

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**LORENZ H PETERSEN**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 10A-UI-15805-VST**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**ANAMOSA COMMUNITY  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
Employer

**OC: 08/01/10**  
**Claimant: Respondent (1)**

Section 96.5-1 – Voluntary Quit  
Section 96.6-2 – Timeliness of Appeal

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The employer filed an appeal from a representative's decision dated November 2, 2010, reference 01, which held the claimant eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a telephone conference hearing was scheduled for and held on December 30, 2010. The claimant participated. The employer participated by Tammy Seeley, nutritional services director.. The record consists of the testimony of Tammy Seeley. Official notice is taken of agency documents.

**ISSUE:**

Whether the employer filed a timely appeal.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony of the witnesses and having considered all of the evidence in the record, makes the following findings of fact:

On November 2, 2010, a representative issued a decision that held that the claimant was eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. The decision also states that the decision would become final unless an appeal was postmarked by November 12, 2010, or received by the appeal section on that date. The employer's appeal was postmarked on November 15, 2010.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

The preliminary issue in this case is whether the employer timely appealed the representative's decision. Iowa Code section 96.6-2 provides that unless the affected party (here, the employer) files an appeal from the decision within ten calendar days, the decision is final and benefits shall be paid or denied as set out by the decision.

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

immediately below that entry, 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 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 is not 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 an appeal postmarked as timely.

The administrative law judge concludes that the appellant's failure to have the appeal timely postmarked within the time prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law was not due to error, misinformation, delay, or other action of the United States Postal Service pursuant to 871 IAC 24.35(2). November 11, 2010, was a federal holiday and the employer's representative, Tammy Seeley, testified that she did deposit the letter in an outside mailbox on November 11, 2010. However, due to the holiday and the transport of the mail to Cedar Rapids, the letter was not postmarked until November 15, 2010. This is a very close question on whether the delay was due to action of the postal service. Ms. Seeley was told that deposits of mail in outside mailboxes are routinely sent to Cedar Rapids for postmark. The administrative law judge concludes, therefore, that the postal service was following its procedure and there is no evidence of error or delay. The postmark, which was November 15, 2010, is controlling. Since the employer's appeal is not timely, the administrative law judge has no jurisdiction to rule on the merits of the claim for unemployment insurance benefits.

**DECISION:**

The employer failed to file a timely appeal from the representative's decision dated November 2, 2010, reference 01. That decision, which concluded that the claimant was eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits, remains in full force and effect.

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Vicki L. Seeck  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

vls/kjw