

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

68-0157 (9-06) - 3091078 - EI

JASON P RANKIN
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 08A-UI-05749-NT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

WEST LIBERTY FOODS LLC
Employer

OC: 05/18/08 R: 04
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Section 96.6-2 – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Jason Rankin filed an appeal from a representative's decision dated June 9, 2008, reference 01, which denied benefits based upon his separation from West Liberty Foods LLC. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone on July 8, 2008. Mr. Rankin participated personally. The employer participated by Ms. Jean Spiesz.

ISSUE:

At issue in this matter is whether the appeal herein was timely.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having considered all the evidence in the record, finds: A disqualification decision was mailed to the claimant's last-known address of record on June 9, 2008. The claimant received the decision within ten days. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by June 19, 2008. The appeal was not filed until June 20, 2008, which is after the date noticed on the disqualification decision. Although flooding had closed the claimant's local post office, mail was delivered on a daily basis to the claimant's rural residence. Mr. Rankin did not avail himself of the mail pick-up service offered by the U.S. Postal Service each day at his residence by depositing his appeal letter with the postman, who delivered mail each day. The claimant delayed filing his appeal until June 20, 2008, beyond the ten-day statutory time limit.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code section 96.6-2 provides:

2. Initial determination. A representative designated by the director shall promptly notify all interested parties to the claim of its filing, and the parties have ten days from the date of mailing the notice of the filing of the claim by ordinary mail to the last known address to protest payment of benefits to the claimant. The representative shall promptly examine the claim and any protest, take the initiative to ascertain relevant information concerning the claim, and, on the basis of the facts found by the representative, shall

determine whether or not the claim is valid, the week with respect to which benefits shall commence, the weekly benefit amount payable and its maximum duration, and whether any disqualification shall be imposed. The claimant has the burden of proving that the claimant meets the basic eligibility conditions of section 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to section 96.5, except as provided by this subsection. The claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence showing that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 10, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to section 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraphs "a" through "h". Unless the claimant or other interested party, after notification or within ten calendar days after notification was mailed to the claimant's last known address, files an appeal from the decision, the decision is final and benefits shall be paid or denied in accordance with the decision. If an administrative law judge affirms a decision of the representative, or the appeal board affirms a decision of the administrative law judge allowing benefits, the benefits shall be paid regardless of any appeal which is thereafter taken, but if the decision is finally reversed, no employer's account shall be charged with benefits so paid and this relief from charges shall apply to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

The ten calendar days for appeal begins running on the mailing date. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the representative's decision, unless otherwise corrected, is presumptive evidence of the date of mailing. *Gaskins v. Unempl. Comp. Bd. of Rev.*, 429 A.2d 138 (Pa. Comm. 1981); *Johnson v. Board of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

Pursuant to rules 871 IAC 26.2(96)(1) and 871 IAC 24.35(96)(1), appeals are considered filed when postmarked, if mailed. *Messina v. IDJS*, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983).

The record in this case shows that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the mailing date and the date this appeal was filed. The Iowa Supreme Court has declared that there is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and that the administrative law judge has no authority to change the decision of a representative if a timely appeal has not been filed. *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). Compliance with appeal notice provisions is jurisdictional unless the facts of a case show that the notice was invalid. *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also *In re Appeal of Elliott*, 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982). The question in this case thus becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. *Hendren v. IESC*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. IESC*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973). The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal. Mail was delivered to his personal residence on a daily basis and the claimant had the opportunity to deposit mail with the U.S. Postal Service on a daily basis by giving or leaving the appeal letter for the postman to pick up when they visited Mr. Rankin's residence each day.

The administrative law judge concludes that failure to file a timely appeal within the time prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law was not due to any Agency error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service pursuant to 871 IAC 24.35(2). The administrative law judge further concludes that the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6-2, and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to

make a determination with respect to the nature of the appeal. See *Beardslee v. Iowa Department of Job Service*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979).

DECISION:

The decision of the representative's decision dated June 9, 2008, reference 01, is hereby affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely and the decision of the representative remains in effect.

Terence P. Nice
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

kjw/kjw