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

On Friday, August 23, 2024, 11:08 AM

In the past year, we have had 16 weeks the papers haven't shown up on time. I know this because my phone doesn't stop ringing with subscribers complaining they didn't get their papers. I do know that weekly newspaper subscribers love to get their paper and are very vocal about not getting it. However, having the paper arrive late .... If they ever get them.... so often has caused many of my subscribers to cancel their subscription because they are frustrated.

It is extremely frustrating for me to pay astronomical postage prices and then have to turn around and mail out individual papers to subscribers who never receive their papers. This is an additional cost I shouldn't have to pay.

Having unsatisfied readers is bad enough.... But now I have added disgruntled advertisers - which is the bread and butter of my business.

When the paper arrives late, some of the ads that have been placed are useless. If an advertiser places an ad in the paper for a weekend event and the paper doesn't arrive until Monday, they are understandably upset.

Because I didn't hold up my end of the bargain by letting the public know about an event, I have to refund the money. As a small business, I can't afford to do this.

We have a few times of year that are great financially for the paper and help get us through tight months. The "new year" paper is one of those times. Many businesses in the community place "new year greetings" thanking customers for their business throughout the year and wishing them a happy new year. This year, one of my papers was filled with new year greetings that should have been delivered to readers on December 28..... with plenty of time before the holiday. That particular paper didn't show up until January 18!!! It was so late and we had so many complaints, we ended up having the paper reprinted - at our cost and re-mailing them - at our cost so the readers got a paper. In addition, I had to refund all the money to the advertisers who placed those ads since it didn't make it out prior to the holiday. This was a substantial financial loss to me, in a paper who struggles to make ends meet every week.

I am begging you to do something to help fix this problem and help make the USPS a reliable partner for us to use to get the papers to our readers.



**Jill M. Friesz**  
**Owner/Publisher**

Grant County News  
Carson Press  
Adams County Record  
Hettinger County Herald  
Golden Valley News  
Billings County Pioneer  
Morton County News Journal

[jill@gspublishing.net](mailto:jill@gspublishing.net)  
Phone: 701-584-2900  
Mobile: 701-202-0537  
[www.gspublishing.net](http://www.gspublishing.net)

## Cecile Wehrman - NDNA

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**From:** Paul Erdelt <perdelt@bektel.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 22, 2024 3:38 PM  
**To:** 'Cecile Wehrman - NDNA'  
**Subject:** RE: URGENT Postal Summit in Grand Forks Monday

Several times this winter, my papers were lost for days (2 days once, 3 days twice, and 4 days once). During this time, I was able to track down that my papers never made it to my post office. I was also able to track down my papers were dropped off in Bismarck by the postal driver from Garrison. All I knew is there were lost between Bismarck and my hometown post office. My local postmaster made all the calls she could and she was not able to track them down. Locally, the post office people are doing a great job, but where there is no accountability, it is failing. Want an easy solution, publish the phone number to the sorting places and make them responsible for not moving mail along...at the same time, allowing the 'owner' to pick them up if they fail us.

During those 2, 3, and 4 days...I was unable to reach anyone who could tell me where my papers were. I filed a complaint after the second time and eventually, someone from Bismarck called me...but she didn't have any answers of where my papers got held up. I did my own research and found the papers got held up in Bismarck 3 of the 4 times...the one time I reached someone in the Bismarck center, they said they were there...but I was unable to come and get them myself.

My neighboring papers take the same route, but there's were only missed 2 times each, for 1 day only, and those times were spread out. Still...we had no one to call to find out where our papers were.

In this case, I believe I have an easy solution... publish the phone number and manager to the sorting places and make them responsible for not moving mail along...at the same time, allowing the 'owner' to pick them up if they fail us. That manager should be able to tell us where the newspapers are as they come in baskets and tubs...If they are not at sorting location #1...I will call sorting location #2...and so on until they are found. Those 2 or 3 phone calls will take me, the customer, about 15 minutes....NOT 4 days.

Nothing was ever solved...we just had to wait until they showed up....and I was paying for that service. Rates continue to go up...but service isn't improving...that is wrong. Solution: more local ownership.

Sincerely,  
Paul Erdelt  
Steele Ozone & KC Press



John Galer  
Chairman, National Newspaper Association  
NNA Headquarters  
PO Box 13323  
Pensacola, FL 32591

Dear Mr. Galer:

Thank you for asking about our newspaper's experiences with the US Postal Service.

The Glen Ullin Times, Glen Ullin, North Dakota is a small community weekly newspaper serving the Glen Ullin and surrounding community and out of state subscribers.

In the past three years, we have experienced an estimated 40% increase in postage to reach our subscribers.

This increase has caused us to:

- increase our subscription rates, which has cost our subscribers more money;
- cut our circulation;
- put our newspaper's future at risk.

While this large increase has hurt our newspaper, we have also experienced serious delays in service. The delivery of the newspaper is horrible. Out of states complain about the length of time to get the paper or they do not get a paper for one to two to three weeks then they all come at the same time.

The Post office in Bismarck, ND has many times forgot to put the newspapers on the truck to Glen Ullin thus we have to travel over one hundred miles each time plus the time it takes to go get them from the Bismarck plant so they can be delivered that day or asap. We pay the rate to our community yet we do not get it delivered to where it is suppose to go. No refund EITHER!

We are deeply concerned about the future of our newspaper. We hope the Postal Service will understand the damage it is inflicting on our communities.

It seems like the postal system could care less as long as the money is deposited in their account. Work ethics are horrible. Everyone blames the other. Instead of fixing the many problems there are the postal system thinks by raising prices everything would work for them. Fix the problem. Talk to the loyal employees you have and those that work the post office every day not the ones behind the desk that have no clue.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Nancy Bittner  
The Glen Ullin Times, Glen Ullin, North Dakota

Terry Schwartzberger  
Publisher/Editor  
Napoleon Homestead  
PO Box 29  
Napoleon, ND 58561

Dear USPS:

As per your request I will offer recent experiences with the US Postal Service.

The Napoleon Homestead is a weekly newspaper in south-central North Dakota with a circulation of about 1,300 subscribers.

In the past three years, we have experienced about a 30 percent increase in postage to reach our subscribers.

Over the course of this time period, we have attempted to tighten our belt, as delivery issues with our weekly mailing have seen increased delays. Most notably, since December of 2023, we and our subscribers have been experiencing more frequent and longer delays in delivery. In roughly the past six months, and just last week subscribers in the adjoining 584 Zip code areas waited 6 days and some up to 8 days for a paper. With the recent delays, our office has now the added expense of meeting a shuttle 35 miles away to pick up Napoleon subscriber papers and manually drop them at the Napoleon Post office in order to guarantee a timely delivery. Prior to December, for the most part, area subscribers were receiving their newspaper the very next day. Now, after postal cost increases, we are told not to expect anything better than 2-day service. High costs, less reliability? Doesn't make sense.

Daily my office receives calls from subscribers who have not received their newspaper, sometimes over several consecutive issues. Obviously, this makes it very difficult to retain our reading customers and we've had folks cancel their subscriptions due to non-delivery.

We hope the Postal Service will understand the damage ever-increasing rates and diminishing delivery results are inflicting on our communities. Local newspapers fill a critical role in our society and studies prove that taxpayers benefit when papers remain viable.

We currently are facing challenging times in retaining or gaining new readers. However, with the delivery issues USPS is offering, they are providing a challenge we shouldn't have to deal with.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Terry Schwartzberger  
Publisher/Editor

# BENSON COUNTY FARMERS PRESS



John Galer  
Chairman, National Newspaper Association  
NNA Headquarters  
PO Box 13323  
Pensacola, FL 32591

Dear Mr. Galer:

This is a consistent issue with the paper delivery.

This business is within 30 miles of the office, still doesn't get the paper delivered.

I've already sent out 5 issues prior to this notice, so for 3 months this paper is where?

Hope this will help,  
Denise

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**From:** Linda Miller <[lkmillier219@gmail.com](mailto:lkmillier219@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 23, 2024 11:34 AM  
**To:** Denise <[denise@farmerspress.com](mailto:denise@farmerspress.com)>  
**Subject:** Bernice Ferguson Community Library Paper

Hi Denise,

I have spoken with four additional subscribers of The Lakota American. All stated they have received all of the issues the past three months. The library hasn't received theirs again the last three weeks. I have not checked today's mail to see if we received this week's issue.

**It has been decided that we will not be renewing the paper.**

Thank you.  
Linda Miller, Treasurer  
Bernice Ferguson Community Library  
PO Box 328  
Michigan, ND 58259

John Galer  
Chairman, National Newspaper Association  
NNA Headquarters  
PO Box 13323  
Pensacola, FL 32591

Dear Mr. Galer:

Thank you for asking about our newspaper's experiences with the US Postal Service.

In the past three years, we have experienced an estimated 35% increase in postage to reach our subscribers. While this large increase has hurt our newspaper, we have also experienced serious delays in service. We have lost several subscribers because they do not get their news in a timely manner and I have had to increase subscription rates to help offset the increase. This makes me look bad as the price increases and the service goes down. Many don't seem satisfied when I assure them their label was printed on their paper and mailed out the same day. I have asked them to contact their post office or the 800 number to ask why their newspapers are not delivered in a timely manner, and they don't want to deal with that. This is out of my control and I am frustrated. They don't renew.

Wouldn't this world be much better if people worked hard to do the best job they could possibly do at their jobs? That is how I do my job and how I expect my employees and my children to do their jobs.

I have been dealing with postal woes for the past 20 years. I understand that people are human and mistakes happen. It is the excuses that people make and "pass the buck" or "not my job" attitudes that some have that irritates and disappoints me.

I have been recording my postal woes for over a year. It seems to be "something" more often than not.

I pay to have my paper delivered in a timely manner. I pay full price. The price keeps going up (35% since 2021) and the service from the Postal Service goes down. And is getting worse!

Just a few examples of what I deal with:

My papers were left on the loading dock once in February 23, once in March 23 and once in April 23. EXCUSE: "We have a new driver and he didn't take the cage with your papers in it. Sorry!"

Once in July 23 and two week in a row in August 23 the USPS lost my papers. When they didn't show up in Northwood, my postmaster who is wonderful, by the way, called the plant supervisor in Grand Forks who had no idea where they were and they were delivered a day late. We never got to know where they were.

The Northwood Postmaster tracked my September 2, 2023 paper every step of the way. She had everyone who touched my paper call her and tell her what was happening with the labels and sorting and delivery. All went well.

I was in contact with Jody from Senator Cramer's office and she replied on an email, "My USPS contact said that the Grand Forks plant was experiencing staffing issues and so outgoing periodicals were sent

to the Fargo plant for processing, which caused delays. The Grand Forks plant manager assured our contact that some changes have been made to the process and newspapers should not be delayed going forward. They are also getting staffing reinforcement at the Grand Forks plant.”

September 23: Route 1 bundle showed up a day late. Route 1 driver put paper in wrong box, AZ customers were getting their papers 2 weeks later.

October 23: Customers didn't receive papers that were labeled and mailed.

November 23: Drug Store never got their bundle. Printer assured me it was bundled and in the tray.

February 24: Delayed one day. Truck came but didn't pick up papers.

March 7, 2024: I received 5—"Unable to Forward" returns costing me 80 cents/paper—1 was from January 9th and the address was correct in TN. Next 1 was from January 23rd and 1 from February 6th (they came together for the same person) and the address was not correct in WA (so I should pay for that, but only once) 1 was from January 30th and the address was correct in WI. 1 was from February 6th and the address was correct in Grand Forks (This is the 3rd time I have gotten this one and the customer has lived at the same place for years).

May 7, 2024: Dawn Cox didn't get her paper. Postal carrier put it in the wrong box.

May 7, 2024: Snowbirds, Sandra and Jack, didn't get their paper this week or last, though their address was changed from AZ to Hoople, and was correct. They did get this week's paper on Friday when they usually get it on Wednesday. When I told them to ask at their post office, then they got the week before paper a week and a half late. This was mailed from Grafton, ND to Hoople, ND—20 miles.

Every week when I go to my mailbox on delivery day, I hold my breathe, not knowing if the papers are there or not. If they aren't, my postmaster is working to find out the problem because she knows I deal with this more often than I should have to, and it is not her fault.

I am deeply concerned about the future of our newspaper. I hope the Postal Service will understand the damage it is inflicting on our small communities.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Beth Johnson  
The Gleaner, owner/publisher  
Northwood, ND 58267  
218-779-1730

## Cecile Wehrman - NDNA

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**From:** Walsh County Press <walshcountypress@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 22, 2024 11:14 AM  
**To:** Jill M. Friesz  
**Cc:** Jack McDonald; Cecile Wehrman - NDNA; Alyssa Meier; Dickinson Press- Publisher- Joy Schoch; Hillsboro Banner; Lynn Evenson; Napoleon Homestead- Terry Schwartzenberger; Wahpeton Daily News- Publisher&NDJobs- Tara Klostreich  
**Subject:** Re: URGENT Meeting with Senator Hoeven and USPS

Monday is our deadline day but I will see what I can do to make it work. I'm getting more and more complaints from the small post offices routes like Lawton and Fairdale. In Crystal there are days that they aren't delivering anything let alone papers.

Allison Olimb  
Editor in Chief

Walsh County Press  
P.O. Box 49  
Park River, ND 58270  
701-284-6333 ph  
701-284-6091 fax  
wcpres@polarcomm.com

## Cecile Wehrman - NDNA

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**From:** Becky Cederstrom <vavads@srt.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 19, 2024 9:34 AM  
**To:** Cecile NDNA  
**Subject:** Late papers

Good morning,

Are other papers still getting late papers? The VAV is every other week on time.

Last week it was late, got it on Friday. This week did not receive Thursday or today (Friday).

It's frustrating, embarrassing. What can the NDNA do?

Becky Cederstrom  
Velva Area Voice Newspaper  
Office/Ad Manager  
701-338-2599  
[vavads@srt.com](mailto:vavads@srt.com)

**From:** Amy Wobbema [mailto:amywobbema@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 22, 2024 3:21 PM  
**To:** Cecile Wehrman - NDNA  
**Subject:** Re: postal summit

Hi Cecile,

As of Aug. 1, I started having the Independent (periodicals only, not shopper) shipped to Carrington via UPS, as I have with the Transcript since Jan. 1. The locals are happy now, but there are out of county folks waiting 6-7 business days to get their paper. Before I made the change, for three weeks in a row Monday's papers were not delivered in Carrington until Tuesday or Wednesday, despite taking them to the Fargo PO on the prior Thursday. I couldn't deal with all the calls. We had readers screaming at us, "Why can't you fix this?" Several were even more upset when we said we weren't going to mail them another copy because the original copy would likely arrive before the replacement. Why would we do that?

Also, another anecdote: The Transcript is delivered to the NR post office on Fridays and delivered locally on Saturday. The local papers are always delivered on time. However, 15 miles away in Carrington, it took until Friday, August 16 for the Aug. 12 edition to get into reader mailboxes.

**Amy Wobbema**  
*Owner/Publisher*  
*Transcript Publishing*

817 Central Ave  
New Rockford, ND 58356  
Ph: (701) 947-2417  
Fax: (701) 947-2418



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## Cecile Wehrman - NDNA

**From:** Bill Devlin <billdevlin23@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 13, 2024 11:05 AM  
**To:** Jack McDonald; Cecile Wehrman - NDNA  
**Subject:** Addition legal question

Hi again,

I am still really concerned about the legal issues and the papers being delivered late. This past week, the Steele County Press and Griggs County Courier, which should be delivered in Flinley on Friday, June, 7th came on Tuesday, June 11th. The publication date was June 7th.

It has been a lot of years since I have looked at legal requirements. However, the Notice of Primary Elections and Primary Election Sample Ballots were in the paper that was delivered on election day. Does that meet the advanced publications requirements?

It is probably an easy fix in state code for the next legislative session. You could just change the last publication date, if needed, to a week earlier. I see the same thing happening with a lot of different types of legals.

# OGDEN NEWSPAPERS

John Galer  
Chairman, National Newspaper Association  
NNA Headquarters  
PO Box 13323  
Pensacola, FL 32591

Dear Mr. Galer:

Thank you for asking about our newspaper's experiences with the US Postal Service.

We serve the city of Minot and all of the rural communities in Ward County, North Dakota. We also use exceptional dispatch to deliver from Minot, Surrey, Towner, Rugby, and Devil's Lake.

In the past three years, we have experienced an estimated 31% increase in postage to reach our subscribers.

This increase has caused us to:

- increase our subscription rates, which has cost our subscribers more money;
- cut our circulation;

While this large increase has hurt our newspaper, we have also experienced serious delays in service. We have used USPS as our sole delivery agent for almost four years. The inconsistency in delivery from the Minot Post Office specifically has been overwhelming, and we have lost 18% of our customers due to the poor mail service.

There is a true lack of ownership or pride in work in the Minot Post Office. We have had employees tell our customers after they've gone two weeks without receiving mail or their newspaper. That is, we, the Minot Daily News, switched to using USPS as our delivery agent when "we knew they had a shortage of carriers." I met with the postmaster in June 2020 in Minot, and before the decision, I was reassured that moving the papers into the mail would not create any issues. With the move, we expected 3-5% shrinkage in circulation.

We have lost 18% of our subscribers because they do not receive mail daily. This is not just the newspaper; mail customers go several days and even weeks without receiving any mail. In the past month, the supervisor of carriers moved out of Minot, and during a conversation with him, he said to me, "Yes, we may miss a day or two here and there for customers. But it

is just mail, and yes, the customers are going to yell. But I'm not going to stress over it. It is just mail."

Attitude reflects leadership.

We are deeply concerned about the future of our newspaper. We hope the Postal Service will understand the damage it is inflicting on our communities.

I understand that the Minot Post Office has had issues retaining and getting carriers, but is it possible the leadership inside the post office is the issue? The culture of not carrying starts with some of the management positions, and has been expressed to customers and to myself.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Robert Patchen  
Ogden Newspapers of ND, Minot, ND

# THE WALSH COUNTY RECORD

John Galer  
Chairman, National Newspaper Association  
NNA Headquarters  
PO Box 13323  
Pensacola, FL 32591

Dear Mr. Galer:

Thank you for asking about our newspaper's experiences with the US Postal Service.

The Walsh County Record is North Dakota's largest weekly newspaper and is located in northeast North Dakota. We are a third generation newspaper family celebrating 100 years in the Morgan Family this year. We serve Walsh County which has a population of 11,880. Farming is our main industry in the rich Red River Valley.

In the past three years, we have experienced a 28 to 35 percent increase in postage to reach our subscribers.

This increase has caused us to increase our subscription rates, which has cost our subscribers more money, trimming other expenses, like our newsroom budget and page count and put our newspaper's future at risk.

While this large increase has hurt our newspaper, we have also experienced serious delays in service. We mail on Wednesday afternoons. Typically, in-county subscribers would receive the paper on Thursday. It is not uncommon for them to receive the paper on Friday or even Saturday. Sometimes our snowbirds will get two issues the same week. There was one subscriber in New Jersey that canceled her subscription due to the fact it took a month to get.

We are deeply concerned about the future of The Walsh County Record. We hope the Postal Service will understand the damage it is inflicting on our communities. I'm not sure with this next rate increase how many subscribers will pay. I may have to increase my advertising rates.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Jackie L. Thompson  
Publisher

## Cecile Wehrman - NDNA

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**From:** Lyann Olson <tribune@nccray.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 22, 2024 11:53 AM  
**To:** Cecile Wehrman - Ndna  
**Subject:** Re: URGENT Postal Summit in Grand Forks Monday

I have a Minot customer who is receiving her paper five days late. Take into consideration our paper is delivered directly to the Minot Post Office. After talking to the postmaster in Minot, she was told they are short four carriers and will not be getting her paper in a timely manner. Her Aug. 14th paper arrived on a Sunday evening, along with all her mail from the week.

Lyann Olson  
Burke County Tribune  
PO Box 40, Bowbells ND 58721  
[tribune@nccray.net](mailto:tribune@nccray.net)  
701-377-2626

## Cecile Wehrman - NDNA

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**From:** LaVonne <rcf1@srt.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 22, 2024 12:18 PM  
**To:** 'Cecile Wehrman - NDNA'  
**Subject:** RE: URGENT Postal Summit in Grand Forks Monday

Hi Cecile

I just wanted to share a couple of problems that I have had again this summer. It seems every summer when some of the original route carriers in Minot take a vacation or time off they have substitute carriers and I am always getting calls that subscribers DID NOT receive their papers. It is frustrating because these subscribers pay for their subscription and they expect to pay for them and more importantly we PAY the postage for them to get them and then they don't. The subscriber then asks us to mail them out another copy, therefore it costs us more money because we are sending out another paper, putting it in a manila envelopes, and paying first class postage for them to get it. Why is it that the substitute carriers can't get these out? We have also had a subscriber call and say when it gets really warm she doesn't get her paper until later in the week when the temperatures cool down.

Those are my complaints. Thank you for listening!

LaVonne L. Erickson  
RCF Editor/Publisher/Owner

# Postal issues still not resolved

Well, it was nice while it lasted.

For several weeks after the postal roundtable held in Grand Forks on Aug. 26, I was getting a few messages from eastern newspapers expressing surprise that they were suddenly getting their newspapers on time.

Of course, it didn't last.

But once again, the disconnect popped up in the southwestern corner of the state and it gave me my first opportunity to try a new "hotline" phone number that, thanks to Sen. John Hoeven's insistence, was intended to give us a real human to talk to the next time a whole print run of a publisher's newspaper went awry.

Having seven print runs delayed the same week was a good test. What's the result? Not much better than no phone number at all.

First, a little background. When I received the phone numbers of two customer service managers in the Minneapolis district, they advised me that while I could call, what they would really need is an email documenting the locations, etc., so they could investigate.

When Jill Friesz, owner of GS Publishing, which prints seven titles in southwest North Dakota, contacted me early on a Friday afternoon about none of her newspapers arriving in the mail, I was eager to try this new system.

I called the first guy and was directed to voicemail. No sooner had I uttered the words, "This is Cecile Wehrman at the North Dakota Newspaper

## Director's Column



Cecile Wehrman  
NDNA Executive Director

Associ --"

"I'm sorry, we can't detect any message, please leave a message at the sound of the tone...beep!"

"Yes, this is Cecile Wehrman at the North Dakota Newspaper Associa --"

Followed by the same message indicating I should begin speaking after the beep. After the third try, I quit.

So I dialed the second guy, where I was actually able to leave a message and I followed that up with an email to both. Fairly promptly, guy No. 1 answered the email and I gave him Jill's contact info. He did follow up with Jill as promised that afternoon, not that he had any answers.

Saturday came and went -- still no papers, but Jill heard from multiple people as she went about town that day, asking where the papers were.

On Monday, these papers that normally arrive on Thursday, finally appeared -- all but one, which didn't arrive until Wednesday (the day a new issue enters the mail in Garrison).

But there was no further follow up.

No answers about where her papers went and no remedy for the fact that, for something like the SEVENTEENTH time in a year, the whole print run was delayed. Once again, advertisers were requesting refunds.

If I were Jill Friesz, I wouldn't have any hair left!

Coincidentally, it was right after Teri Finneman's Lunch & Learn session about the new revenue model that Jill let me know about her papers going missing. As she remarked, it's tough to increase subscription rates when our delivery model is unreliable. I get it.

Who sees the irony that it's not only the newspaper revenue model that dates back to the 1800s but our primary delivery method as well?

Of course, Jill and so many others also offer online access, but we know not everyone wants to read their newspaper on a computer screen.

Two old maxims come to mind: "Doing nothing is not an option," and, "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing again and again and expecting a different result."

Change is hard.

Finneman believes change starts with bringing subscription prices in line with reality. With USPS, the reality is usually poor service and no remedy for it.

(After originally penning this column follow up from USPS suggested Jill mail her papers on Monday if she wants them delivered Thursday. Insert headslap emoji here.)



### Protection & Advocacy of ND provides:

- Information and referral
- Assistance with self-advocacy
- Education and training
- Advocacy services
- Legal representation
- Protective services
- Systems advocacy
- Legislative advocacy

#### Our Mission

Uniting to champion the equality and inclusion of people with disabilities where we live, learn, work and play.

Contact P&A at:  
Wells Fargo Bank Building  
400 East Broadway, #409  
Bismarck, ND 58501  
701-328-2950  
800-472-2670



## Planning a Family Day Trip?

Visit a state museum or historic site near you.



STATE  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
OF NORTH DAKOTA

[history.nd.gov/visit](http://history.nd.gov/visit)