



# Thank Goodness Spring Is Here!

## Historic Kentucky ice storm ...

photo by  
Peggy Smith

**T**he most brutal winter in history for my part of the world in Kentucky is not yet gone. The damage from the storm will remain on the ground for years to come. There were more than 769,000 people without power—more than a half a million without power for weeks. Over 21,000 power poles snapped in half—more than were damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

Virtually every tree was topped and fell, with 90 percent of the roads impassable. The storm only created three inches of ice, but apparently the weight factor was thousands of pounds on power lines and trees. It then thawed and re-froze to a solid mass ice structure. The main electric lines to this end of the state fell into the lake. Nowhere could you buy gas, get cash, food, a cup of coffee—*nothing* for four days. Total darkness fell upon us. After four days, only a spot here and there gained power. At my home, it took 16 days.

I had often wondered what Postmasters do and how the Postal Service operates in areas that are hit by devastating natural disasters. I know what happened here. I would like to share it with you. Not only my office but none of the post offices in about 100 miles had power or heat; mine did not have water. Only one cell phone carrier worked, and it was one that very few people use in this area. Most telephone lines were down; my phone remained on, but only for incoming calls.

The processing plant worked on generators, so mail was available at the plant. HCR trucks could not bring it to the offices for four days because diesel was not available. No power means no service stations open. The two or three that were running on generators supplied emergency vehicles only. The temperature was freezing and expected to plummet to 6 degrees by the first of the week. I had two phone calls to my office. First, to see if I had done my pre-count conference; the second to get my eflash numbers. When I asked if he could add the volume numbers up for me, he said he did not want to. Let's just say I convinced him that he did want

to! When I borrowed a cell phone from someone and called to ask if I could get a propane heater for my office, I was told *no*. The temperature inside was 38. I went and got our mail at the processing plant because my customers needed their checks and medicine. The carriers' fingers were numb after working only a short time. We needed help and support from outside Kentucky and there was one place we knew to turn to—the LEAGUE of Postmasters. After a week of freezing in the dark and trying to continue with “normal operations” and “watch the budget” messages being disseminated, we had to have relief.

The LEAGUE made the right contacts for us and generators were on the way. We received generators, gas and water. We could actually have heat in our offices, operate our retail windows and begin to give the appearance of returning to normal. It took from Jan. 27 to Feb. 17 to regain Internet services. Without the help of the National League of Postmasters, I fear we would have suffered more harm.

What does membership mean to you? To me and western Kentucky membership, it is truly a life saver. The LEAGUE was our ice angel! Thank you, thank you, thank you ... for caring about the human side of the post office. It is so sad that the Postal Service seems to have lost sight of the humans and just looks at numbers. I am humbled and blessed to be a member of the greatest organization in America. Be a friend to a non-member and sign them up.

I have new e-mail address: [wespeg@live.com](mailto:wespeg@live.com). After the ice storm, our Internet provider advertised that they delivered better than the post office through rain, snow, sleet and hail—and I was without service for 16 days. So I fired them. It felt good.

Enjoy this beautiful spring. Western Kentucky has plenty of brush for baby birds and bunnies so something good came out of all the adversity.

I'll see y'all in New York. I am way overdue for some LEAGUE hugs! •



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