

Brooklyn Postmaster Cometh with a Mixed Bag For Businesses

By Craig McGuire
Brooklyn Postmaster Robert Daruk delivered some good news, and some bad news, to Brooklyn business people at a recent legislative breakfast hosted by the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce.

Prominent among the tidings brought by Daruk, a native of Williamsburg who started his postal career as a letter carrier, was an announcement that the cost of mailing a first-class letter would be increased

from 29 cents to 32 cents. According to Daruk, the increase could be implemented as early as January of next year.

"The revenue that is generated allows the United States Postal Service to operate totally self-sufficient," said Daruk. "By law, it is our goal to break even."

According to literature distributed by Daruk to justify the hike, since the last rate increase in 1991, natural gas for heating has jumped in price almost 40

percent, electricity is up almost 16 percent, and it costs nearly 14 percent more to buy a newspaper.

However, Daruk insisted that Postal Service customers will be getting what they pay for.

"By putting our ear to the community we are able to make improvements," said Daruk. "We are implementing strategies to help reduce mis-delivery and late delivery, and other postal problems through extensive training and re-

training of our full- and part-time employees."

"We are trying to provide lobby directors in each of our branches," said Daruk, "as well as extend our hours. That will help shorten lines."

Not only can customers now order stamps by mail, and stamps and other retail items by phone, but as of July 5, are able to order stamps by fax.

Brooklyn residents can also look forward to the addition of 40 new vehicles to the borough's postal fleet.

And, in addition to the new Ryder Station that recently opened on Flatbush Avenue, the Postal Service will be introducing eight new mobile postal units in Brooklyn to complement the existing four.

Of course, as is the case whenever Daruk makes a public appearance, he heard postal service assailed by Brooklynites.

Chamber of commerce members, given the opportunity to vent their frustrations, as well as offer the postmaster some suggestions, voiced numerous complaints.

"We are having a terrible problem with the post office in our area," said Benita Rivera, representing a company in Bedford-Stuyvesant. "We are a large business and we need a lot of mail."



Postmaster Robert Daruk.

"Whether you are a small business or a large firm," said Daruk, "you should receive quality service, and I invite you to speak to one of our representatives."

"Is there any reason that a registered letter should take 11 days to reach Albany?" asked Brooklyn businesswoman Christin McMillan.

"There is no reason why that should happen, but unfortunately when you deal with volume it does occur," said Daruk.

"Why does Priority Service cost 10 times the amount of a regular letter?" asked businesswoman Jen-

ny. "I don't see any guarantee when it will get there [in two days]?"

"The reliability of Priority Service is better than 90 percent," said Daruk, "and it is still the most reasonable rate."

Kristen Lang, aide to State Senator Martin Connor, said, "At a recent meeting, you offered some of the senator's constituents, who were frustrated with busy signals, a number to call. Maybe you could provide that number for some of these people."

"Anyone who needs information or assistance," said Daruk as pens were quickly readied, "should call (718) 348-3607, or (718) 348-3606."

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