Post office move a plus; bungled ‘bonus’ a minus

Editor's note: The Saturday "Thumbs Up-Thumbs Down" editorial offers opinions on highs and lows in the news this week.

Downtown redevelopment could get a boost from the U.S. Postal Service's decision to leave its present home at 126 N. Barstow St.

The post office site has long been seen as desirable land by developers and could add to the already revitalized area. RCU may exercise its option on the land, or a developer may have other ideas for the property.

With developers already lining up possibilities to accommodate a new post office site, chances are pretty good that it would remain downtown and be a mainstay of the city's center.

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In the aftermath of the Baldwin-Woodville school district's "Christmas bonus" controversy, the school board president said other school districts had contacted him in hopes of implementing a similar idea.

B-W school officials initially said the $500-a-worker bonuses (a total of about $200,000) that arrived in December for all employees were worked out in a closed session. Upon further review, they now say the payments were included all along in the school budget and probably shouldn't have been called Christmas bonuses.

A tip for other schools considering such a move: Don't expect district residents to rally around any referendums for operating costs or other needs if you're handing out holiday bonuses. Taxpayers have good memories. Merit pay to those excelling in the classroom is one thing; holiday bonuses that go to everyone are another issue.

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Paul Howells of Menomonie loved his brother Alun and doesn't want anybody to forget him after his death in the Iraq War.
Paul, who graduated from UW-Stout last month, created a 3-D digital gallery to honor troops, such as his brother, who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan. The gallery was Paul's senior project for his Bachelor of Fine Arts.

The digital gallery allows people to search a specific memorial or see all memorials. He hopes to memorialize all the troops killed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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The Green Bay Packers' performance in their final game on Sunday leaves us with a bad taste in our mouths for the offseason.

Green Bay looked like a pedestrian team, and the New York Giants played more like defending Super Bowl champions. The Giants are on the kind of roll that could give them another world championship, while the Packers are left wondering what might have been.

If only the Packers could have done something to send the New York fans home feeling as blue as the bright jerseys that were sprinkled around Lambeau Field.

- Gary Johnson, local news editor