



National Association
of Letter Carriers

Fredric V. Rolando, President

Jan. 26, 2012 — No. 12-01

NALC Bulletin

100 Indiana Ave. NW Washington, DC 20001-2144 202.393.4695 www.nalc.org

Welcome back, Congress!

Postal issues front and center as reps return to DC

As the nation's elected representatives returned to Washington this month to begin the second session of the 112th Congress, NALC President Fredric Rolando penned a special greeting to all House and Senate members to mark the occasion.

"On behalf of the nearly 300,000 men and women who make up the National Association of Letter Carriers," he wrote, "I would like to formally welcome you back and give you a brief update on letter carriers' actions in the field over the last six weeks."

In individually addressed letters, Rolando noted that carriers continue to closely watch the progress on Capitol Hill of a number of pending postal reform measures, some of which would have major impacts on letter carriers if they were to become law.

"Various bills making their way through both houses of Congress would eliminate our unique six-day delivery service, making it more difficult for the Postal Service to remain competitive and offer essential services to customers in every community, including hundreds of thousands in your district," he wrote. "I urge you to reject those proposals in lieu of legislative solutions that strive to strengthen and build the Postal Service, not weaken and slowly destroy it."

The president also made special note of the NALC's recent successful petition drive in support of protecting six-day mail delivery, in which off-duty active carriers, alongside retired carriers, family members and friends, gathered more than 1 million signatures from Americans who oppose eliminating a day of delivery. (See story below.)

"I look forward to working together with you for the remainder of the session to ensure a competitive and financially viable Postal Service," Rolando wrote.

The same day, Rolando also sent an urgent notice to the members of the NALC e-Activist Network.

"With Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid announcing late last week that he would be delaying a floor vote for the controversial anti-piracy bills pending before Congress," the president wrote, "the Senate schedule now has unexpected floor time that will need to be filled. All indications are that the leadership plans on moving S. 1789, the 21st Century Postal Service Act of 2011, as early as next week.

"S. 1789, in its current form, is unacceptable to the NALC and to many stakeholders and customers throughout the country," Rolando wrote.

The president outlined some key problems with the Senate measure:

- + It allows for cutting a day of mail delivery by 2014 if the Postal Service doesn't turn a profit by then, while failing to give the USPS the flexibility it needs to be able to turn a profit.
- + It calls for phasing out door-to-door delivery in favor of curbside and centralized delivery.
- + It fails to call for the refund of between \$50 billion and \$75 billion in CSRS pension surplus funds that two independent audits found were the result of overpayments dating back to the 1970s that the USPS has made into CSRS.
- + It includes an anti-labor provision that would direct arbitrators to take into special consideration the financial condition of the Postal Service before rendering a decision. Arbitrators already are required to consider all the evidence presented to them. Adding this pro-management provision to the law with no balancing pro-worker consideration would tilt the balance of interest arbitration against unions.

Rolando noted that S. 1789 could become a better bill if senators added in the provisions found in Sen. Bernie Sanders' S. 1853, the Postal Service Protection Act of 2011.

"S. 1853 addresses the problems laid out above and sets out to strengthen the Postal Service while maintaining the excellent level of service Americans have come to expect, preserving middle-class jobs and creating new opportunities for the Postal Service moving forward," he wrote.

NALC members can get instant e-mail updates on the latest legislative via the union's free e-Activist Network. Just go to nalc.org to sign up or to update your e-mail address.

Are you an e-Activist?

Stay informed and get the very latest alerts from the NALC via the e-Activist Network. Go to nalc.org today to sign up or to update your e-mail address.



Heading to mediation!

USPS declines to extend contract talks with NALC



On Jan. 20, the U.S. Postal Service announced that it was declining to further extend its collective-bargaining negotiations with the NALC.

"I am disappointed by the Postal Service's decision," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "We had been making steady progress in negotiations, right up to the latest deadline. Our negotiations have been innovative, professional and productive and have been conducted at the highest level."

"Now that the formal litigation process has begun, we will pursue a negotiated agreement through mediation and prepare to vigorously defend our members in interest arbitration, if it reaches that step," he said.

The decision triggers an impasse that will automatically send contract talks to mediation under the auspices of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. If no consensual agreement between NALC and USPS is reached within a 60-day period of mediation, the issues will be submitted for final and binding resolution before an interest arbitration panel, which under law must consider all the evidence presented by both parties.

"Notwithstanding this turn of events, NALC continues to believe that a negotiated agreement is in the best interests of the parties, the businesses that rely on us, and the nation we serve," Rolando said. "We will continue to negotiate in good faith as mediation takes place under the law's dispute-resolution process, even as we prepare for binding arbitration. We will continue to work with Congress on vitally needed reforms and work with our external expert advisers to advance a new business model that will revitalize and preserve the USPS as a vital element of the nation's business and cultural infrastructure."

Be sure to follow the latest developments at nalc.org.

Rolando to Issa: Don't send USPS into a death spiral



NALC President Fredric Rolando

A commentary piece written by NALC President Fredric Rolando was published in the Sunday, Jan. 15 edition of Southern California's *Press-Enterprise*, a major newspaper in Rep. Darrell Issa's district.

Issa is chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. His so-called postal reform bill, H.R. 2309, contains provisions that, were it to become law, would destroy the U.S. Postal Service while hurting people and businesses.

In Rolando's item, which was a response to Issa's Dec. 18 op-ed in the *Press-Enterprise*, the NALC president laid out a compelling argument against the congressman's efforts and discussed what should instead be done.

"[Issa's] op-ed is all over the lot in citing culprits: management, e-commerce, workers and more," Rolando wrote. "Those are assertions masquerading as analysis."

The president refuted Issa's conclusions using a number of easily verifiable facts, including:

+ Fiscal years 2007-2010 saw a Postal Service net profit of \$611 million delivering the mail, despite the worst recession in 80 years.

+ The \$20 billion in red ink during that same time period stems from the 2006 postal reform law mandate that the Postal Service—alone among all agencies and firms—pre-fund future retiree health benefits for the next 75 years within a decade.

"Issa's piece failed to mention this manufactured crisis—a smart move, because then the rest of his narrative, as well as his congressional bill, would fall apart," Rolando wrote.

Instead, the president continued, "Issa favors slashing postal services to residents and businesses. He favors tasking bureaucrats in Washington with managing the Postal Service instead of the professionals. He favors abrogating contracts with hardworking letter carriers who deliver in your communities."

Rolando wrote that Congress needs to fix the pre-funding fiasco it created, but noted that a bill to do so, H.R. 1351—which has a bipartisan majority of co-sponsors in the House—can't move forward because Issa won't let it come to a vote.

Meanwhile, Issa's "reform" bill has two co-sponsors: himself, and freshman Rep. Dennis Ross (R-FL).

If the alleviated the financial strain of pre-funding, Rolando noted, "the postal community could focus on adapting to an evolving society, as it has for 200 years...through efficiencies and growing the business."

"By contrast, degrading services would send the Postal Service into a death spiral by driving customers away and reducing revenues," he wrote. "Destroying something to save it is never good public policy."

Minneapolis Convention deadlines set



NALC Secretary-Treasurer Jane E. Broendel has announced that delegate eligibility lists for this summer's 68th biennial national convention in Minneapolis will be mailed to all branches beginning Feb. 1.

The lists must be completed and returned to Broendel's office at NALC Headquarters no later than May 24 in order for branch representatives to be registered as delegates to the convention, which takes place July 23-27 at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

All proposed amendments to the *NALC Constitution* to be submitted for consideration at the convention must be received by Broendel's office by May 24 as well. That date is 60 days in advance of the convention, as prescribed by the *Constitution*. Proposed amendments will appear in this July's *Postal Record* for the entire membership to review.

Resolutions to be considered by delegates also must be received at Headquarters by the May 24 deadline in order to be printed in the *Resolutions and Amendments* book provided to delegates. Resolutions received after May 24, however, still may be considered at the convention.

Complete convention details can be found at nalc.org.

Beware of survey!

As this *Bulletin* went to print, the NALC received information that a survey is being sent to letter carriers in various Districts. We are told by

Postal Service management that the survey is the marketing tool of a group that is trying to sell financial investment services. Postal management adamantly states that this survey is not sanctioned by the USPS.

The District Manager from the first District where the survey appeared has instructed all postmasters and managers there to return any such mail and not to hand out the surveys to employees.

1 million signatures!

National petition drive a huge success



At the National Rap Session in Las Vegas in October, NALC President Fredric Rolando asked all members to collect signatures in support of protecting the future of the U.S. Postal Service.

And on Jan. 6, he sent an e-Activist Network message announcing the results of this important campaign.

"You delivered!" Rolando said. "From big cities to small towns, more than 1 million signatures were collected, processed and sent to Congress in just 12 weeks."

"Your dedication, determination and hard work made it possible to reach this goal of 1 million signatures," he continued. "The voices of Americans from every corner of this country have been heard because of the efforts of the brothers and sisters of the NALC. And the message is clear: Americans support first-rate mail delivery service, six days a week, and they will do everything they can to protect it."

Active members—off the clock and out of uniform—working alongside retired members, their families and friends, fanned out across America seeking residential and business customers who agree that keeping six-day mail delivery service is crucial if the Postal Service is to survive.

"While the importance of the USPS to America has been demonstrated to Congress and the White House, our battle is far from over and we must continue to fight for a viable, effective Postal Service," Rolando said. "So it is up to us to ensure that Congress does not ignore the voices of these Americans."

20th Food Drive set for Sat., May 12



Dozens of NALC branches throughout the country already have their sights set on Saturday, May 12, the date of the 20th annual NALC Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive—the country's largest single-day drive to help needy families fight hunger in America.

"The need for food assistance has never been greater, and millions of Americans depend on the food we collect to help carry them through the summer months," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "I urge every NALC branch and member—active and retired—to begin immediately to work with local officials in preparing for the food drive."

The national drive, which began with a pilot program in 1991, is held each year on the second Saturday in May.

Any branch that has not yet registered should do so as soon as possible by contacting NALC Community Services Coordinator Linda Giordano at 202-662-2489.

What is 'Align Networks'?

The USPS has established a contractual relationship with Align Networks, a private business, to set up a program that provides physical therapy network services for employees with work-related injuries and illnesses.

The Postal Service has held mandatory service talks around the country to pitch the program on the workroom floor.

The NALC is in the process of finding out more about both the program and the Service's relationship with Align Networks.

In the meantime, injured letter carriers should remember that the program is strictly voluntary.

In making the important choice of selecting a physical therapist, you are not required to go to any therapist in Align Networks. You and your doctor should make the choice that best serves you.



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Senate effort to 'reform' USPS takes new direction

Last fall, Sens. Joe Lieberman (I-CT), Susan Collins (R-ME), Tom Carper (D-DE) and Scott Brown (R-MA) introduced S. 1789, the 21st Century Postal Reform Act of 2011, which they touted as a bipartisan bill that would do what was necessary to rescue the U.S. Postal Service from financial ruin. But closer scrutiny has revealed that S. 1789 fails to live up to its promise.

"Rather than reform the Postal Service, S. 1789 would cause irreparable harm to it," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "This job-killing measure labors under the erroneous idea that pre-funding future retiree health benefits is more important than preserving America's only truly universal delivery network that serves 150 million American households and businesses six days a week."

Sadly, the 21st Century Postal Reform Act dropped a key feature of separate bills offered by Carper and Collins that preceded it: A fair allocation of CSRS pension costs that would allow the USPS to fully pre-fund future retiree health costs and therefore relieve the Postal Service of the crushing \$5.5 billion annual cost of pre-funding that has crippled the agency. The bill provides some modest relief on pre-funding by restructuring the Postal Service's retiree health payments, but it conditions the continuation of Saturday delivery to a return to profitability that is made impossible by the still-onerous cost of pre-funding.

As a result, S. 1789 would guarantee the loss of Saturday service within two years—and the elimination of 80,000 jobs, including 25,000 city carrier jobs. Combined with the mandate to phase out door-to-door delivery to nearly 35 million households, the loss of six-day delivery would greatly diminish the quality of service and would likely drive even more mailers to abandon the USPS. In short, the Postal Service would be asked to dismantle itself to maintain a pre-funding burden that no other agency or company faces.

Thanks to the grassroots activism of NALC members, dozens of senators have been alerted to the serious flaws in S. 1789. Indeed, on Feb. 14, a group of 27 senators, led by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), sent a letter to the co-sponsors of S. 1789 and asked for major changes in the legislation, drawing from language in Sanders' own postal reform bill, S. 1853. The Sanders bill, introduced last fall as well, calls for preserving Saturday mail delivery, stopping the closings of rural post offices and mail processing centers, and sparing many of the 220,000 jobs that the Postal Service aims to cut by attrition.

The Senate group called for major amendments to S. 1789 that would help preserve six-day mail delivery (though stopping short of permanently mandating six-day service), protect rural post offices, preserve current one- to three-day delivery standards, limit the number of mail-processing plant closings and create a blue-ribbon commission to develop an entrepreneurial business model for the Postal Service.

The senators' letter also called for an end to the 2006 postal reform law requirement to fully pre-fund future retiree health benefits for the next 75 years within just 10 years, noting that the account already is flush with funds. That burden is unique to the Postal Service among all businesses and government agencies.

Neither S. 1789 nor S. 1853 was scheduled for consideration in the Senate by the time this *Bulletin* was being prepared.

Minneapolis 2012

Convention registration continues; special accommodations announced

More than 3,500 NALC members already have been registered as delegates to the union's 68th Biennial National Convention July 23-27 in Minneapolis. Many more packets continue to arrive every day, and the Office of the Secretary-Treasurer at Headquarters in Washington is doing its best to get credentials to delegates as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, check nalc.org for the latest news about the convention, including housing information for registered delegates.



Attendees at the convention who may need assistance due to a disability can avail themselves of the following accommodations in adherence with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

► **Hearing impaired:** General session video presentations, including podium and floor action, will be open-captioned so hearing-impaired delegates can sit with their delegations. If a delegate needs other special accommodations, including a signing interpreter in workshops, contact Secretary-Treasurer Jane E. Broendel at NALC Headquarters by May 24.

► **Accessible equipment rental:** Scootaround provides a complete mobility rental service. Call 888-441-7575 to book your rental equipment or visit scootaround.com. Delivery to hotel or convention center is available. Also, The Mobility Shop provides electrical mobility scooters and wheelchairs. On-site reservations can be made at the Visitor Information Center, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily. For advance reservations or for more information, call 888-404-5554 or visit themobilityshop.com.

► **Oxygen:** If you require oxygen refills while in Minneapolis, you may contact one of the suppliers below. You'll need the following information: prescription, diagnosis, amount of oxygen and type of equipment required, plus type of payment (cash, credit card or insurance information, if insurance will be paying). Calling a day ahead is recommended.

Handi Medical Supply: 800-514-9979, handimedical.com
Reliable Medical Supply, Inc.: 763-566-4060, reliamed.com

► **Parking:** Handicapped parking is available to individuals with valid disability parking permits in surrounding ramps and lots as well as at parking meters on the street.

► **Wheelchair lift vehicles:** The NALC is providing free shuttle bus service to and from the Minneapolis Convention Center for hotels within the block that are not within walking distance. A complete list will be available later. To comply with ADA provisions, a vehicle equipped with a wheelchair lift will be made available during all convention hours on an on-call basis. Requests for this service can be made directly to the operations manager. The number will be listed on bus fliers available at all hotels where shuttle service is provided.

Advanced LWEC training for branch OWCP reps

The NALC is offering advanced training for branches with OWCP representatives who have experience representing injured workers and a serious interest in increasing their knowledge and sharpening their representational skills about Lost Wage Earning Capacity (LWEC) decisions.

The training will be held April 22-27 at the National Labor College in Silver Spring, MD. There is a maximum of 30 spaces available for this class.

The subject of OWCP LWEC determinations is little understood but extremely important to all letter carriers who suffer an on-the-job injury. Acting Assistant to the President for Compensation Coby Jones and retired Assistant to the President Ron Watson will provide a comprehensive review of the statutory basis of LWECs, as well as OWCP's regulatory and procedural provisions.

LWECs based on actual wages earned and those based on constructed positions will be covered in-depth and the approaches to successfully modifying or reversing LWECs will be explained. A major focus of the class will be a practical, how-to manual on winning OWCP appeals challenging LWEC determinations.

Students can expect to spend up to 12 hours a day in the classroom, followed by evening assignments. For this reason, students are required to stay overnight at the NLC.

The application form to attend the OWCP LWEC training is available at nalc.org. It must be completed and returned to NALC Headquarters no later than March 16. Selections will be based on the branch's need and the applicant's experience.

Branches will be responsible for their members' transportation, lodging and related expenses. **Do not make airline reservations before you receive confirmation of acceptance from the NALC's director of education.**

The NALC has secured a rate of \$199 per day at the NLC, which includes a single-occupancy room and all meals. Lodging, reservation and payment information will be included in the letter of acceptance.

Obama's budget calls for end of six-day service in January

President Barack Obama released his proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2013 on Feb. 13, and it unfortunately included language to allow the Postal Service permission to reduce mail delivery frequency from six days a week to five as early as January 2013—the same language the administration proposed to the so-called "super committee" last fall.



NALC President Fredric Rolando

"It's unfortunate that President Obama has bought into the postmaster general's push to start to dismantle the universal network," NALC President Fredric Rolando said, "and we will work with our friends in Congress, our customers and our allies in the business community to strike this proposal from the budget before it comes up for a vote."

"Sacrificing 17 percent of service to save 3 percent of the budget is not a rational business formula," Rolando said. "This would only drive customers away and further reduce revenues."

Obama's budget was released just a few days after the USPS Board of Governors announced the Postal Service's financial figures for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2012, which covers the last three months of 2011.

Most news outlets focused on the USPS press release headline that stated the agency lost \$3.3 billion in that quarter.

"But a headline can't tell the whole story," Rolando pointed out. "In the same release, the Postal Service announced that it actually posted a net operating profit of \$200 million delivering the mail in the first quarter of FY 2012—an impressive achievement given the current economy."

The USPS noted that its performance was boosted by record employee productivity and by "stronger-than-expected holiday shopping activity, driven by strong growth in online merchandise sales"—up 7 percent over the first quarter of the previous year.

"That shows the potential for growth offered by the Internet," Rolando said, "and such record productivity, plus strong growth in the shipping business, show that the Postal Service can be a successful organization if it's freed from the unwarranted and uniquely onerous pre-funding burden placed on it by Congress."

The pre-funding payment, along with a non-cash actuarial adjustment to the Postal Service's workers' compensation costs, is entirely responsible for the \$3.3 billion loss figure, Rolando said.

"Of course, going forward, we understand that falling First Class mail volume is undermining ability to earn operational profits, so change is necessary at the bargaining table and in the halls of Congress," he added. "Everybody has to do their part."

Contract update: Mediator named

Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service Director George Cohen announced Feb. 13 that he had appointed attorney Joshua Javits as mediator to assist NALC and USPS in reaching a new collective-bargaining agreement. An impasse was declared after USPS declined on Jan. 20 to extend talks toward a new contract.

The mediation process was triggered on Feb. 8 when the parties contacted the FMCS. The NALC and USPS will have 60 days from that date to reach an agreement. If they fail to do so, the issues will then be submitted for final and binding resolution before an interest arbitration panel, which under law must consider all evidence presented by either party.

The terms of the 2006-2011 National Agreement remain in effect while the process unfolds.

Stamp Out Hunger!

20th food drive will help millions

May 12 marks the 20th anniversary of the NALC's Stamp Out Hunger national food drive.

"For two decades, our annual national drive has proved critical in helping millions of American families—our customers—who are struggling to make ends meet during this continued recession," NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

"Each year, the second Saturday in May is a day when all citizens have an opportunity, with the help of their letter carrier, to easily donate food to needy families in their community," he said.

The drive, the largest one-day food-collection event in the nation, has been a success every year, Rolando said, but the needs are particularly sad, even staggering, in 2012.

"Sixteen percent of all Americans are at risk of hunger—uncertain where their next meal may be coming from, a figure that includes 1 in 5 children under the age of 18, plus 4 million seniors who are forced every day to choose between paying a utility bill and buying food," he said.

"Last year, despite many obstacles, letter carriers proudly collected more than 70.2 million pounds of food, raising the total amount of donations picked up over the history of the drive to more than 1.1 billion pounds," Rolando said. "With help from our brothers and sisters in the rural craft, alongside other postal employees and volunteers, letter carriers will do what we can again this year to help all Americans."

Twenty years after the first nationwide food drive, letter carriers still lead the charge in the ongoing battle against hunger, collecting non-perishable food—including pet food—to help stock food banks, pantries and shelters for the summer months.

The number of registered branches for the 2012 food drive already has topped 1,200, with more signing up every day.

Providing these branches and volunteers a much-appreciated boost are the drive's official sponsors: the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, Campbell Soup Company, Valpak, U.S. Postal Service, United Way, AFL-CIO, Feeding America, Uncle Bob's Self-Storage and AARP.

Reminder postcards are key components in drumming up customer participation in the food drive, and Campbell's is donating 75 million to help the cause.

Campbell's also has pledged a donation of 1 million "Stamp Out Hunger" bags to be distributed in a number of locations. International Paper is providing similar bags in select areas, while Publix, the grocery chain with more than 1,000 stores in the Southeast, is donating bags in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina. And AARP is kicking in more 13.5 million bags as well, to be delivered to states where senior-citizen hunger is a particular problem.

In a letter to President Rolando, Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe expressed the Postal Service's strong support of the drive. "I look forward to working with you to make a difference as our carriers, other postal employees and citizens in communities throughout our nation deliver for families in need through the food drive," Donahoe said.

The official coordinator's manual and other materials have been sent to food drive coordinators of those branches that already have registered for the 2012 drive. Branches must register each year if they plan to participate. Questions regarding the food drive should be directed to NALC Director of Community Services Linda Giordano at 202-662-2489 or at giordano@nalc.org.



New RAAs for Regions 9 and 15

NALC President Fredric Rolando has announced the following appointments:

► Roswell, GA Branch 4862 member Paul Barner is appointed as a regional administrative assistant for Atlanta Region 9 to fill the vacancy left by the retirement of Nancy Quick.

Quick is a 28-year letter carrier and member of Sumter, SC Branch 904. She is a former president of the South Carolina State Association and served Region 9 as RAA for nearly 10 years.

Barner is an Army veteran and a 2007 graduate of the NALC Leadership Academy. He has been a letter carrier since 1987 and has served his branch as a shop steward, treasurer and trustee. He also has worked as an arbitration advocate, a primary Step B representative, and he has held a position on the Georgia State Association's executive board.

Barner's appointment is effective Feb. 27.

► President Rolando also has appointed Orlando Gonzalez, a member of New York City Branch 36, as an RAA for New York Region 15.

Gonzalez is a 15-year letter carrier and a 2011 graduate of the Leadership Academy. He served Branch 36 as a shop steward, Formal A representative and editor of the branch newsletter, and he also was a Customer Connect district coordinator.

Gonzalez' appointment is effective March 5.



Paul Barner



Orlando Gonzalez



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NALC to lead nationwide demonstrations on April 12



As this *NALC Bulletin* was being prepared, plans were underway for another round of "Save America's Postal Service" demonstrations, this time to be held after work on Thursday, April 12, at U.S. senators' home offices across the country.

"We had great success with our September 27 events at House members' offices in spreading the word about the real solutions found in Rep. Stephen Lynch's H.R. 1351," NALC President Fredric Rolando said, "so we're going to use the same strategy to let senators know that letter carriers simply cannot support S. 1789—the 21st Century Postal Reform Act—as currently written."

These demonstrations, which will be led by off-the-clock letter carriers, will take place outside of Senate offices across the country as a means of encouraging each senator to oppose S. 1789.

The timing and impact of these events are critical since S. 1789 is likely to be brought up the week following the April 12 demonstrations. (See story at right.)

"These events are meant to engage the public through the use of speeches, handouts and demonstrations to make our voices heard," Rolando said.

If S. 1789 were to pass, the bill would hurt the Postal Service by:

- Allowing an end to six-day mail delivery in two years;
- Phasing out door-to-door mail delivery;
- Failing to fully address the Postal Service's pre-funding requirement;
- Not addressing the overpayment into the CSRS pension fund; and
- Leaving in place the postmaster general's deeply flawed "business plan."

The president noted that the Postal Service has a wide variety of supporters, many of whom may wish to participate in the various Save America's Postal Service demonstrations. "While you're off the clock, get in touch with small-business owners who use the mail to advertise, leaders of veterans' groups, local elected officials, other labor union members, faith leaders, and progressive allies who have concerns for the plight of working men and women, and ask them to take part on April 12."

Please note: As with the Sept. 27 rallies, these April 12 events will not be protests against individual senators or postal management. Our message continues to be focused on the legislative process and the value of the Postal Service—not on any grievances we might have with postal managers or anyone else.

20th food drive is weeks away



The 20th annual NALC Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is Saturday, May 12, and letter carriers from more than 1,300 branches across America are putting the final touches on their plans for this national event that helps replenish the food banks that serve our neediest customers.

"Too many people in this country still are going hungry," NALC President Fredric Rolando said, "a widespread problem we see every day by virtue of the fact that we deliver to every address in the nation six days a week."

Since the national drive began in 1992, letter carriers in every corner of the United States—alongside our family members, friends, co-workers from other crafts and allies—have set aside the second Saturday in May as the day we give something back to the communities we loyally serve.

Last year's drive brought in 70.2 million pounds of non-perishable food (including pet food), raising the total amount of donations collected over the 20-year history of the drive to more than 1.1 billion pounds.

By the time our national drive rolls around, food bank stocks often are exhausted, which is what makes our unique effort a timely rescue as the summer months approach. And with school lunches unavailable, the need is particularly strong.

Letter carriers lead this collection effort, but we get a big boost from the many sponsoring organizations that help make the food drive a reality, including the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, Campbell Soup Company, Valpak, U.S. Postal Service, United Way, AFL-CIO, Feeding America, Uncle Bob's Self Storage and AARP.

Campbell's is helping spread the word about the May 12 drive by donating 75 million postcards, which will complement the promotional announcements about the event featured on 40 million Valpak mailers. AARP will provide promotional articles and advertisements in its membership magazine as well.

Campbell Soup also is pledging a donation of 1 million "Stamp Out Hunger" bags for handing out in key locations throughout the country, while International Paper and AARP will join the Publix grocery store chain in placing special food-drive branded bags in specific communities. And Uncle Bob's Self Storage will donate its fleet of rental trucks on May 12 to collect donated food in the areas the company serves.

Questions regarding the food drive should be directed to NALC Director of Community Services Linda Giordano at 202-662-2489 or at giordano@nalc.org.

A true win-win

The MBA's Maturity Income Plan



The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) allows individuals who meet certain income eligibility requirements to contribute to a **traditional individual retirement account (IRA)** and to reduce their taxable income at the same time.

"It's not often that one finds a true win-win strategy, but this is a real win-win for letter carriers," NALC Director of Life Insurance Myra Warren said. "The government achieves its goal of promoting saving for retirement while allowing individuals to reduce their current tax burden."

"It's time for all members to check out the MBA's Maturity Income plan," she said, adding that the plan is available as a traditional IRA, a Roth IRA, or a non-qualified deferred-annuity policy.

Note that tax day, April 17, is the last day you can make a deposit into your MBA traditional IRA or Roth IRA for the 2011 tax year.

"The MBA is currently paying 4.5 percent interest on Maturity Income policies," Warren said. "Please contact the MBA with any questions on this popular retirement vehicle."

For more information, write the MBA at U.S. Letter Carriers Mutual Benefit Association, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Suite 510, Washington, DC 20001-2144, or call 202-638-4318.

And if you or someone in your family is enjoying the many benefit programs available through the MBA, we would like to use your photo or theirs in our brochures and other publications. Please contact the MBA and let the office know if you're interested.

Consideration of S. 1789 on hold—for the moment

On the evening of Sunday, March 25, NALC President Fredric Rolando hosted two separate national conference calls to talk to NALC members about S. 1789, the deeply flawed 21st Century Postal Reform Act introduced last November by Senators Joe Lieberman, Susan Collins, Tom Carper and Scott Brown. The calls—timed to contact members before a looming floor vote on S. 1789, reached a combined total of 122,000 NALC members' households. Nearly 51,000 members listened live to those calls, and more than 71,000 messages were left for those could not take part in them.

During each call, Rolando outlined the NALC's strong opposition to the bill as introduced.

"It appears to favor the Postal Service's dangerously misguided business strategy of relying almost exclusively on reducing the quality and value of its mail services," the president said, "while failing to adequately address the single biggest cause of the Postal Service's recent financial distress—the 2006 mandate that USPS pre-fund future retiree health benefits for the next 75 years."

Immediately following that evening's teleconferences, and all day Monday and Tuesday, thousands of NALC members, plus our friends, family members and allies, flooded the phone lines of Senate offices on Capitol Hill, voicing our opposition to the bill. About 13,000 calls were placed using a special toll-free number posted on the NALC website.

"Thanks in part to your calls," Rolando told members in a national e-Activist Network message, "by the afternoon of March 27, the Senate had failed to gather enough votes to allow consideration to begin on S. 1789." This means that a Senate vote on this bill likely won't be held until after Congress' Easter recess, at the earliest, he said.

"Our hope is that senators are using this extra time to carefully analyze the Postal Service's financial problems, so that if the Senate resumes consideration of the bill in the coming weeks, it will be prepared to work on real reform designed to strengthen the agency," Rolando said.

"NALC cannot support legislation that aims to slow mail delivery by cutting Saturday delivery service, wiping out tens of thousands of jobs, just to continue an onerous mandate to pre-fund future retiree health benefits that no other employer in the nation faces," he said. "We already have set aside \$45 billion, enough to pay for decades of retiree health premiums. The focus now must be on investing in a new business model with a viable business strategy."

Unfortunately, the Postal Service does not seem to have a viable business strategy, something that became clear when Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe effectively endorsed H.R. 2309 at a House subcommittee hearing on March 27.

That radical bill, sponsored by House Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Darrell Issa (R-CA), aims to dismantle the USPS by revoking the employees' union contracts, slashing delivery services and shuttering major portions of the USPS' networks at a cost of 200,000 jobs.

"We support the FERS refund," Donahoe said during the hearing. "We support the ability to move and consolidate the network. We support the ability to move to consolidate from six-day to five-day delivery. Practically everything in the bill, we are in support."

Go to nalc.org to listen to the PMG's remarks.

"Comments such as these drive home the fact that we need S. 1789 to offer a fundamental alternative to a Donahoe-endorsed Issa plan," Rolando said. "But for S. 1789 to be that alternative, it must be amended to maintain quality service, to restore the USPS' capacity to grow, and to preserve good postal jobs for veterans and other Americans."

Members can stay informed on the latest developments by signing up for the e-Activist Network. The sign-up form is on nalc.org.

"All of us must be prepared to renew at any time our fight to preserve the Postal Service," Rolando said. "Our commitment to this cause will help us win that fight."

Springtime means state chairs training, lobbying



NALC President Fredric Rolando spoke to state chairs at the opening of their spring training conference in Washington.

The legislative chairs of the NALC's state associations came to Washington March 19-20 for two days of training and lobbying.

NALC President Fredric Rolando opened the Monday training sessions and updated the letter carrier leaders on the various irons the union has in the proverbial fire.

"We have a lot of work to do this year," Rolando said. "We need to work to create a labor-friendly House, to get a filibuster-proof majority of 60-plus senators, and to hold on to the White House."

"Meanwhile, the NALC continues to look for ways to work with the White House on a menu of items the Obama administration could implement right now to help strengthen the Postal Service," he said. "But as far as an endorsement in the presidential election goes, we'll make a decision on that at this summer's convention, just like we did in Boston in 2008."

Rolando noted how members' efforts to deliver our message to the news media seem to be taking hold gradually. "Practically every news story on the Postal Service's financial crisis now includes at least some mention of the pre-funding problem, which is quite a difference from what we saw just a year ago," he said.

Of course, a big issue on members' minds was the status of contract negotiations. "We remain in mediation with the Postal Service as we continue to work toward a new collective-bargaining agreement," the president said, "and unless something changes or unless the two parties agree to extend mediation, we're ready to move to interest arbitration following the April 8 deadline."

"A negotiated contract is always preferable, since an arbitrated contract tends not to deal with as many workroom floor issues," Rolando said.

"The next few weeks will be crucial," Rolando said. "And even if we wind up going to interest arbitration, we'll continue to try to negotiate an agreement with the Postal Service right up until when the arbitrator is ready to announce a decision."

For the remainder of the day Monday, members of the Legislative and Political Action Department outlined the NALC's strategy going into the fall elections. On Tuesday, the legislative chairs visited House and Senate members to lobby for support of letter carrier issues.



The NALC's state legislative chairs listened to an update from the union's legislative department on the status of postal reform on Capitol Hill.



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National Association
of Letter Carriers

Fredric V. Rolando, President

May 2, 2012 No. 12-04

NALC Bulletin

100 Indiana Ave. NW Washington, DC 20001-2144 202.393.4695 www.nalc.org

Senate passes S. 1789; NALC disappointed, determined

On April 25, despite tens of thousands of phone calls from NALC members voicing our opposition from around the country, the U.S. Senate voted instead to begin the slow dismantling of the United States Postal Service by passing S. 1789, the deeply flawed postal reform bill, by a vote of 62 to 37.

The legislation embraces a downsizing strategy and fails to fully remove the onerous burden to pre-fund 75 years of future retiree health benefits. If it were to become law, it would be almost impossible to save Saturday mail delivery for the American people and their businesses.

The bill gives the postmaster general the authority to propose a switch to five-day delivery in two years—at a cost of 80,000 jobs—if he believes such a change is necessary to preserve the “solvency” of the Postal Service, subject to review by the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO). Since the USPS has already made this dire determination (incorrectly, in our view), two years from now it almost certainly would abandon its most important strategic advantage in the delivery business. Indeed, while the bill reduced the level of required pre-funding, the cost of the mandate is still too heavy to allow the USPS to regain a sound financial footing.

In late March, the Senate failed to uphold a motion to move forward and begin debate on S. 1789, pushing the final vote to after the Easter recess. The NALC took advantage of this delay and held dozens of public demonstrations against the bill at senators’ home offices throughout the country (see story, below right).

Once the Senate resumed business, a revised version of S. 1789 was introduced and a number of major amendments were proposed, including amendments to stop the change to five-day mail delivery, to protect door-to-door delivery of the mail and to strike draconian workers’ compensation reform. Unfortunately, only two of these amendments, which the NALC supported, were adopted before the bill went to a final vote. (The amendment to preserve door-to-door delivery was approved.)



NALC President Fredric Rolando

“We’re disappointed, but we are determined to fight on,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said after the vote. He reminded letter carriers that the legislative process is far from over. “It may take months to get a bill through the House of Representatives,” he said, “and we will not rest in this struggle to defend a strong and viable Postal Service.”

Despite the truly regressive nature of the House Republican bill, H.R. 2309, the NALC’s top priorities have strong bi-partisan support in the House. Indeed, a majority of representatives have co-sponsored both H. Res. 137 (regarding six-day service) and H.R. 1351 (regarding pension equity). President Rolando vowed a spirited campaign in the House. Once that body acts, the process will not be over. A conference committee would have to reconcile the competing bills, and President Obama would be able to weigh in on the legislation—since a final bill that passed both houses would not become law unless he signed it.

“I want to thank the thousands of letter carriers who joined together to lobby the Senate this week,” Rolando said, “flooding the upper chamber with tens of thousands of calls and other contacts.”

In an e-Activist Network message, Rolando cautioned members to avoid a “knee-jerk reaction” to senators who voted in favor of S. 1789. “I want to make sure that we strategize very carefully about how we move forward from here,” he said. “This process is far from over and, whether we like it or not, the Senate will continue to have a voice in this process. We need to remain focused on the long-term objective of making our case before Congress and the Obama administration.

“Let’s stick together and stay on message,” he said. “This fight has only just begun!”

NALC releases white paper on USPS business model, postal reform

Successful revitalization of the U.S. Postal Service requires a strategic business plan that leverages the unmatched reach of its network, legislative action to relieve it of a congressional mandate no other business faces, and shared sacrifice from all stakeholders. That’s the finding of a white paper released April 17 by the NALC, ahead of the resumption of consideration of the Senate’s postal reform bill.

“While the Postal Service clearly faces enormous challenges, we do believe that its revitalization is achievable,” read the white paper, prepared by renowned international financial advisory firm Lazard.

The paper, “Delivering Change to Revitalize an American Icon,” was the result of a due diligence investigation of the USPS commissioned in October 2011 by NALC and conducted by a Lazard team with extensive experience in restructuring strategy.

The paper outlined the basic elements of a strategy that would aim to revitalize the Postal Service—rather than the approach being advocated by the Postal Service, which relies on massive, and ultimately counterproductive, reductions in service. The Postal Service’s “shrink to survive” strategy will simply facilitate the decline of this vital American institution, the report found.

The Lazard paper acknowledges that the Postal Service faces a financial crisis and must adapt to rapid technological changes that have reshaped—and are still reshaping—the way Americans communicate with others, primarily because of the Internet and its impact on the use of First Class Mail. On the other hand, some of those changes can stimulate new business for the Postal Service, Lazard said, such as increased delivery of packages ordered online.

The paper stresses that cuts in the number of employees and reductions in services alone can neither save the Postal Service, nor enable it to adapt to the evolving needs of the American public and of postal customers, both business and residential. On the contrary, they could destroy it by driving customers away and further reducing revenue.

In particular, Lazard noted, “a successful restructuring of the Postal Service must start with a plan to better leverage its unrivaled last-mile delivery network—a retail network that touches every city, town and neighborhood in America. Instead of focusing on shrinking its network and capabilities, thereby yielding its competitive advantage, the Postal Service needs an ambitious rethinking of its business model.”

NALC President Fredric Rolando said: “This analysis clearly shows it would be a terrible mistake for Congress or the Postal Service to rely on massive cuts in service to deal with the Service’s financial difficulties, which are real. Yet that’s exactly what they are doing. The Postal Service does need basic rethinking, but not heavy-handed, ill-considered slashes in employees, facilities and delivery services.”

The white paper is available for review at nalc.org.

Contract talks end as mediation deadline passes

The April 8 deadline for mediation passed and negotiations for a new National Agreement between the NALC and the U.S. Postal Service concluded, so the process has moved to interest arbitration.

Formal talks between the two parties began in August, three months before the Nov. 20 expiration date of the 2006-2011 contract. But following several extensions, the USPS announced on Jan. 20 that it was declining to further extend its collective-bargaining negotiations with the NALC.

“I am disappointed by the Postal Service’s decision,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said in January. “We have been making steady progress in negotiations, and our negotiations have been innovative, professional and productive and have been conducted at the highest level.”

About three weeks after the impasse was declared, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service appointed attorney Joshua Javits as mediator to help NALC and USPS reach a new agreement. The two parties agreed on a mediation deadline of April 8, and Javits held a number of meetings with both sides, separately, attempting to focus on the parties’ common interests. Unfortunately, an agreement could not be reached, so the process moves to interest arbitration.

In interest arbitration, each party selects an arbitration advocate to represent it on a three-person board, with the third person being an independent and neutral third party chosen by both parties to resolve the dispute. Much like a court case, each side presents evidence through witness testimony and documents, complete with opening and closing arguments, chances for cross-examination and rebuttal. After the arbitration board takes time to review the case, the arbitrators issue an “award” that explains the new contract and how it was reached.

As with mediation, there are advantages and disadvantages to resorting to interest arbitration. This step in the contract negotiation process generally is perceived as fair and unbiased, resolving a dispute with a measure of finality. A disadvantage, though, is that there is no guarantee that both sides will come out winners in an arbitration decision. Of course, even after the arbitration gets started, the NALC and USPS could still choose to settle on an agreement on their own, sidestepping the binding arbitration process.

The last time a NALC-USPS agreement was reached through interest arbitration was in the summer of 1999. That arbitration resulted in a substantial win for the NALC, with a three-year pact that provided a rise to Grade 6 pay for all city letter carriers, annual wage increases and continued cost-of-living adjustments, as well as improved health care benefits.

“The negotiating atmosphere is a lot tougher in 2012 than it was 13 years ago,” Rolando said, “which is why we’ve literally been preparing for interest arbitration since the 2010 national convention in Anaheim. We continue to bring all our resources to bear on this effort to achieve a new National Agreement, and we will work tirelessly to make sure our full case gets heard by the arbitration board, just as we did at the bargaining table.”

Rallies to help ‘Save America’s Postal Service’ held April 12

On April 12, the NALC led scores of “Save America’s Postal Service” demonstrations outside of U.S. senators’ home offices across the country. (Due to local scheduling considerations, some branches held demonstration events either the day before April 12 or the day after.)

“These public demonstrations were meant to encourage each senator to oppose S. 1789 in its current form and to offer amendments to make the bill stronger,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said, noting that events were timed to take place before the Senate resumed consideration of its deeply flawed postal reform legislation.



NALC President Fredric Rolando addressed an April 12 rally outside the Richmond, VA, office of Sen. Jim Webb (D).

Also, demonstrating during the afternoon rush hour time of 5 to 6 p.m. helped provide maximum public exposure for the events—many of which were covered live on radio and TV newscasts and received prominent news coverage.

The president joined about 40 letter carriers plus numerous passersby at the Richmond, VA, office of Sen. Jim Webb. “We need a plan to grow the business, make use of the network and address pre-funding,” Rolando told the gathering, pausing frequently as drivers on the street blew their horns in support. “You’ve got to have a business plan before you legislate.”

In addition to the live coverage of the demonstrations on evening TV and radio newscasts, the events received follow-up reports on morning shows the next day, as well as newspaper and blog coverage.

A link to NALC’s Flickr page containing hundreds of photos from April 12 is available at nalc.org.

NALC launches special website

As Congress resumed its business after the Easter recess, NALC launched a new website created to promote dialogue about postal issues and the challenges facing USPS: DeliveringforAmerica.com.

“We believe that Congress needs a real plan for the USPS, not one based on tearing down a treasured institution,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “This new site is designed specifically to let Americans know how, in the 21st century, the Postal Service is, and can continue, ‘Delivering for America.’”



Before Congress: NALC Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr. recently discussed with Congress how letter carriers are bolstering the nation’s security by participating in the Cities’ Readiness Initiative, a program to distribute medicines to Americans in the event of a biological attack. “We are fully aware of the solemn responsibility we bear as the foot soldiers for this critical Homeland Security program,” Peralta told the House Homeland Security Committee during an April 17 hearing. “No one else goes to every address in America, six days a week, and no one knows neighborhoods like letter carriers. We appreciate the confidence placed in us by presidents and officials from both parties.” So far, letter carriers in six communities have volunteered to take part in the CRI—in Seattle, Minneapolis, Louisville, Philadelphia, Boston, and Vista and San Marcos (both in San Diego County).



68TH BIENNIAL NALC CONVENTION JULY 23-27, 2012 — MINNEAPOLIS

Convention attendees who may need assistance due to a disability can avail themselves of the following accommodations in adherence with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

General session video presentations, including podium and floor action, will be **open-captioned** so hearing-impaired delegates can sit with their delegations. Delegates who need other special accommodations, including a signing interpreter in workshops, should contact Secretary-Treasurer Jane E. Broendel at NALC Headquarters by **May 24**.

information: prescription, diagnosis, amount of oxygen and type of equipment required, plus type of payment (cash, credit card or insurance information, if insurance will be paying). Calling a day ahead is recommended.

Handicapped parking is available to individuals with valid disability parking permits in surrounding ramps and lots as well as at parking meters on the street.

The NALC is providing **free shuttle bus service** to and from the

Minneapolis Convention Center (MCC) for hotels within the block that are not within walking distance. A vehicle equipped with a wheelchair lift will be made available during convention hours on an on-call basis. Requests for this service can be made directly to the operations manager, and the number will be listed on bus fliers available at all hotels where shuttle service is provided.

Parking: Across the street from the MCC is an underground parking garage that is connected by a climate-controlled skyway system to the MCC and several downtown accommodations and attractions.

Ground transportation to and from the airport: Visit nalc.org for booking and discount information on SuperShuttle and ExecuCar, as well as for available taxi and light-rail service.

Tours: Several tours are available to NALC convention delegates. Visit nalc.org for more details and to make reservations. Also, be sure to read the latest convention information in the *May Postal Record*.



National Association
of Letter Carriers

Fredric V. Rolando, President

May 31, 2012 — No. 12-05

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100 Indiana Ave. NW Washington, DC 20001-2144 202.393.4695 www.nalc.org



From l: John Graf from Hamilton, OH Br. 426; NALC President Fredric Rolando (l) joined Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine and other Headquarters staff members to help Fredericksburg, VA Branch 685's members and volunteers collect and sort food during this year's national Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive; and a smiling carrier from Arizona Mgd. Br. 1902.

Food Drive results rolling in

The NALC's 20th annual national "Stamp Out Hunger" Food Drive took place on Saturday, May 12, and letter carriers representing more than 1,400 of the union's branches worked alongside thousands of family members and volunteers from the other craft unions and from postal management to collect thousands of bags of non-perishable food that postal customers had left by their mailboxes for pickup.

"Hunger remains a tremendous problem in many communities we serve," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "That's why letter carriers consider it such an honor to set aside the second Saturday in May each year both to deliver the mail and to pick up food to assist our neediest patrons."

The national drive began in 1992, and since then, letter carriers and volunteers throughout America have used this special Saturday to help restock food pantry shelves that have been depleted in the months following the winter holiday collection drives. Also, the school-provided meals that are available to the children of many families in need are provided only while school is in session, making our drive especially timely.

In 2011, letter carriers collected 70.2 million pounds of food, which boosted the grand total of collections over the drive's history to more than 1.1 billion pounds. Final totals of this year's drive were still being tabulated as this *Bulletin* was being prepared.

"Letter carriers are proud to lead this annual effort," Rolando said, "but there is no way we would be able to have the impact we have without the help of our national sponsors." This year, those sponsors were the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, Campbell Soup Co., Valpak, the Postal Service, United Way, AFL-CIO, Feeding America, Uncle Bob's Self Storage and AARP.

In the weeks leading up to the May 12 drive, Campbell's provided 75 million reminder postcards for mailing and worked with NALC to spread word about the drive via social media services such as Facebook and Twitter. Valpak included food drive announcements on the front of 40 million of its blue coupon mailers, and AARP placed promotional articles and advertisements in its membership magazine.

Another form of publicity that's proving more popular and effective with each passing year is the use of specially branded "Stamp Out Hunger" bags. AARP, International Paper, the Publix grocery store chain and Campbell's together donated millions of specially marked bags in key locations across America.

Uncle Bob's Self Storage provided logistical support by donating the use of its fleet of rental trucks in the areas it serves to help cart collections from post offices to food pantries.

Check nalc.org for the latest food drive news and updated food collection totals.

The case against S. 1789

NALC President Fredric Rolando released a comprehensive critique of S. 1789, the 21st Century Postal Service Act, in late April. The critique highlights the many areas where the bill falls short of addressing the real issues facing the USPS or where it does serious damage to the Postal Service's network and its employees. The critique is available for review at nalc.org.



NALC President Fredric Rolando

On April 25, the Senate passed S. 1789, a measure that embraces the postmaster general's downsizing strategy while failing to adequately address the crushing mandate to pre-fund future retiree health benefits, which would continue to cost the Postal Service about \$4.7 billion to \$5.3 billion per year, every year, from now on. No other agency or company faces this burden.

On top of that, the bill calls for giving the PMG the authority to move to a five-day delivery schedule in two years, at a cost of 80,000 to 100,000 good-paying middle-class postal jobs, if he feels the cut in service is needed to keep USPS afloat. Slashing so many jobs in the midst of a national jobs crisis would weaken the country's economic recovery.

If S. 1789 were to become law, it would force the USPS to degrade its unique six-day-per-week, last-mile mail delivery network in the name of funding future retiree health benefits that are already massively pre-funded. Also, it would seriously undermine the Postal Service's ability to build on its growing success in the delivery of residential parcels and e-commerce packages.

And, alarmingly, S. 1789 attacks the rights and benefits of postal workers by amending the collective-bargaining provisions of current law to favor postal management, and by slashing workers' compensation benefits for injured workers.

But this is just the latest step in an ongoing and lengthy legislative battle.

"Despite all of this bad news, it's important for us to remain positive because the legislative process is far from over," President Rolando said. "For one thing, it may take some time to get a postal reform bill through the House, which then would be followed by the appointment of a joint House-Senate conference committee whose job it would be to come up with a bill both chambers could pass and President Obama would be willing to sign.

"So please use this critique in any meetings or conversations you will have with your senators and representatives in the coming weeks," Rolando said.

The president also said that the union is mobilizing its resources to stage a grassroots and media campaign to oppose Rep. Darrell Issa's so-called "postal reform" bill in the House.

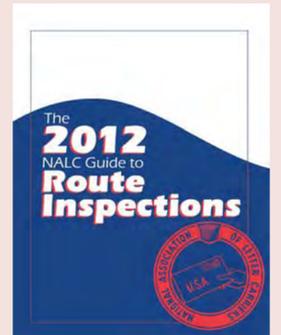
"Thank you for your continued hard work and dedication as we continue our fight to save the Postal Service and do what we can to spur it toward creating a business model to help it thrive for decades to come," Rolando said.

2012 NALC Guide to Route Inspections now available

The 2012 NALC Guide to Route Inspections was created to assist shop stewards and branch officers in identifying contractual violations that take place during management's unilateral six-day route counts and inspections/adjustments, and with filing successful grievances on those violations. This guide is now available on the City Delivery page of the NALC website at nalc.org.

The sections in this guide take you through the inspection in chronological order and provide an easy reference to various provisions and related national settlements that govern route inspections.

There also is a section with detailed descriptions and advice on how to read the various forms, reports and screens used during the route count and inspection process. Once you learn how to read one of our examples, you will be able to understand every one of the same type of form, report or screen you will ever see.



Convention news and notes



HOUSING: June 21 is the last day rooms will be available to book at the NALC rate. After June 21, rooms and preferred rates are based upon availability.

BLOOD DRIVE: The NALC, in association with the American Red Cross in Hennepin County, MN, will hold a blood drive on Tuesday, July 24, and Wednesday, July 25, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Minneapolis Convention Center in room M100, located on the Mezzanine Level. The goal is to collect 200 units of blood per day.

It is strongly recommended that you sign up in advance using the online scheduler at redcrossblood.org. Click "Make a Blood Donation Appointment" and enter sponsor code 0177712. You will need either to click on "Create a New Account" or, if you have donated with the American Red Cross recently, to enter your user name and password. You then will be directed to the NALC Convention signup sheet, where you may select an appointment time.

You also may schedule your appointment by calling 800 RED CROSS (800-733-2767), option 2, and use sponsor code 0177712.

"Double red cell" donation also is available.

If you do not have the opportunity to schedule an appointment in advance, an onsite appointment may be made, based on availability.

Blood donors must be healthy (feel well and able to perform normal activities) and weigh at least 110 pounds. If you donated blood after May 28, you will not be eligible to donate at this drive.

TOURS: Take a look at the tours available to NALC convention delegates, such as a fun-filled tour of the Twin Cities, a four-hour riverboat cruise (with lunch), a trip to the Mystic Lake and Dakota County casinos, a tour of Minnesota wineries, a tour of Stillwater (known as the birthplace of Minnesota), a Minnesota Zoo adventure, a cruise on Lake Minnetonka, and the Wabash Caves and gangster tour. See nalc.org or read the descriptions in the June edition of *The Postal Record*.

ALTERNATE DELEGATES: Alternate delegates who replace registered delegates need to provide NALC Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel with a letter of authorization signed by their branch's president and secretary.

REGISTRATION: Delegate credentials have been mailed to branches that have registered for the convention. Branch secretaries should contact the Office of the Secretary-Treasurer if the credentials have not been received.

Military care packages

In July, delegates from both the NALC convention and the NALC Auxiliary convention will work together to collect donated items from delegates. The items will be sent to NALC members who are on active military duty.

Volunteers from both conventions will pack items into boxes, label the boxes and prepare them for shipping.

Examples of requested items:

beef jerky	baby wipes	playing cards
shampoo	chapstick	energy bars
deodorant	lotion	chewing gum
prepaid phone cards	AA batteries	

Some items are prohibited, such as obscene or pornographic material, liquor, cigarettes and aerosol cans.

Volunteers also will distribute NALC postcards for delegates to write personal messages of support and thanks to our members who are serving in the military. These postcards will then be placed in boxes with the goods collected.

Volunteers will place USPS gurneys, featuring labels/posters to identify collection points for this drive, at several locations throughout the Minneapolis Convention Center.

Military notifications

Branches should be advising the NALC Membership Department when members are called to active military duty so the union can suspend their dues. Union membership is unaffected by this dues suspension.

Also, branches need to notify the Membership Department when members return from active duty.



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[@nalc_national](https://twitter.com/nalc_national)

Shyam Das named arbitration chair for next NALC-USPS pact

The NALC and the Postal Service have agreed upon the selection of National Arbitrator Shyam Das as chairman of the three-person arbitration board that will set the terms of the next collective-bargaining agreement between the union and the USPS.

"We will vigorously defend letter carriers' wages and benefits and seek to advance our bargaining goals through this step of the process," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "Those goals include achieving the best possible contract for our members and laying the groundwork for a revival of the United States Postal Service."

Das is a member of the American Arbitration Association's labor panel and has been a full-time labor arbitrator since 1977. He has served on national arbitration panels involving postal workers since 1996 and has chaired arbitration proceedings involving United Steelworkers and the Major League Baseball Players Association.

The board is now working on a schedule for hearings. Once arbitration is underway, those hearings and related testimony could last for several months. After the proceedings are complete, the arbitration panel will meet to broker a final and binding "award" that sets the terms of the next contract.

"We will call on working carriers to be witnesses and advocates for their fellow carriers," Rolando said, "and we will need the full support and cooperation of the membership to put on the best case possible."

The last time an NALC-USPS agreement was reached through interest arbitration was in 1999.

Now accepting applications for 2013 Leadership Academy

The application period for the 2013 Leadership Academy classes has begun.

Application forms are available for download at nalc.org or can be obtained from your national business agent's office. Any active member may apply for one of the 60 open spots.

There are two major changes in the application process. First, applications must be received by Aug. 31, a change designed to allow selections to be made earlier so those chosen will have more advance notice to make leave and travel arrangements. The other change of note is that those who wish to be reconsidered for one of the 2013 spots must reapply by completing a new application form.

The application form has two main parts, one for the applicant and one for the mentor. A good mentor is someone who displays leadership skills and is willing—and able—to spend a significant amount of time interacting regularly with the student while providing guidance and encouragement. The mentor also should be in a position to provide time and venues for the student to practice the skills he or she has been building at the Academy, to be available to observe their student's work and to provide appropriate feedback and critique. Branch presidents or other branch officers often are good choices for mentors.

Two classes will be held in 2013. Each class consists of three separate weeks of instruction on a variety of subjects. In 2013, Class 15 is scheduled for the weeks of Jan. 6-11, March 3-8 and May 5-10, while Class 16 is scheduled to be held Aug. 4-9, Oct. 6-11 and Dec. 8-13.

Sessions have been held at the National Labor College in Silver Spring, MD. However, the NLC campus is closing at the end of August, so the NALC is trying to locate another facility in the Washington, DC, area.

Students are required to complete outside learning projects upon returning home following Weeks 1 and 2. And upon graduation, the students will spend a week working in their national business agents' offices.

Upon selection, students will be advised of the exact dates they will need to be available for each class. Transportation, room, meals, lost wages and other costs involved with attending the Academy and working in the business agent's office are paid by the NALC.

Two applicants from each of the 15 NALC regions will be chosen for each of the 2013 classes. Those selected will be notified in early October.



HOUSING: June 21 is the last day rooms will be available to book at the NALC rate. After June 21, rooms and preferred rates are based upon availability.

BLOOD DRIVE: The NALC, in association with the American Red Cross in Hennepin County, MN, will hold a blood drive on Tuesday, July 24, and Wednesday, July 25, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Minneapolis Convention Center in room M100, located on the Mezzanine Level. Sign up in advance using the online scheduler at redcrossblood.org. Click "Make a Blood Donation Appointment" and enter sponsor code 0177712, or call 800-RED-CROSS (800-733-2767), option 2, and use sponsor code 0177712. Onsite appointments may be made, based on availability. If you donated blood after May 28, you will not be eligible to donate at this drive.

ALTERNATE DELEGATES: Alternate delegates who replace registered delegates need to provide NALC Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel with a letter of authorization signed by their branch's president and secretary.

TOURS: A number of tours will be available to delegates and their families at special rates during the convention.

► **Cities Tour:** The Minneapolis/Saint Paul area is rich in Northern European culture. Guides will tell tales of early Minnesota, the founding of Saint Paul and Minneapolis and their growth into one of the Midwest's largest metropolitan areas. Stops along the way include the famous Sculpture Garden, Minnehaha Falls, Mill City Museum, the State Capitol and historic Summit Avenue—the longest avenue of Victorian mansions in the country.

► **River Cruise:** A four-hour riverboat cruise with lunch. Come aboard, relax and enjoy the rhythm of the river and the Dixie Land Band as you cruise down the Mississippi. Riders might spot bald eagles, herons, egrets and falcons on the way from Saint Paul's bustling downtown harbor through the Mississippi National Great River Park.

► **Casinos:** Mystic Lake Casino and Dakota Country Casino are the country's largest, full-service casinos between Atlantic City and Las Vegas. Each person receives a "Play 10 get 10" package, which includes a \$4 food voucher good at any of the seven restaurants. Playing time at the Casinos is four hours, and Club Mystic player card membership is required.

► **Minnesota Wineries:** Travel south of the Twin Cities to the Cannon River Winery and the Alexis Bailey Winery. Minnesota's early autumn frosts cut grape growing season short, which has led to the development of hardy grape varieties that can be harvested early and that can also survive Minnesota winters.

► **Historic Stillwater:** A true "river town" founded in 1848, Stillwater is known as the Birthplace of Minnesota, nestled into the bluffs of the St. Croix River. Stroll along Main Street and peer into owner-operated boutique shops, art galleries, antique stores, historic pubs, wine bars and restaurants, some with decks overlooking the river.

► **Minnesota Zoo:** Check out more than 500 animal species at the award-winning 480-acre Minnesota Zoo. Explore the Minnesota Trail to see all native species, ride the monorail through the Northern Trail, check out Discovery Bay and the Tropics Trail, and hop aboard a hay wagon to the Wells Fargo Family Farm.

► **Lake Minnetonka Cruise:** Take a brunch cruise of Lake Minnetonka, with more than 125 miles of shoreline, and check out the magnificent homes while enjoying the natural beauty. The cruise package includes a tour of the town of Excelsior for shopping or a stroll by the lake.

► **Wabasha Caves & Gangster Tour:** At the Wabasha Caves, a costumed "gangster guide" will show the sites of historic nightclubs, kidnappings and gun battles and tell tales associated with the gangsters of the 1920s and '30s such as John Dillinger, Baby Face Nelson, Ma Barker and even Al Capone. The tour continues to the state capitol, past the Fitzgerald Theatre (home to Garrison Keillor's "A Prairie Home Companion"), Landmark Center, Summit Avenue, and the supposedly haunted Chauncy Griggs House.

To reserve tours online, go to eventlab.net/rsvp/tours.php?id=7. You also can use the form at right to reserve a tour. Faxed requests are handled on a first-come, first-served, space-available basis. Reservations must be prepaid online or faxed to Event Lab at 952-224-8559. Payment is due at the time of the reservation. Confirmation will be sent to those attendees who provide an e-mail address. Your printed e-mail confirmation is your ticket. Those who don't provide an e-mail address may call 952-224-8558 to check on orders. Allow one week for processing of faxed requests. All tours use air-conditioned, deluxe touring vehicles. Unless otherwise noted, meals are not included on any tour; however, time will be allotted on all-day tours for lunch on your own. Tours will depart from and return to the Minneapolis Convention Center. Please arrive 15 minutes before listed departure time. If you have further questions, please contact Event Lab at jnoble@eventlab.net or 952-224-8558.

70.5 million pounds!

Carriers celebrate another successful Food Drive



Letter carriers led the charge against hunger on Saturday, May 12 by collecting more than 70.5 million pounds of food during the NALC's 20th annual national "Stamp Out Hunger" food drive.

"These amazing results will enable the food pantries that we supply across the country to help feed the 50 million Americans who lack sufficient food," NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

The annual one-day drive, the largest in the nation, is held on the second Saturday in May in 10,000 cities and towns in every state, territory and the District of Columbia.

"Six days a week, as we deliver mail to every address in America, letter carriers see first-hand the needs in the communities we work in, and we're privileged to lead an effort that brings out the best in so many Americans," Rolando said.

Non-perishable donations that residents placed in sturdy bags near their mailboxes were collected as the mail was delivered on Saturday, May 12.

Several NALC branches are still compiling figures, but already this year's total tops last year's 70.2 million pounds, making this the ninth consecutive drive surpassing 70 million pounds of food collected and bringing the grand total to more than 1.2 billion pounds picked up since the annual food drive began in 1993.

The good results this year were achieved despite the continuing tough economy, which makes the drive all the more important. So, too, does the timing.

"This drive allows letter carriers to help replenish food banks during difficult summer months when millions of children have no school breakfast or lunch programs to count on," Rolando said.

Various places saw dramatic increases in the amount of food collected this year, including the states of Mississippi, South Carolina and Texas, as well as Los Angeles and Chicago—with some communities reporting a five-fold increase.

"We could not achieve these results without the contributions of our national and local sponsors, the assistance of those groups that help our branches collect the food, and the generosity of our postal customers," Rolando said.

Assisting the more than 1,600 participating NALC branches were rural letter carriers and other postal employees, plus members of other unions and civic volunteers.

The drive's national partners this year were Campbell Soup Co., AARP, the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, Feeding America, Valpak, the U.S. Postal Service, United Way Worldwide, the AFL-CIO and Uncle Bob's Self Storage. Special collection bags were provided by AARP, Campbell's, the Publix grocery store chain and International Paper. Also, Campbell's provided postcards to remind postal customers of the drive and Valpak encouraged donations on its envelopes.

A complete report on this year's drive, including dozens of photographs and a list of the top-collecting branches, will appear in the August issue of *The Postal Record*.

Text alerts are coming

The NALC recognizes just how important it is to get word to you as quickly as possible about developments related to your pay, your benefits and your working conditions.

And now we're looking at going full-steam ahead on sending you alerts via text message, adding this 160-character, cell phone-based method of communication to an arsenal that includes the mail, the telephone, e-mail and the web.

Our plan is to try out this medium soon by sending a test message to all the cell phone numbers we have in our membership files. This message will give you instructions on how to either stay in the system or opt out of it.

Because some members have unlimited text plans while others pay per message, we plan to accommodate both groups by limiting use of this text-message system to only the most urgent calls to action.

You can use the sign-up form for the NALC e-Activist Network posted on nalc.org to make sure we have your cell phone number for this exciting new service.

Important note about TSP deductions

Due to changes made by USPS and the subsequent programming needs, NALC will be processing Thrift Savings Plan deductions for Pay Periods 10 and 11 in Pay Period 12.



Postal Vision 2020: On June 13, NALC President Fredric Rolando (l) took part in the annual Postal Vision 2020 conference in Washington. The conference serves as a forum for discussions about the future of postal communications and shipping, and what that future means to those who regulate, supply and use the mail. Besides Rolando, some of the leaders featured at this year's conference included Postal Regulatory Chairman Ruth Goldway, Postal Service Inspector General David Williams, Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe, Association for Postal Commerce President Gene Del Polito and technology author Phil Simon. "The USPS' universal last-mile network is becoming totally integrated with the logistics networks of the major private package delivery industry," Rolando told attendees. "This private-public integration makes sense in many ways, and it should be expanded—but none of it will be possible if we dismantle or degrade the Postal Service's networks, which the Senate bill will do gradually and the House bill would do quickly."



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OPTIONAL TOUR ORDER FORM

REGISTRATION DETAILS

Full Name _____ Credit Card Billing Address (if different): _____
 Address _____ Address _____
 City _____ City _____
 State _____ Zip _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ Charges will appear as "Event Lab"
 Fax _____ Special _____
 Email _____ Needs _____

TOUR SELECTIONS

TOUR	DATE & TIME	PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL	
Take on the Twin Cities	Monday, July 23, 2012 9:00am – 1:00pm	\$29.00		\$	
Padelford Riverboat Cruise	Monday, July 23, 2012 9:30am – 4:00pm	\$121.00		\$	
Mystic Lake Casino 1	Tuesday, July 24, 2012 10:00am – 3:30pm	\$18.00		\$	
Minnesota Wineries	Tuesday, July 24, 2012 8:30am – 4:00pm	\$45.00		\$	
Historic Stillwater	Tuesday, July 24, 2012 9:30am – 4:00pm	\$38.00		\$	
Minnesota Zoo Adventure	Wednesday, July 25, 2012 9:30am – 4:00pm	\$59.00		\$	
Lake Minnetonka Cruise	Wednesday, July 25, 2012 9:30am – 3:30pm	\$92.00		\$	
Wabasha Caves & Gangster Tour	Thursday, July 26, 2012 9:00am – 1:00pm	\$69.00		\$	
Mystic Lake Casino 2	Thursday, July 26, 2012 10:00am – 3:30pm	\$18.00		\$	
***See page 2 for complete tour descriptions			FAX REGISTRATION FEE	\$ 5.00	
				TOTAL ORDER	\$

BILLING INFORMATION

Visa MasterCard American Express
 Name on Credit Card _____ Expiration Date _____
 Credit Card Number _____ Security Code _____

CANCELLATIONS

Tour price includes non-refundable \$3.00 processing fee. The additional \$5.00 fax registration fee is also non-refundable. Tickets can be refunded within 7 days from the date of purchase. To cancel your ticket and request a refund, please call an Event Lab customer representative at 952-224-8558. Event Lab reserves the right to cancel tours and issue refunds if the minimum number of tickets is not sold.

REGISTER ONLINE AT WWW.NALC.ORG TO AVOID FAX REGISTRATION FEE
 OR FAX THIS COMPLETED FORM TO EVENT LAB AT 952-224-8559



National Association
of Letter Carriers

Fredric V. Rolando, President

July 18, 2012 — No. 12-07

NALC Bulletin

100 Indiana Ave. NW Washington, DC 20001-2144 202.393.4695 www.nalc.org

Legislative update

Delay on H.R. 2309 looks likely; NALC members need to stay alert

Thanks in part to thousands of phone calls from NALC members, it looked less and less likely that the House of Representatives would take up before its summer recess the so-called postal reform legislation introduced last fall by Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA), chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Even so, NALC President Fredric Rolando cautioned members to stay on guard about this dangerous piece of legislation.

“Congressman Issa claims that H.R. 2309 addresses the Postal Service’s undeniable financial crisis,” Rolando said. “The key problem, though, is that his bill ignores the actual cause of the Postal Service’s recent financial problems—the part of the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act that requires the Postal Service to pre-fund 75 years’ worth of future retiree health benefits on a needlessly aggressive schedule.”

No other company or government agency is required to pre-fund such benefits at all, let alone at such a level. This mandate has caused 85 percent of the \$32 billion in losses USPS has reported over the last five-and-a-half years. Repealing the pre-funding requirement is the simplest start to solving the Postal Service’s financial problems, Rolando said.

“There is nothing to like about this bad, unfixable bill,” he said. “The House needs to scrap it, go back to the drawing board and come up with one that not only prioritizes the preservation of this country’s only universal delivery network, but also strengthens it for the future.”

A detailed rundown of what’s wrong with H.R. 2309 can be found at nalc.org.

“A key problem is that Congress is trying to craft postal reform around what it thinks is USPS’ business plan,” Rolando said, “when it’s clear that the Postal Service doesn’t actually have a business plan.” Trying to create a reform bill that starts with cutting service and degrading USPS’ networks, he added, is a recipe for disaster that ultimately will drive more business out of the postal system and send the agency into a death spiral.

NALC members can keep up with the latest developments via the NALC e-Activist Network. A sign-up form is available at nalc.org.

Arbitration update

NRLCA award announced; NALC-USPS hearing schedule set

On July 3, an arbitration board issued an award that set the terms of a new four-and-a-half-year national agreement between the Postal Service and the National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association.

“Naturally, the award addresses numerous issues that are unique to the rural letter carrier craft,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “But the wages and benefits that were awarded are clearly modeled on the terms of the 2010 agreement between the USPS and the American Postal Workers Union.”

The president also noted that the board specifically rejected the Postal Service’s call for a more radical restructuring of the economic provisions of the USPS-NRLCA agreement.

“The Chairperson is convinced that no restructuring of a single labor contract can address all of the USPS’s financial challenges created, in large part, by the recession and the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act with its retiree health benefits pre-funding obligations,” Arbitrator Jack Clarke stated in issuing his award decision.

A summary of the terms of the NRLCA-USPS award can be found at nalc.org.

As previously reported, the NALC and the Postal Service have agreed on the selection of National Arbitrator Shyam Das as chairman of the arbitration board that is tasked with hammering out the next contract between the NALC and USPS. The board has scheduled its first meetings for early August, with hearings subsequently taking place on a number of dates through January—a necessary schedule considering the complexity of the issues before the board, Rolando said.

GLITCH: On Sunday evening, July 8, President Rolando held a tele-town hall call with thousands of NALC members to discuss the looming danger that the House of Representatives might soon take up H.R. 2309. A robo-call was set up for three evenings earlier on July 5 to alert members to this tele-town hall, but due to an error, some members may have received the robo-call from NALC Headquarters much later in the evening than was intended. We apologize for any inconvenience this might have caused.



CONVENTION COUNTDOWN

Convention just around the corner

Delegates get ready to report Monday in Minneapolis

The 68th Biennial NALC Convention gets under way Monday, July 23, in Minneapolis, and more than 9,100 letter carriers representing every U.S. state and territory have registered as delegates for the week-long meeting at the city’s convention center.

NALC President Fredric Rolando will deliver the keynote address shortly after the convention convenes on Monday morning.

Also scheduled to address delegates during the five-day gathering are Lazard Co. Senior Advisor Ron Bloom, Communications Workers of America President Larry Cohen, Union Network International-Americans President Ruben Cortina, Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton, Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN), Syndicom President Michel Gorbet, National Postal Mail Handlers Union President John Hegarty, Canadian Union of Postal Workers President Denis Lemelin, Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak, MSNBC Host Ed Schultz, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, Democratic National Committee Chairwoman Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), and Endicia Chief Development Officer Harry Whitehouse.

Delegates can expect to hear the latest updates in our battle to save the Postal Service, including our campaign to defeat H.R. 2309 on the House floor. Your branch and state representatives also will debate and then approve or disapprove resolutions and constitutional amendments submitted by delegates.

Additionally, daily workshops on a variety of topics will be held before and after the general sessions, including a new week-long stewards training school.

Convention coverage will be provided in special editions of the *NALC Bulletin* and daily at nalc.org. A full write-up on the activities in Minneapolis will appear in the September edition of *The Postal Record*.



NALC President Fredric Rolando delivers his keynote speech to the 2010 Convention in Anaheim.

Important convention notes:

Delegates: Branches are reminded to bring their delegate credentials with them to the convention.

Alternate delegates: Alternate delegates who replace registered delegates need to bring with them to the convention their letters of authorization signed by their branches’ presidents and secretaries.

Military care packages: Volunteers from both the NALC and NALC Auxiliary conventions will collect donated items from delegates to be sent to NALC members who are on active military duty. Examples of requested items include beef jerky, shampoo, deodorant, prepaid phone cards, baby wipes, lip balm, lotion, AA batteries, playing cards, energy bars and chewing gum. Prohibited items include obscene or pornographic material, liquor, cigarettes and aerosol cans. Monetary donations are discouraged. Also, volunteers will distribute NALC postcards for delegates to write personal messages of support and thanks to our members who are serving in the military. These postcards will be mailed with the goods collected. USPS gurneys featuring labels/posters to identify collection points for this drive will be placed at several locations throughout the Minneapolis Convention Center.

Kudos for carriers and CRI

A July 11 story in *The Washington Post* covered the Postal Regulatory Commission’s meeting the day before, where a discussion of the role of letter carriers under the Cities’ Readiness Initiative took center stage. The CRI is designed to use the Postal Service’s universal delivery network and the voluntary participation of letter carriers to deliver medicines to Americans in the aftermath of a biological event, such as a terrorist attack.

During the meeting, officials from the Department of Health and Human Services, as well as USPS and the PRC, praised NALC President Fredric Rolando and rank-and-file letter carriers for their role in the program tests that have taken place in Louisville, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Philadelphia, Boston and parts of San Diego County.

The Cities’ Readiness Initiative “proves that the Postal Service is about more than delivery of hard-copy mail,” PRC Chairman Ruth Goldway said. “One of the [postal] network’s strengths is that it’s better suited than other delivery methods, with letter carriers familiar with every street. I hope we can build on this network in other not-so-dramatic situations, such as fires, floods and food-poisoning outbreaks.”



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National Association
of Letter Carriers

Fredric V. Rolando, President

July 24, 2012 No. 12-08

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100 Indiana Ave. NW Washington, DC 20001-2144 202.393.4695 www.nalc.org



CONVENTION COVERAGE

'If we don't save the USPS, no one else will'

Rolando keynote opens Minneapolis convention

NALC President Fredric V. Rolando told the delegates assembled in Minneapolis on Monday for the union's 68th biennial convention that city letter carriers have a "secret weapon" in our fight to preserve the Postal Service and our future.

"We have each other," he said.

"Remember to keep your head up, and remember the power of a union. You have a way to overcome all the fear and uncertainty about the future by fighting for each other today."

In his second convention keynote address as NALC president, Rolando referred a number of times to the rough ride letter carriers will face in the coming days and months.

"Fasten your seat belts, brothers and sisters," he said. "This convention is going to make history. And we are going to face extreme turbulence as we do so."

"But make no mistake," he said. "Our primary task this week will be to determine the future of the Postal Service. That is bold, some might think, arrogant talk. But it is true."

"The future of the Service is too monumental a task to leave to the hopeless management running the agency, or to this deadlocked Congress, or this disengaged White House. If we, the National Association of Letter Carriers, do not seize the moment, show the way and demonstrate that the Service can be saved—and how—the sad fact is that no one else will do it. Period."

The work begins

The letter carrier band from Salt Lake City provided a selection of rousing musical numbers as delegates streamed into the Hall D of the Minneapolis Convention Center on Monday morning.

National Secretary-Treasurer Jane E. Broedel called the convention to order shortly after 10 a.m., calling to the stage South Florida Branch 1071's Stephanie Bostic to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner." Next, Minneapolis Branch 9 Executive Vice President Darrell Maus led the delegates in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by some words of encouragement and inspiration from Rabbi Melissa Simon, leader of Minneapolis' Shir Tikvah.

Broedel then asked the delegates to observe a moment of silence to remember NALC members who had died since the union last met in convention, in Anaheim in 2010.

Current Branch 9 President Mike Zagaros joined former branch President Pam Donato—now serving in Washington as a special assistant to President Rolando—in welcoming delegates to the "City of Lakes." Also greeting the assembly were Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton and Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak.

Next, Broedel acknowledged the NALC's retired national officers who were on hand for the convention. She then asked Region 7 National Business Agent Chris Wittenburg—whose region includes Minnesota—to take the podium to introduce the other NBAs to the audience and acknowledge each region's administrative assistants. Broedel then returned to the microphone, introduced each of the union's resident national officers, and then asked delegates to give a warm letter carrier welcome to President Rolando.

Setting the stage

"Minneapolis has a special place in American history," the president said as he began his keynote address to the convention. In 1934, he said, "a truckers' strike turned into a months-long general strike



NALC President Fredric Rolando delivered the keynote address to the 2012 Convention in Minneapolis on Monday, July 23.

in this city that created mass support for unionization."

Minnesota, he said, also is the state that produced four giants in the United States Senate: Hubert Humphrey, Eugene McCarthy, Walter Mondale and Paul Wellstone. "Boy, could we use a few of them in the Senate today," he said wryly.

Rolando immediately got down to business, outlining some of the challenges letter carriers face in 2012, not least of which is the Postal Service's financial trouble. But worse, he said, "it has no strategy—zero—and no business plan—zero."

Postal managers, he said, have only one answer: "Cut service. Cut Saturday delivery. Close facilities. Cut the workforce. Reduce wages and benefits. Contract out. Shrink, shrink, shrink ourselves."

Making things even more complicated are the rampant anti-union sentiment in modern America, as well as how Congress remains deadlocked on most issues, not just postal ones.

Looking for answers

"But to criticize is easy," Rolando said. "The real question is whether we have a solution."

For help in finding a solution, he said, the NALC last fall turned to Ron Bloom, whom President Barack Obama tapped in 2009 to save and restructure the auto industry. Bloom also had a measure of success in helping to turn around America's steel industry.

"The bottom line of Ron's work, and our own knowledge and experience, is that there is a viable Postal Service that is possible in the future," he said. "But not with business as usual. Business as usual will mean 'no business.'"

If we let nature take its course, Rolando said, we won't be fighting five-day delivery. "We'll be fighting three-day delivery—or worse. And we won't be fighting for a better contract. We'll be fighting to keep any kind of contract."

"Change is coming, brothers and sisters," the president said. "The only thing we need to decide is: Will we be the agents of that change, or the victims of it?"

"I'm here to say: We must be agents, not victims."

Our challenge, Rolando said, is to find our place in the 21st century.

"We must be the driving force with regard to innovation," he said. "We, the people in this room, must summon the courage to lead. If we don't do it, nobody will."

"The Postal Service must innovate to survive," Rolando said, "but it cannot innovate if it dismantles itself. That's why we have to keep working in Washington and across the country to stop our political enemies from dismantling the Postal Service before we can help reinvent it."

Bargaining in a crisis

Rolando reminded delegates that the convention takes place shortly before the beginning of arbitration hearings toward our next national agreement with the Postal Service.

"The Postal Service has chosen to end 10 years of cooperative labor relations that began after the anthrax attacks in 2001 and extended through the financial meltdown of 2008," he said. "It has chosen the path of confrontation."

The president assured delegates that the union will vigorously defend letter carrier wages and benefits and seek to advance bargaining goals through interest arbitration.

"That includes having the vision and courage to take a hard look at every level of our organization to determine what changes are necessary to ensure that we have the ability to adapt to changing circumstances," Rolando said. "Whether that includes downsizing, restructuring or just minor tinkering, we must position ourselves to adapt so that we can remain a great union that can protect the rights and interests of our members."

Bringing his remarks to a close, Rolando returned to his address' opening imagery. "There is turbulence ahead, brothers and sisters," he said. "We have no choice but to fly through it, seatbelts fastened—through the legislative and political battles, through the fight for a new business model, through interest arbitration and through the struggles to enforce our contract."

Our constitution tells us what to do during the convention, Rolando said, "and we will do it with our usual dedication and respect for each other, and our diverse views."

"We have 270,000 brothers and sisters committed to helping each other and to building a better workplace and a better country, one family at a time," the president concluded. "Let's make this the best convention in the history of the NALC."

Legislators take the stage

President Rolando invited a succession of House and Senate members to the stage, beginning with Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), the chairperson of the Democratic National Committee.

"On every street in every city and town, letter carriers provide a service we simply could not live without," she said. "For so many Americans, you are their lifeline."

Wasserman Schultz then introduced a special video message from President Barack Obama.

"I want to thank you for standing up every day for American workers," Obama said. "Together, you represent what's best about this country. Your work isn't easy, but day in, day out, you perform a service that keeps our entire economy on track."

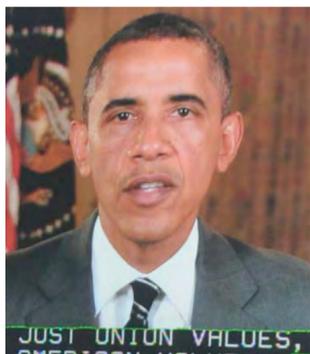
Next, President Rolando invited to the podium Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), whose tight schedule allowed her to make a few brief remarks to the delegation.

Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN) was escorted to the stage shortly after noon by the Minneapolis delegation. "You have my undying, unrelenting support" in efforts to save the Postal Service, Ellison told the delegates. "You have the strong support of many, many members of Congress who are willing to stand with you."

To push Congress to act, he said, letter carriers should look to average Americans. "The public loves the Postal Service," he said. "If you organize them, you will win."



Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL)



President Barack Obama



Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN)



Rep. 7 NBA Chris Wittenburg



Former Minneapolis Br. 9 President Pam Donato and current President Mike Zagaros

Union members in action

President Rolando took the floor to present awards to branches with the best organizing success. "The best branches passionately build our union," he said, "one 1187 at a time."

Patterson, NJ Branch 120 was recognized as the best-organized branch with fewer than 500 members, boasting a perfect 100 percent—all 151 of the branch's letter carriers are NALC members.

The branch with the best organizing rate among branches with 500 to 999 members is Birmingham, AL Branch 530, which has a 98.2 percent organization rate.

South Florida Branch 1071 won the award among branches with 1,000 or more members. The branch has an organizing rate of 98.5 percent.

In addition to the awards, the honor roll of branches with 95 percent or better organization rates was scrolled on the screen.

Keeping to the organizing theme, President Rolando noted that letter carriers played an important role in the success of the American Federation of Government Employees in gaining representation for Transportation Security Administration employees last year by sending released carriers to help.

Rolando also announced that some delegates will march Thursday evening to a rally at a downtown Minneapolis Verizon store to support that company's workers in their contract negotiations.



National Association
of Letter Carriers

Fredric V. Rolando, President

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68TH BIENNIAL
NALC CONVENTION
JULY 23-27, 2012 — MINNEAPOLIS

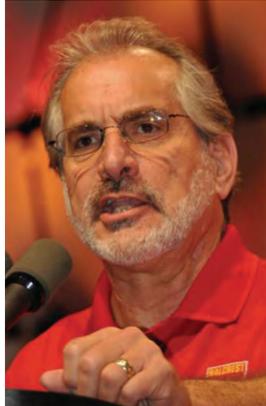
Tuesday, July 24

The future of postal business

Running through the second day of the NALC's 68th biennial convention was the theme that while things look unquestionably bleak for the U.S. Postal Service, there is still time to help the agency innovate and grow its business. Reaching that goal, however, likely will require shared sacrifices from consumers, Congress, postal management and postal employees. However, seeds of hope can be seen in the growing-package delivery business and in carriers who participate in Customer Connect to bring more business to USPS.

Delegates passed a motion to accept *en bloc* the proposed amendments approved by the Executive Council, with the exception that delegates could ask for discussion and clarification on some of those amendments. Of the 14 amendments discussed Tuesday, a few were withdrawn before coming up for consideration, with delegates upholding the approval or disapproval of the rest, occasionally following brief consideration by the assembly.

One approved amendment in particular rights a historic wrong. Between 1913 and 1969, some African-American letter carriers, denied NALC membership on the basis of race, chose to join the National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees. As of Tuesday, the NALC Constitution extends NALC membership to those carriers.



NALC President Fredric Rolando

Writing our own history

Shortly before noon, President Fredric Rolando invited to the stage Ron Bloom, vice president of U.S. investment banking at the consulting firm Lazard.

"In the good old days, he would be treated as Enemy No. 1," Rolando said with a smile, "Or at least someone to be very wary of." Now, the president said, Bloom is a trusted advisor as the NALC and the Postal Service confront the agency's financial reality.

Rolando explained to delegates that Bloom, a Harvard Business School graduate, comes to the NALC with a background as a union organizer for Service Employees International Union (SEIU) but more importantly with a reputation for having successfully restructured the steel and automotive industries—which is why, last September, the NALC hired him to analyze the business potential of the Postal Service.



Lazard's Ron Bloom

"When Ron came on board," the president said, "we made it clear to him that we wanted a detailed review of the Postal Service, and then his honest, unvarnished opinion of whether the United States Postal Service was able to be salvaged—and if so, how.

"Ron made it clear that we might not like everything he had to say after he conducted his review, but that he would give it to us straight," Rolando added. "What we do with his advice and his recommendation is up to us. It's up to all of us."

Bloom told delegates that he had learned an interesting lesson from his SEIU experience: "When a union stands up for dignity and respect, it winds up standing up for the people it serves."

Later, working both for the United Steelworkers and as the "car czar" for the Obama administration, he noted how union involvement was crucial in restructuring the American steel and automotive industries. "If the union doesn't stand up for the industry, nobody will, because at the end of the day nobody cares more about these institutions than the people who work for them," Bloom said. And so the union must lead the change, he added.

The history of the Postal Service, he said, teaches us that we need three things to succeed: A leader with vision who wants the Postal Service to win; a Congress that sees the value of the network; and letter carriers who stand up for themselves and this institution. If they don't, he said, nobody will—but if they do, extraordinary things can happen.

"The basic facts of the Postal Service are dire and dramatic," Bloom said. "Congress created it, and whether by action or inaction, indifference or malice, many people are prepared to see it fade away."

But while the bad news is significant, Bloom said, letter carriers are not without tools. "This business is going out of business, but it is not going out of business today."

Most importantly, he said, the Postal Service has the NALC. "Whether the USPS survives really does rest on letter carrier shoulders," he said.

A restructured Postal Service needs to include the idea of shared sacrifice, with leaders empowered to take a hard look at collective-bargaining agreements. "Labor needs to be a part of the solution," he said. "If we don't lead this, it will not happen. If it's not part of a bigger package of shared sacrifice, it is completely in vain."

USPS needs to be allowed to act like a business, he said—and that requires leadership.

"When history is written," Bloom concluded, "the question will come whether the second decade of the 21st century was the beginning of the end of the Postal Service, or will it be the moment when the National Association of Letter Carriers stood up, grabbed the wheel and said, 'We will write our own history—we will stand up and save the United States Postal Service.'"

Harry Whitehouse of Endicia

President Rolando invited Harry Whitehouse, chief development officer and co-founder of Endicia, to address the convention. Whitehouse described his company's innovative partnership with the Postal Service, which has led to the company's sales of roughly 65 percent of all PC postage.

Whitehouse said USPS package delivery was up 9 percent over the previous year. With package delivery growing rapidly, even in the recession, he said the Postal Service has the tools to compete with private shippers and grow its business even more.

"I always say that if I walk into any UPS or FedEx shipper, I can get at least some of the business, if not all of the business," Whitehouse said. He told the delegates that the Postal Service should use its advantages, such as superior tracking, ease of international shipping and competitive pricing, to build on its 15 percent share of the parcel market.

Package delivery, he said, is growing with e-commerce rather than shrinking like first class mail—the competition comes from other shippers rather than the Internet, since one can't e-mail a package. "If they ever come up with a real transporter and Captain Kirk is beamed in with a couple of packages," he joked, "we're all hosed."



Endicia's Harry Whitehouse

Greetings from past presidents

President Rolando then called President Emeritus William Young to the podium. Young read letters from President Emeritus James Rademacher and President Emeritus Vincent Sombrotto addressing the convention. Neither was able to attend the convention this year due to health concerns.

The struggle over the future of the Postal Service, Rademacher wrote, "will soon come to a head, and NALC will win because of a strong leader and a membership that believes in solidarity."

Saving the Postal Service "can be done, and I am confident it will be done," Sombrotto wrote. "I believe you—this convention—are the ones to do it."

Young then urged letter carriers to take care of their health to meet the challenges of their jobs, their family lives, and their union activities, and said the elections this fall will be "the defining moment for this generation of letter carriers."



NALC President Emeritus William Young

Customer Connect leaders recognized

Next, Vice President George Mignosi honored almost 50 letter carriers who have reached the \$1 million milestone for Customer Connect leads.

Though finding sales leads may not sound like the work of a union member, Mignosi said, "building our business and serving our customers is at the heart of trade union work." Customer Connect has helped to support letter carrier jobs, he added, by generating a half million leads and \$1.5 billion in new sales.



Executive Vice President Timothy O'Malley



Vice President George Mignosi



Secretary-Treasurer Jane E. Broendel



Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine



Director of City Delivery Lew Drass



Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr.



Director of Retired Members Ernie Kirkland



Director of Life Insurance Myra Warren



Director, Health Benefit Plan Brian Hellman

Wednesday, July 25

'Real solidarity'

On Wednesday, letter carrier delegates to the NALC's 68th biennial convention renewed their commitment to and participation in the larger U.S. labor movement, inspired by a succession of speeches from union leaders both national and international, plus a rousing video review of the NALC's struggles and successes since the 2010 convention in Anaheim. Carriers also discussed how the union can optimize its resources in the face of a slowly shrinking postal workforce.

National Trustees Chairman Larry Brown and fellow trustees Randall Keller and Mike Gill led the remaining deliberations on proposed amendments to the NALC Constitution. The convention on Tuesday had voted to adopt *en bloc* those amendments recommended for approval by the NALC Executive Council, although members were given the chance to discuss those proposed amendments if they so chose. The convention voted to uphold the Council's recommendation of disapproval on two of the remaining amendment proposals. The trustees also took turns presenting a summary of the Board's biennial report to the convention printed in the Officers' Report book.

Our fight, our future

Rolando showed delegates a special video, titled "Our Fight, Our Future," that reviewed our legislative and political battles of the last two years and previewed the ones ahead.

"The battle for the Postal Service is part of a larger war on workers," Rolando said in the video. "We intend to keep fighting, not just for ourselves, but for all workers—public and private."

The video also included interviews with a number of letter carrier activists from all over the country who had taken part in the nationwide rallies on Sept. 27, 2011, and April 12, 2012, or who participated in pro-labor protests in states such as Ohio, Wisconsin and Utah. It also showed some of the media engagement—including newspapers, radio and television—by President Rolando and others.

"Big business had decimated labor in the private sector," he said. "Now they're coming after us. We are the last stand for labor unions as we know them. If we go down, so does the middle class."

NPMHU President John Hegarty

Rolando called to the stage National Postal Mail Handlers Union President John Hegarty, who leads one of the other three postal unions.

"We've always worked together, on postal reform legislation and other postal legislation," Hegarty said. "We need to keep our hard-fought benefits."

He praised the NALC's legislative and political work, as well as letter carriers' presence in every neighborhood in the country six days a week.

"We may not always agree on exactly the right path forward," Hegarty said, "but we do agree that cutting the word 'service' out of the United States Postal Service is a bad idea. We need to coordinate political activities and elect union-friendly candidates this fall."



NPMHU President John Hegarty

Hegarty also noted that President Rolando is set to speak at the NPMHU convention in a couple of weeks.

AFL-CIO solidarity

Continuing with the day's theme of solidarity both with the NALC and with the larger labor movement, President Rolando introduced AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, who was escorted to the stage by the NALC's delegates to the AFL-CIO convention.

The assault on the Postal Service isn't just your fight, Trumka said. "It's the fight of every last trade unionist in this country. We're going to make sure that we hold together and win this fight for the good of all of us."

"Our job is to build power for workers, and we're no strangers to hard work," he said. "What we want is pretty simple—to work hard for a decent life. To get it, we've got to stand together."

"This is our country," he concluded. "We built it, we make it run. It's time that we took it back for the American people."



AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka

Discussing the future

President Rolando then opened the floor for a discussion of ideas about adapting to the decline in NALC membership.

"This ability to adapt is crucial, since there are many factors affecting us that we can't entirely control," Rolando said. "It's hard to do, but it's our obligation as leaders of the union."

"The finances of the NALC are incredibly strong," he said, "and we want to keep it that way."

The delegates discussed a range of ideas, including shortening the national convention, sending fewer delegates to conventions, holding conventions every three or four years, realigning the regions, accelerating and encouraging branch mergers, and merging the NALC with other postal unions. The delegates provided their input on the pros and cons of these and other ideas and their effect on both the union and on maintaining solidarity.

Rolando thanked the delegates for their input and said delegates were welcome to speak from the floor about the subject during the rest of the convention. He said he was looking into forming a committee to consider these and other ideas and to make recommendations for future discussions.

'In the same fight now'

Rolando then welcomed guest speaker Denis Lemelin, president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), to the podium.

Lemelin explained the struggle that his union and its 54,000 members face—similar to our own—in protecting the rights of Canadian postal workers and in preserving its postal service, Canada Post, from attempts to privatize and downsize it. He described how a national government hostile to unions had attacked workers' rights and Canada Post, leading to a two-week strike, a 58-hour filibuster by the opposition party in the Canadian House of Commons and court battles. Like the NALC, the CUPW has resolved to step in and save its employer from hostility and neglect.

"It's our responsibility to protect our members," he said, "but at the same time to be sure that protecting our members, protecting our jobs, is protecting the postal service and is protecting our future."



CUPW President Denis Lemelin



National Association of Letter Carriers

Fredric V. Rolando, President

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100 Indiana Ave. NW Washington, DC 20001-2144 202.393.4695 www.nalc.org

68TH BIENNIAL
NALC CONVENTION
JULY 23-27, 2012 — MINNEAPOLIS

CONVENTION WRAP-UP

Thursday, July 26

Standing up, fighting back

President Fredric Rolando opened proceedings at 10 a.m. Thursday by showing a video review of the NALC's Sept. 27, 2011, rallies held at the home office of nearly every member of the U.S. House of Representatives. The video showed video clips and still photos of the rallies calling on the House to take up H.R. 1351, the bill introduced by Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) in the spring of 2011. The bill calls for refunding the Postal Service's pension account surpluses within the Federal Employees Retirement System and the Civil Service Retirement System—surpluses that two independent accounting firms have estimated to be between \$50 billion and \$75 billion.

Rolando also showed the convention a video that encouraged letter carrier activists to get involved with the AFL-CIO's Labor 2012 campaign. "Here's the truth," federation President Richard Trumka said in the video: "Our job is to build a movement of independent men and women, and from what I've seen, we're on our way."

"We have to elect a leader we can count on," he said. "Elections matter, and this one matters a lot. The solution is us and the movement we've made."

General resolutions, general myths



NALC Trustees Chairman Larry Brown

The convention then continued deliberation on the remaining general resolutions, with discussions led in succession by Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr., Director of Retired Members Ernie Kirkland and Health Benefit Plan Director Brian Hellman. Between the consideration of several resolutions, President Rolando provided delegates with background on some of the Executive Council's rulings and dispelled some myths.

We have to take the lead in the fight to save the Postal Service, he said. "And where appropriate and where conducive to our strategy, we certainly are building coalitions and have been all over the place, and we appreciate the efforts of those who are doing that all over the country."

"The NALC is not looking to do this alone," President Rolando said. "What we've said is, 'If we don't take the lead, nobody else is going to.'"



NALC Trustee Randall Keller

He also took specific issue with some resolutions' sentiment that the national union needs to get on board with the idea of forming coalitions. "Please stop it," he said. "Don't misrepresent the NALC. The NALC has been building coalitions for the three years I've been president, and a few years before that. Nobody has reached out to the other postal unions more than the NALC."

But sometimes our differences with other unions complicate our ability to form coalitions, he made clear. "'When appropriate' is the key," Rolando said. "We want to reach out to everybody."

He called a "myth" the charge by some that working with Lazard's Ron Bloom amounted to forming a coalition with Wall Street. "We do not have a coalition with Wall Street," Rolando said. Even so, "it would be irresponsible for this union to not go to the people who do this for a living to find out if there's a business there and hear what they have to say. What we do with it is our decision. This is too important a fight. Let's get on the same page."

Rolando also spoke about some resolutions that called for the removal of Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe and certain anti-union members of the Postal Board of Governors. The Executive Council takes the view that the overall structure of the Board of Governors needs to be fixed, he said.



NALC Trustee Mike Gill

"The Board of Governors right now is more dysfunctional than ever," President Rolando said. "At a time like this, when the Board of Governors is this dysfunctional, to ask them to replace (Donahoe)—whom we've certainly already gone on record as wanting out of there—there is a good chance (the board) could put somebody like Jim Miller in there." Miller was President Ronald Reagan's budget chief, an advocate of government privatization who was nominated to the board by President George W. Bush in 2002.

"We kind of liken this to, 'Bonnie and Clyde aren't getting along too well, and they get divorced and Clyde gets a new Bonnie,'" he said with a laugh. "It can get worse. It did get worse. We wanted (former Postmaster General Jack) Potter out of there...and look whom we got."

Floor resolutions

The convention considered two floor resolutions. One was from New Orleans Branch 124, calling on the Postal Service to consider creating a commemorative stamp in honor of those Gulf Coast residents who died in 2005 during the twin disasters of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The convention approved the resolution.

The second resolution, brought to the floor by the NALC Executive Council, asked convention delegates to endorse Barack Obama for a second term as president of the United States. The Council touted some of Obama's first-term accomplishments, such as his work to undo his predecessor's anti-worker agenda by nominating pro-worker advocates to the National Labor Relations Board and the National Mediation Board, not to mention his signing into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Affordable Care Act and the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.

The Council contrasted Obama's record with that of the presumptive Republican nominee, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, who, if elected, has promised to call for cuts in Social Security, to turn Medicare into an underfunded voucher program, and to cut up to 10 percent of the federal workforce. The Council said that Romney repeatedly has demonstrated an anti-union, anti-worker philosophy, evidenced primarily by his support for a national "right to work" (for less) law.

Perhaps most significantly of all, Romney has endorsed privatizing the U.S. Postal Service.

Although quite a few delegates took to microphones to debate the pros and cons of making such an endorsement, the convention ultimately voted to approve the Executive Council's resolution.

'We stand up, we fight back'

President Rolando welcomed Communications Workers of America President Larry Cohen to the stage. Cohen told the delegates about his union's ongoing struggle with Verizon to get a fair contract and compared Verizon management's antics to those of the Postal Service. "We get management, whether the Postal Service or Verizon, that wants to shrink us, to keep us in a box, until they can shut us down and throw us out."

Cohen pledged his union's support for the NALC's efforts to save the Postal Service. "We will fight back, and we will be there together with you in that fight to save a public Postal Service as if it's our own fight—because it is our own fight."

President Rolando also welcomed Rueben Cortina, president of UNI-Americas, a regional organization of UNI Global Union. Cortina brought a message of hope to the delegates. In contrast with stagnant economies, harmful austerity measures and hostility to union rights in other parts of the world, labor unions in several Central and South American nations are gaining ground in tandem with their economies.

Bucking the trend, unions have succeeded in organizing even stubbornly anti-union companies such as Wal-Mart in Brazil, Argentina and Chile, he said. He attributed the success to union activists in these countries who refused to back down. "You can have good laws, but you need strong unions," he said. "If we mobilize and we have strong unions, nothing can stop us."

Taking our message public

President Rolando then explained that MSNBC television host Ed Schultz, who had been scheduled to speak at the convention, could not come because of a health crisis affecting his wife. In lieu of his appearance, delegates watched excerpts from Schultz's show that demonstrated his knowledge of the real causes of the postal crisis, his disdain for Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA) and others attacking the Postal Service, and his strong support for letter carriers.

"This kind of 'free media' support is invaluable," President Rolando said after the Schultz video. Rolando provided details on NALC's aggressive media and communications strategy.

The delegates then saw some of NALC's ads, and also a commercial broadcast on the Internet by Issa—using thousands of dollars in taxpayer funds—that contained egregious falsehoods about the postal crisis.



NALC President Fredric Rolando told the convention on Thursday that if the NALC doesn't take the lead in saving the Postal Service, "nobody else will."

Default committed by Congress, not by USPS



NALC President Fredric Rolando

By Aug. 1, numerous news outlets were calling a "default" the U.S. Postal Service's failure to make a congressionally mandated \$5.5 billion payment toward pre-funding the health benefits of future postal retirees. Although he admitted that the word "default" sounds ominous, NALC President Fredric Rolando said that in reality the default is by Congress, not USPS.

"It was Congress that in 2006 imposed a burden on the Postal Service that no other public agency or private company in America faces—the obligation to pre-fund future retiree health benefits," Rolando said. "And Congress made this unaffordable by requiring the Postal Service, which doesn't receive a dime of taxpayer money, to pre-fund 75 years into the future."

"It is this unique burden that the USPS is 'defaulting on'—but in fact Congress has defaulted on its responsibilities by not addressing the mess it created," he said. "How big a mess? According to USPS financial reports, pre-funding accounts for 85 percent of all the Postal Service's red ink since 2007, and 94 percent this year."

Rather than fixing the problem it created, Rolando said, Congress wants to degrade the world's most affordable delivery network by reducing services to the American people and America's businesses, which he said will only worsen the financial problems by driving customers away and reducing revenue.

"Besides bringing the Postal Service to the financial precipice," the president said, "pre-funding also has prevented the agency from doing what it has done for 200 years—adapt to an evolving society. Instead, this artificial political crisis has focused management's entire energy on a desperate attempt to pay bills that no one else has to pay."

If Congress would remove the sense of panic, Rolando said, USPS could develop a forward-looking plan to address the structural challenges—and opportunities—that NALC acknowledges exist. "For example, while first-class mail is declining, the e-commerce market is exploding," he said. "The USPS chief financial officer announced earlier this year that the agency's \$200 million operational profit for that fiscal quarter was attributable to a sharp rise in delivering Internet-ordered packages. Much more could be done to tap that market."

"The ultimate irony about the so-called default is that the Postal Service already has \$45 billion set aside for future retiree health benefits—more than any other organization in America—and yet Congress wants to drain still more from the USPS," the president said.

Sixty years with MDA

Rolando called NALC MDA Director Jim Williams of Portland, OR Branch 82 to the podium. Williams introduced Tom Boyle, MDA's vice president of business development.

Boyle thanked carriers for their unwavering support for helping those with muscular dystrophy and their families, and for supporting research toward treatments and cures. "It's been an amazing 60 years," Boyle said, looking back on NALC's commitment, which began in 1952, to supporting MDA. "The spirit is just as large as it was those 60 years ago." Delegates enjoyed a video about MDA and the benefits of their support for the organization.

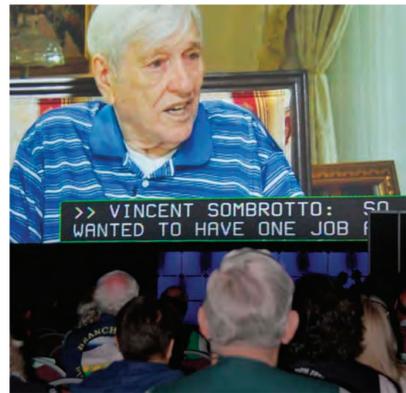
President Rolando then brought to the stage MDA National Goodwill Ambassador Bryson Foster, a 12-year-old boy from Charlotte, NC, who has muscular dystrophy. Rolando interviewed Foster about his interests in sports and his favorite activities at MDA summer camps.



President Rolando interviewed MDA National Goodwill Ambassador Bryson Foster.

Friday, July 27

Putting the pieces together



Delegates watched a video from 2010 commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Great Postal Strike of 1970.

On Friday, delegates discussed the business of the Postal Service and ways that NALC could adapt to the changing business, where we've come from and where we're going, solidarity with other unions and within our own union, communication strategies, and ways of giving back to the communities we serve. By the afternoon, when delegates passed a motion to adjourn the NALC's 68th Biennial Convention in Minneapolis, delegates had taken full opportunity of the chance to communicate their concerns to their leaders, who vowed to continue the work of the union until the next convention, to be held in Philadelphia in 2014.

President Rolando asked military veterans in the hall to stand for recognition and applause. He asked for a moment of silence for letter carriers who had recently died, and announced a new custom of honoring those lost on the job or in military service at each convention by displaying a letter carrier memorial wall, which will be mounted permanently in the lobby of NALC Headquarters.

Election Commissioner Joe DeRossi of Brooklyn, NY Branch 41 then announced the results of the election for AFL-CIO delegates held the previous day, with the top seven vote winners elected (in bold):

Denise Brooks, Br. 1433, Medford, OR
—10,223 votes
Stephen R. Hanna, Br. 509, York, PA
—9,752 votes
Lloyd P. Doucet Jr., Br. 124, New Orleans, LA
—9,748 votes
Anita Guzik, Br. 24, Los Angeles, CA
—9,585 votes
Elise M. Foster, Br. 11, Chicago, IL
—9,544 votes
Ingrid Armada, Br. 15, Providence, RI
—9,501 votes

Charles P. Heege, Br. 36, New York, NY
—9,176 votes
Scott A. Van Derven, Br. 2, Milwaukee, WI
—1,711 votes
David Alan Hyman, Br. 2902, Tri-Valley, CA
—1,479 votes
Richard Koritz, Br. 630, Greensboro, NC
—1,307 votes
Don Hill, Br. 120, Paterson, NJ
—1,231 votes
Joni E. Evans, Br. 426, Hamilton, OH
—1,203 votes

Food Drive

NALC Assistant to the President for Community Services Pam Donato took the stage alongside her predecessor Linda Giordano, and the two thanked NALC members for another successful "Stamp Out Hunger" national food drive—noting that more than 1,400 participating branches had collected 70.2 million pounds, bringing the grand total to more than 1.2 billion pounds collected since the annual nationwide drive began in 1993. They then showed delegates a video review of this year's drive.

Katherine Lyons, a representative of national food drive partner Feeding America, introduced a special video greeting from outgoing Feeding America President Vicki Escarra. President Rolando then presented awards to the top food-collecting branches in 2012, and presented the Food Drive Regional Championship Belt to NALC Region 9, which covers Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

Convention business

➤ Vice President George Mignosi, chairman of the Committee on Appeals, presented his committee's report. Two appeals of branch decisions were heard from a letter carrier at the convention, followed by the committee's response to each. The committee's decision in the first appeal, the only one in which the carrier involved addressed delegates, was upheld by a teller vote, 1,670 to 978. The second appeal was upheld by voice vote.

➤ NALC Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel, the chairwoman of the Convention Site Committee, noted again that the 69th Biennial NALC Convention in 2014 will be held in Philadelphia. She also called out for special recognition NALC Meeting Planner Kim Akoto.

➤ NALC Director of Life Insurance Myra Warren, chairwoman of the Uniform Committee, presented the committee's report, noting in particular that she understood the complaints about the Type 1 uniform shirt, but that it had been changed because its material was no longer manufactured in the United States.

➤ President Rolando reminded delegates that a resolution passed during the Anaheim convention in 2010 called for showing at all future conventions the video "The Strike at 40," a look back at the Great Postal Strike of 1970 as told by President Emeritus Vincent Sombrotto and other letter carriers who took part. As the 25-minute video rolled, delegates also saw numerous news clips from that time period covering the historic nationwide wildcat strike.

➤ NALC Executive Vice President Timothy O'Malley led a discussion of a floor resolution from Portland, OR Br. 82 to investigate the establishment of a postal banking system. Following a brief discussion, the convention upheld the Executive Committee's recommendation of approval for the resolution.

➤ President Rolando thanked convention host Minneapolis Branch 9 for its outstanding work in putting together the national convention, and also thanked NALC Headquarters staff members who had traveled to Minneapolis to work on the convention as well. He gave special recognition to his assistant, Cheryl Harrod, and to NALC Chief of Staff Jim Sauber.

At 2:08 p.m., the convention passed a motion to adjourn the convention sine die.



Randy Zebin, president of Philadelphia Br. 157—the host branch of the next convention—described to delegates what they can expect in 2014.



National Association
of Letter Carriers

Fredric V. Rolando, President

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100 Indiana Ave. NW Washington, DC 20001-2144 202.393.4695 www.nalc.org

NALC makes its case as arbitration begins



In a show of solidarity, all 28 members of the NALC's Executive Council were on hand in Washington, DC on Sept. 6 to witness the opening of interest arbitration proceedings for a new national agreement between NALC and USPS.

Inside a packed Hutchings Hall at NALC Headquarters in Washington, DC, the National Association of Letter Carriers opened interest arbitration proceedings for a new National Agreement with the United States Postal Service on Sept. 6.

Formal contract talks between the NALC and USPS began in August 2011, three months before the expiration of the 2006-2011 agreement. However, following several extensions, USPS announced on Jan. 20 that it was declining to continue its collective-bargaining negotiations with the NALC, an impasse that triggered mediation proceedings. The parties were unable to reach an agreement by the April 8 mediation deadline, so the process moved to interest arbitration.

The chairman of the three-person arbitration board is Shyam Das, a member of the American Arbitration Association's labor panel and a full-time labor arbitrator since 1977. Das has served on national arbitration panels involving postal workers since 1996 and has been chairman of arbitration proceedings involving United Steelworkers as well as the Major League Baseball Players Association.

Das opened the hearing with a few brief remarks and then introduced the other members of the board: Bruce Simon, representing the NALC, and Robert Dufek for USPS.

Simon, in turn, recognized Keith Secular, the attorney who serves as NALC advocate for the arbitration proceedings. Among those seated at the table with Secular were NALC President Fredric Rolando, Executive Vice President Timothy O'Malley and Chief of Staff Jim Sauber. Also in attendance in a show of support were the other members of the NALC Executive Council—the other eight resident national officers, the 15 national business agents and the three national trustees.

Seated across from the NALC contingent were managers and staff members from the Postal Service, as well as attorney Thomas Reinert, the USPS advocate.

"Mr. Chairman, members of the Board, let me cut right to the chase," Secular began. "NALC readily acknowledges that the United States Postal Service is in great trouble. Financially, in a classic sense, it is insolvent."

Secular said that the NALC understands the impact that electronic diversion of the mail has had on First Class mail volumes, but he said that a distinction must be made between that and the cause of the Postal Service's more immediate fiscal crisis—the congressional mandate to pre-fund 75 years' worth of future retiree health benefits within just 10 years, at a cost of about \$5.5 billion a year, as well as the long-term decline of First Class mail volumes.

"Recognition that these are two separate issues is essential to understanding the Postal Service's problems and the potential solutions," he said. "While we agree with the Postal Service that it is in great trouble, we strongly disagree with the Service about how to deal with that trouble. And that difference is at the heart of this arbitration."

NALC, however, believes that future postal growth is not only possible, Secular said, but likely, thanks to the explosive expansion of Internet commerce, and he noted that NALC has worked dili-

gently on the Postal Service's behalf to bring greater clarity to the agency's problems. The attorney also noted that the NALC has retained the services of Ron Bloom, vice president of U.S. investment banking at the consulting firm Lazard. Bloom was President Barack Obama's so-called "car czar," and he is credited with helping to save both the auto industry and, a few years earlier, the steel industry.

The conclusion reached by Bloom and Lazard, he said, is that there is and will be a viable Postal Service, but "not without a dramatic restructuring of the institution and its governance, which would be far more extensive than is contemplated by either the Postal Service's present plan or any pending legislation."

Secular pointed out how advances in mail-sorting automation over the last 20 years have reduced the amount of time letter carriers must spend in the office but have, at the same time, increased the more strenuous—yet quite valuable—time that letter carriers spend on their routes delivering the mail.

Secular reviewed the NALC's contract proposal, which is for a seven-and-a-half year bargaining agreement that includes preservation of 2 percent annual general wage increases as well as cost-of-living adjustments. It also calls on the Postal Service to recognize that, with the increase in street time, the letter carrier job has become harder and deserves an upgrade in pay.

The NALC proposal also would retain, as is, the no-layoff clause, and it includes language that insists on preservation of six-day mail delivery service—"a legitimate issue for collective bargaining, as well as an issue of public policy," Secular said.

And a new contract needs to preserve the memoranda of understanding against the contracting out of letter carrier work to low-paid, non-union and unskilled workers. "Contracting out will be harmful to the Postal Service and its customers, as well as bad public policy," Secular said.

"We acknowledge that the Postal Service's financial situation is as dire as the agency says it is," President Rolando remarked after the hearing, "but the main source of the problem is not the pay and conditions of letter carriers, but the Congress of the United States."

"The arbitration panel cannot solve the financial crisis by helping the Postal Service dismantle itself," Rolando said. "Congress must act and the arbitrators must give the parties the chance to do what's necessary to adapt to the needs of the 21st century."

The next arbitration hearing is set for Oct. 29, with sessions scheduled for several dates through January.

Surrender?

NALC describes USPS proposals as 'throwing in the towel'

USPS attorney Thomas Reinert's opening statement at the opening of interest arbitration between the NALC and the Postal Service on Sept. 6 might have started out in a genial and friendly fashion, but it quickly shifted toward an adversarial tone as his hour-long remarks kicked into gear.

"USPS is insolvent, in a financial crisis that is drawing a lot of attention," Reinert said. "The Postal Service has responded to this," he added, with what he referred to as "structural changes and consolidations."

"First Class mail volume used to be cyclical," Reinert said, "but now, thanks to the Internet, it seems to be in a permanent decline. Times have changed, thanks to technology."

Leaning heavily on terms favored by the private sector—where "restructuring" often is code for "cuts" and "layoffs"—Reinert said that the Postal Service "needs a restructured, two-tier workforce, the ability to contract out mail delivery services, and a larger non-career workforce of temporary employees.

"Deliveries have been restructured as well," he said.

To an extent, Reinert conceded NALC's position that there is growth to be had thanks to Internet sales, but he said that USPS believes such growth will be small.

Reinert, a senior partner at the Morgan Lewis law firm, also returned several times to a shop-worn theme that has come up in past contract negotiations and arbitration hearings: comparability between Postal Service employees and private-sector workers in terms of pay and benefits, a statutory requirement of the 1970 reorganization law. How comparability is measured, however, has been a hotly debated matter for decades.

The USPS attorney claimed that the agency's employees enjoy a significant wage and benefit premium over private-sector workers, and that the cost-of-living adjustments agreed to in negotiated and arbitrated bargaining agreements dating back to 1973 have helped to perpetuate this.

"We need to restructure our labor costs to align with the statutory comparability standard," Reinert said, as well as to account for what he insultingly—and erroneously—termed "the diminished revenue contribution of employed letter carriers."

Reinert then laid out USPS' proposals, which include moving the letter carrier craft toward a workforce made up of as much as 25 percent of temporary, non-career carriers with no path to permanent positions; creating a two-tier workforce by reducing both the new hire and top wage rates of new employees; eliminating COLAs, on top of a 42-month wage freeze retroactive to the expiration of the last bargaining agreement; substantially modifying the no-layoff clause, which Reinert said would be necessary if the Postal Service's proposal to move to five-day delivery becomes law; and returning to another old idea: contracting-out mail delivery service to low-paid, non-union and unskilled workers.

For now...

6-month resolution preserves 6-day mail

As this *NALC Bulletin* was being prepared, the House of Representatives passed a six-month continuing resolution to keep the government in operation after Sept. 30, the end of Fiscal Year 2012, and indications were that the Senate would pass it as well.

"This continuing resolution contains a small victory for letter carriers," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "Thanks in part to our activists' lobbying efforts, the bill maintains the federal appropriations language that preserves six-day mail delivery service—language that has been part of similar appropriations measures for more than 30 years."

But Rolando cautioned letter carriers to remain watchful for threats from other angles. For example, on Sept. 7, Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA) caused a bit of a stir when he asked President Obama to send to Congress an interim postal reform package for inclusion in the continuing resolution. In particular, Issa, chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, wanted the White House to call for permitting the Postal Service to cut a day of mail delivery service and to interfere with the collective-bargaining process by proposing a ban on allowing postal unions to negotiate no-layoff agreements.

The Obama administration rejected Issa's proposal.

"Congress still seems unable to put together meaningful postal reform legislation that fixes the pre-funding mess it created," Rolando said. "And now we see on full display just what we're up against this fall, as House leaders use letter carriers and the Postal Service as pawns in a distracting, desperate gambit to score cheap political points ahead of the November elections."

While there remained little chance that the full House would either consider H.R. 2309 or take up the Senate's postal reform measure, S. 1789 before the election, President Rolando reminded carriers that this is exactly why all NALC members must keep their guard up.

"After the elections, Congress could try to ram through some form of so-called 'postal reform' in the lame-duck period between November 6 and the swearing in of the new Congress in January," he said.

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Letter carriers recognized as 2012 Heroes of the Year



NALC President Fredric Rolando (r) honored the 2012 National Heroes of the Year at a ceremony in Washington, DC on Sept. 20. Pictured are (from l) Jeff Keane; Duluth, MN Br. 114 member Mike Sylvester; Athens, OH Br. 997 member Charlie Rose; Naperville, IL Br. 1151 member Cassandra Summers; Cape Atlantic, NJ Br. 903 member Tom Logue; Phoenix Br. 576 member Mike Hollmann III; Virginia Beach, VA Br. 2819 member Celia Ruiz; and Christopher Keane.

Thomas Logue, a 28-year letter carrier from New Jersey, and **Charlie Rose**, a 23-year veteran in Ohio, were among those honored by the National Association of Letter Carriers on Sept. 20 as 2012's Heroes of the Year.

Logue, who saved a boy engulfed by a large wave on Father's Day, was named 2012 National Hero of the Year. The Cape Atlantic, NJ Branch 903 member saw the youngster pulled out to sea by a rip current before disappearing under a wave.

Rose, a member of Athens, OH Branch 997 and recipient of the Special Carrier Alert award, detected at least a dozen natural gas leaks on his route, saving lives and prompting the local gas utility to replace more than 17,000 feet of pipe and Athens' city council to require carbon monoxide detectors in 4,500 new rental properties.

Several other carriers also were recognized as heroes. They represent thousands of letter carriers who not only deliver the mail to 150 million households and businesses six days a week, but who often assist in situations involving accidents, fires, crimes or health crises:

- **Mike Hollmann III** of Phoenix Branch 676, the Western Region Hero, was on his route one Saturday when he noticed a woman lying on the ground near her wheelchair being attacked by three angry pit bulls. Scaling to the top of a fence, Hollmann distracted the dogs until police came.
- **Mike Sylvester** of Duluth, MN Branch 114, the Central Region Hero, saved lives after an automobile hit a house, rupturing the gas line to the house and leaving the car smoking and its fuel tank punctured.
- **Celia Ruiz** of Virginia Beach, VA Branch 2819, the Eastern Region Hero, observed her neighbor's children thrown airborne after being struck by a drunk driver and applied CPR.
- **Cassandra Summers** of Naperville, IL Branch 1151, the Humanitarian of the Year, founded a non-profit group to redecorate the rooms of breast cancer patients.
- Cartoonist **Bil Keane**, whose "Family Circus" artwork promoted the National Association of Letter Carriers' annual "Stamp Out Hunger" food drive for many years, received the first Legacy Award. Keane, whose single-panel "Family Circus" comic strip began in 1960 and appears in almost 1,500 newspapers, died in November. His sons Jeff and Christopher accepted the award on his behalf.

The 2012 NALC Heroes of the Year were honored by NALC President Fredric Rolando at a special ceremony Sept. 20 in Washington, DC. The event also marked the 30th anniversary of Carrier Alert, a free program that elderly or homebound residents can join so vigilant letter carriers notify relatives or authorities at any sign of distress.

Fill the Satchel for MDA

The second annual "Fill the Satchel for MDA" event helped add to NALC's already-impressive fundraising for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Letter carriers, in uniform and with their postal satchels, set up at various locations around the country on Sunday, Sept. 9, collecting from motorists, pedestrians, shoppers and even from the crowds heading into baseball and football stadiums.

Even so, NALC President Fredric Rolando hopes branches won't stop there. "It's important to be out collecting on street corners and outside of stores, but I want to challenge our members to think bigger," he said. "It's about whatever it takes to fill the satchel. That can mean barbecues, poker tournaments—whatever our members think works best."

The MDA is the official charity of the NALC. America's letter carriers have helped lead the search for a cure for neuromuscular diseases for 60 years. The NALC was the first national sponsor of the MDA and has collected more than \$20 million in the last 15 years alone to finance research and provide care and services for children and adults affected by any of the more than 40 muscular dystrophy diseases covered by MDA's comprehensive medical services and research programs. MDA's programs are funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions from individuals and organizations.

"It's important that our branches make these fundraisers their own," Rolando said. "The results are always better when they do. And every dollar we bring in is one more dollar we're closer to delivering the cure."

Future planned events include "Muscle Walks for MDA" as well as the national bowlathon, set for the second Sunday in January.



Letter carriers and volunteers from Hattiesburg, MS Br. 938 were among the hundreds of NALC members across the country who took part in the second annual "Fill the Satchel for MDA" event on Sunday, Sept. 9.



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Host branch sought for 2018 convention

NALC branches interested in hosting the 71st Biennial NALC Convention in 2018 should notify Secretary-Treasurer Jane E. Broendel in writing by Oct. 15.

To host the convention, a city should have at least 3,500 hotel rooms within reasonable distance from a convention facility. The convention center must seat 7,000 delegates on one level and have appropriate meeting room space for workshops and offices. In choosing a host branch, the availability of unionized facilities is a top consideration.

In keeping with the rotation schedule as set forth in Article 3, Section 1 of the *NALC Constitution*, branches will be considered in the Northeastern, Central and Southern Regions whose cities meet the above-stated requirements. The NALC Executive Council chooses convention sites after hearing reports from the Convention Site Committee. The Council will consider cities that express an interest in hosting the 2018 convention as well as other eligible cities, taking into consideration the size of the convention and the corresponding difficulty in finding suitable facilities.

The 69th Biennial National Convention in 2014 has been set for July 21-25 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia, and the 70th convention in 2016 has been set for August 15-19 at the Los Angeles Convention Center.



National Association
of Letter Carriers

Fredric V. Rolando, President

Oct. 19, 2012 No. 12-12

NALC Bulletin

100 Indiana Ave. NW Washington, DC 20001-2144 202.393.4695 www.nalc.org

Arbitration continues; new MOU announced

The NALC and the Postal Service were set to meet again for formal arbitration hearings on Oct. 29. A report on these proceedings toward a new collective-bargaining agreement between the two parties will be included in a future issue.

Meanwhile, on Oct. 9, NALC President Fredric Rolando announced that NALC and USPS had entered into a memorandum of understanding designed to alleviate some of the staffing issues that have plagued many delivery units across the country.

The MOU provides for:

- the conversion of up to 6,000 part-time flexible (PTF) city letter carriers to full-time regular;
- the filling of vacant residual CC-01 and CC-02 positions that are not withheld for Article 12; and
- the limited authorization to hire an additional 3,400 bargaining-unit transitional employees (TEs).

“These steps, along with the creation of a work group to validate the continued need to withhold positions, should help alleviate some of the staffing issues,” Rolando said.

A link to the MOU, M-01797, can be found at nalc.org.



NALC President Fredric Rolando

Has your branch or state association lost its tax-exempt status?

If your branch or state association has lost its tax-exempt status and you are filing for reinstatement, please note: Your deadline is Dec. 31.

“Don’t wait until the last minute—get working on it now,” NALC Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel said. “If you don’t take care of this by the end of the year, getting your tax-exempt status back after the deadline will be much more complicated and time-consuming.”

Check out the special link on the home page of nalc.org to find tools to help your branch or state association get back its tax-exempt status.

NALC’s special election web page helps keep voters informed

Election Day is just weeks away, and the NALC has created a special page on nalc.org that’s filled with links to tools you can use to stay informed about what’s at stake on Nov. 6.

The page contains a wealth of information, including links that help answer questions about early-voting time frames or absentee ballot request deadlines. Another link helps web page visitors figure out how and where to vote, how to get registered to vote or how to check their registration status. Other links help with locating polling places and provide information about each state’s voter ID laws.

A link to the page is prominently placed on the home page at nalc.org.

Retiree COLAs announced

The 2013 retiree cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will be 1.7 percent under both the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), following the release of the September Consumer Price Index (CPI) on Oct. 16.

The COLA rate reflects the difference between the average CPI in the third quarter of 2011 and the third quarter of 2012.

CSRS annuities are adjusted by the full amount of the difference in CPI. FERS annuities are increased according to the following rules:

- If the increase in the CPI is 2 percent or less, adjust the COLA by the full CPI increase.
- If the CPI increase is between 2 percent and 3 percent, the COLA is 2 percent.
- If the CPI increase is more than 3 percent, the adjustment is 1 percent less than the CPI increase.

As the CPI increase is under 2 percent, FERS annuities are adjusted by the full amount.

ABC News names carriers ‘Persons of the Week’

Letter carriers received some high-profile exposure on Sept. 21 when “ABC World News Tonight” named letter carriers “Persons of the Week” in a segment that focused on this year’s NALC Heroes of the Year ceremony held the day before in Washington.

The piece mentioned several of this year’s honorees and what they had done, interviewed them, showed video from this year’s heroes ceremony with President Fredric Rolando presenting them with their awards, talked to those rescued, provided historical context, and overall got across the message of carriers’ value and dedication to the communities we serve.

A YouTube clip of the story is posted on nalc.org.



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National Association
of Letter Carriers

Fredric V. Rolando, President
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NALC Bulletin

100 Indiana Ave. NW Washington, DC 20001-2144 202.393.4695 www.nalc.org

Election results provide NALC, USPS an opportunity for progress



NALC President Fredric Rolando

The NALC congratulates President Barack Obama and those elected to Congress on Tuesday, Nov. 6. The election results provide a starting point for the work ahead of resolving the financial problems facing the United States Postal Service. We set certain goals for the election, and the work of thousands of off-duty and retired letter carriers helped re-elect President Obama and elect or re-elect senators and House members who support our efforts to strengthen the Postal Service and support hardworking letter carriers.

"The election offers the prospect that the financial problems facing the United States Postal Service can be resolved in a fair and reasonable manner that benefits the public," NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

Rolando made clear that while a victory by forces that seek to dismantle the Postal Service and attack public employees would have been bad for the USPS and for the country, the NALC's work has just begun. The election provides an opportunity for progress but guarantees nothing.

"We intend to speak with members of the administration and with lawmakers in the weeks and months ahead about how best to assure that the Postal Service can continue to serve its vital function in the life of this country," he said. "Its role today is every bit as important as it has been ever since our founders had the wisdom to enshrine it in the Constitution."

Rather than hasty action on existing flawed bills by a lame-duck Congress, Rolando called on lawmakers to allow the new Congress to draft legislation that would improve the Postal Service's situation, not worsen it as some current bills would. He called on NALC members to remain vigilant over the next couple of months. However, the results of many legislative races are likely to improve our prospects on postal issues, Rolando said.

"Addressing in a responsible manner the future of the Postal Service would, indeed, be a good place for all sides to demonstrate a commitment to effective governing," Rolando said. "Legislation currently before Congress in both chambers fails to make the grade, because it would dismantle the universal network that provides Americans with the world's most efficient delivery service, while degrading those very services and costing us customers."

Eliminating six-day delivery, for example, would impose new costs on small businesses that are open weekends and need to send and receive financial documents—small businesses that provide two-thirds of all new jobs. And driving mail out of the system would reduce revenue and further imperil the Postal Service. Ending house-to-house delivery for tens of millions of residents and businesses would have similarly negative impacts.

Rolando urged lawmakers to begin from scratch and focus on repairing the damage caused by the 2006 congressional mandate that required the Postal Service, alone among all agencies and companies, to pre-fund future retiree health benefits. That accounts for 80 percent of all the red ink. Fixing this wouldn't solve all of the agency's problems, but it would end the crisis atmosphere and allow issues such as the decline in first-class mail to be addressed. The Postal Service needs to devise a business plan that addresses the serious challenges it faces while also recognizing opportunities such as the explosion in Internet-ordered packages that need to be delivered.

NALC's Health Benefit Plan:

Lower rates are just the beginning

Open Season is the time period in which you can join the NALC Health Benefit Plan like thousands of letter carriers who have signed up for the NALC Plan through the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program. If you already are a member, you can make changes to your coverage, such as adding a spouse or family as covered members.

When you call the NALC Health Plan, you will talk to a customer service representative at the Plan's headquarters who works for the NALC Plan, and only the NALC Plan—someone who knows the benefits inside and out. If representatives confront a complicated issue or need to refer a problem to other staff members, they have quick access to the Plan's experts on insurance and medical issues who work in the same building.

The Plan's administrators at the very top, starting with Health Benefit Plan Director Brian Hellman (a member of New York City Branch 36), take suggestions for improvements from letter carriers through the Plan's customer service representatives and visits to branches across the country.

For 2013, the changes include new or expanded benefits for conditions that letter carriers typically confront on their physically demanding job, such as back or foot problems. Some of the changes comply with requirements of the Affordable Care Act.

These new and improved benefits make the NALC Plan a great choice for letter carriers during this Open Season (Nov. 12 through Dec. 10).

One important change to the Plan in 2013 is lower rates. Many American workers will face higher premium payments for their health insurance next year, but not members of the NALC Plan. Active letter carriers will pay \$52.95 biweekly for Self Only coverage or \$103.26 for Self and Family coverage. The monthly annuitant premium will be \$160.66 for Self Only coverage and \$326.04 for Self and Family coverage.

Joining the NALC Health Benefit Plan gives you access to the preferred provider network of Cigna HealthCare Shared Administration Open Access Plus (OAP). Using one of the 1.5 million providers in the Cigna network can save you money, but you are free to choose any doctor, specialist or hospital you want. The Plan also includes coverage of prescription drugs, with mail delivery available.

For more information about Open Season and your choices, go to opm.gov/insure/openseason. From this website, you can compare the NALC Plan with other choices available to you in the FEHB program, including for coverage and rates.

Flexible Spending Accounts: Letter carriers have another useful way to save money on health care expenses to consider this Open Season—a flexible spending account (FSA).

Money you save in an FSA goes directly into the account from your paycheck and isn't subject to income tax. All you have to do is authorize direct deductions to an FSA of a few dollars each pay period. You don't even have to think about it when you fill out your tax return.

You can open an FSA to cover healthcare expenses, such as co-payments or deductible costs, and also vision care, eyeglasses or contact lenses, medicine or even basic items like aspirin. If you have a young child, a separate FSA can help pay for daycare expenses.

The Postal Service has announced that the maximum annual contribution for healthcare accounts for 2013 is \$2,500. The maximum for dependent care accounts remains at \$5,000 per family and \$2,500 for a married employee filing a separate income tax return.

Though payments into each FSA are spread across the year, the money is available for you to spend on qualified expenses at the beginning of the year.

To enroll in or make changes to an FSA:

- Go to liteblue.usps.gov, or blue.usps.gov on the USPS intranet, log in with your employee ID and PIN, and select PostalEASE under Employee Self Service.
- Enroll at any employee self-service kiosk.
- Call 877-4PS-EASE (877-477-3273) and selection option 1 or request help from the Human Resources Shared Service Center.

Penalty Overtime Exclusion

As referenced in Article 8, Sections 4 and 5 of the National Agreement between the NALC and the USPS, the December period during which penalty overtime regulations are not applicable consists of four consecutive service weeks.

This year, the December period begins Pay Period 26-12-Week 1 (Dec. 1, 2012) and ends Pay Period 01-13-Week 2 (Dec. 28, 2012.)

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Stay informed and get the very latest alerts from the NALC via the e-Activist Network. Go to nalc.org today to sign up or to update your e-mail address.



A harm to one is a harm to all

NALC responds to Hurricane Sandy

As October drew to a close, Hurricane Sandy made landfall and left a huge swath of destruction throughout the northeastern United States.

Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia and West Virginia were hit hard not only by the effects of the hurricane but also by the massive flooding and tragic fires it left in its wake.

"The daily media reports on this disaster can be difficult to fully comprehend," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "More than 100 dead and many more injured, hundreds of thousands homeless or still without power, and losses in the billions of dollars. And several thousand letter carriers and other members of our postal family are among those hardest hit."

The USPS is a fixture in every community, by virtue both of our work and our family lives, Rolando said. "That means whenever disaster strikes, some of us are always in the path of danger. But the fact that we are embedded in every community is also one of our greatest strengths."

"When some of us need help, there are NALC members a hundredfold across the country, standing ready, willing and able to give them a lift up," the president said. "We always have and we always will take care of our own."

Help postal employees affected by Hurricane Sandy!

Donating \$10 immediately is simple! Text "PERF" to 55555

For more than 20 years, the POSTAL EMPLOYEES RELIEF FUND (PERF) has been NALC's means to provide financial support directly to letter carriers in need. We need to make sure that harm to those hit by Hurricane Sandy is met by the strength and solidarity of all of NALC.

Positions can be made:

- Online at postaleid.com
- On your phone by texting "PERF" to 55555
- By sending a check made payable to "Postal Employees Relief Fund" (PERF) to: Postal Employees Relief Fund, 211 Sherwood, Woodbridge, VA 22191
- By contributing to PERF through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) by designating F1058

For updated information, go to nalc.org/sandy

This flier on how you can help out with Hurricane Sandy relief through PERF was mailed with this NALC Bulletin.

For those affected by Sandy, the NALC has put together information and resource materials to help members deal with the recovery process. These materials can be found at nalc.org/sandy.

"The NALC understands that a harm to one of us is a harm to all of us," Rolando said.

A letter mailed to branch presidents contained a list of benefits for which members might be eligible, from the American Red Cross, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Postal Service's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), the Postal Employees' Relief Fund (PERF), the AFL-CIO, Union Plus and United Way. Links to these and other new benefits and programs can be found at nalc.org/sandy.

"If your branch was not directly affected by Hurricane Sandy," President Rolando said, "I am asking members to make a personal donation to PERF, the special charitable organization operated by the various union and management organizations of the Postal Service to solely benefit postal employees."

A flier mailed with this NALC Bulletin outlines the ways members can donate to PERF.

Further, Rolando said that the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has given special permission for agencies to solicit for Hurricane Sandy disaster relief funds such as PERF through Nov. 21. "This is separate from our work to obtain PERF donations from members through the Combined Federal Campaign," he said, asking members and branch leaders to be creative in their fundraising efforts for PERF "because every dollar counts."

"For more than 20 years, PERF has been NALC's means of providing financial support directly to letter carriers in need," Rolando said. "We need to make sure that harm to those hit by Hurricane Sandy is met by the strength and solidarity of all of the NALC."

Any member who needs assistance in getting help can contact NALC Community and Membership Outreach Coordinator Pam Donato at 202-662-2489.

NOTE: If anyone is being worked in unsafe or unsanitary conditions caused by the hurricane, please contact your branch officers, your national business agent or NALC's director of safety and health.

Major ECAB decision on OIG surveillance video

The Employees' Compensation Appeals Board (ECAB) issued a decision on Sept. 26 (Docket 11-863) that addresses a number of issues involving U.S. Postal Service Office of the Inspector General (OIG) surveillance videotape. All branch contract enforcers and injured worker advocates should be familiar with this important decision, because it addresses a critical distinction between use of surveillance videotape for the purposes of fraud investigation and of claims development.

OWCP has incorporated the holdings in 58 ECAB 478 into the *FECA Procedure Manual*, under provisions regarding Second Opinion Examinations and Independent Medical Examinations. ECAB cautioned that its opinion should not be read as criticism of OIG fraud investigation efforts and that it did not have jurisdiction over USPS OIG investigative practices.

A link to this decision, and to background information, can be found on the Compensation page of nalc.org.

Interest arbitration update

The interest arbitration board that will set the terms of a new National Agreement between NALC and USPS convened by telephone in executive session on Thursday, Nov. 1. The session was held after hearing dates scheduled for Monday, Oct. 29, and Wednesday, Oct. 31, had to be rescheduled because of the impact of Hurricane Sandy.

The chairman of the three-person arbitration board is Shyam Das, a member of the American Arbitration Association's labor panel and a full-time labor arbitrator since 1977. Das has served on national arbitration panels involving postal workers since 1996 and was chairman of arbitration proceedings involving United Steelworkers as well as the Major League Baseball Players Association. The other members of the board are Bruce Simon, representing the NALC, and Robert Dufek for USPS.

The parties are discussing a schedule for submission of testimony, with several more hearing meetings scheduled over the next few months. The NALC anticipates that an award decision will be made in January, after the holidays. Check nalc.org for the latest updates.

Branch financial training set for Orlando, Cleveland

Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broedel has announced that registration is underway for two educational training sessions tailored to assist new branch secretary-treasurers and other local and state officers who are chiefly responsible for financial administration.

One session will be held in Orlando, FL, Feb. 25-27. The other will take place in Cleveland, OH, April 22-24.

While these seminars are intended primarily for branch secretary-treasurers, other branch and state officers who deal directly with branch finances also are invited.

Priority will be given to first-time attendees and each session is limited to 150 participants.

A form to request registration for either the Orlando or Cleveland seminar is printed below and also may be found online at nalc.org. Registration forms must be received at NALC Headquarters in Washington by the registration deadline.

The training will cover the basics for financial officers: taxes, including payroll withholding requirements; accounting systems and maintenance of proper controls; reporting to the Department of Labor, including LM-2, LM-3 and LM-30; fiduciary duties under the Landrum-Griffin Act; bonding of branch officers; NALC dues; legal limits on certain types of union spending; and IRS reporting requirements, including Forms 990 and 990-T.

The Orlando seminar room rate is \$129 single/double, plus tax. The registration deadline for the Orlando seminar is Jan. 23.

The Cleveland seminar room rate is \$99 single/double, plus tax. The registration deadline for the Cleveland seminar is March 27.

Training sessions will begin at 8 a.m. on the first day and conclude by noon on the third day.

Branches will be responsible for transportation and lodging. **Please do not make airline reservations before receiving confirmation from the secretary-treasurer's office. Hotel information will be included with your letter of acceptance.**



Secretary-Treasurer Seminar registration form

Please register me for one of the following NALC Secretary-Treasurer Seminars:

- Feb. 25-27 in Orlando, FL. Registration deadline is Jan. 23. Room rate [single/double] is \$129 plus tax.**
- April 22-24 in Cleveland, OH. Registration deadline is March 27. Room rate [single/double] is \$99 plus tax.**
- If your chosen seminar is already full, check here if you'd like to be registered for the other one.

Name _____

Branch or state position _____

Branch # _____ Branch city _____ State _____

Home address: Street _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone number (required) _____

Send to:
Secretary-Treasurer Jane E. Broedel
National Association of Letter Carriers
100 Indiana Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20001-2144

**** Please do not make airline reservations until you receive an acceptance letter.**



National Association
of Letter Carriers

Fredric V. Rolando, President

Dec. 5, 2012—No. 12-14

NALC Bulletin

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Congressional compromise misguided, misses the mark

On Nov. 16, Sen. Joseph Lieberman (I-CT), the retiring chairman of the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, held a bipartisan meeting of House and Senate leaders to discuss an alarming idea: to allow the U.S. Postal Service to end Saturday mail delivery service but retain package delivery service on that day.

"I'm sure Senator Lieberman's intentions are good, but his misguided notion falls into the trap of failing to address the root cause of problems the Postal Service continues to face," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "In fact, his proposal ignores the 2006 congressional mandate to pre-fund 75 years' worth of future retiree health benefits and to do so within just 10 years.

"This crisis, manufactured by Congress, is what's creating on Capitol Hill a false sense of urgency to act immediately," Rolando said. "There is no argument that something must be done to solve the Postal Service's financial problems, but Senator Lieberman's so-called compromise would eliminate 25,000 city carrier jobs, jeopardize a \$1.3 trillion national mailing industry that employs 7.5 million Americans in the private sector, and drive more business away from the Postal Service by undermining the value of our service. Moreover, it would hurt the USPS' ability to take advantage of the exploding package-delivery market.

"Rather than rushing ahead with a faulty compromise between a bad House bill and a bad Senate bill," the president said, "Congress should take carefully measured steps to address pre-funding—especially since the pre-funding account already contains more than enough cash to meet the health benefit needs of future retirees for decades to come.

"Addressing pre-funding would help take away the manufactured sense of urgency and allow the entire postal community—employees as well as lawmakers and managers—to come together to develop a forward-looking business plan to help the Postal Service succeed in the 21st century," Rolando said.

The president has sent messages via the NALC e-Activist Network alerting members to Lieberman's plan, adding that anything that can happen during Congress' lame-duck session. In fact, reports were emerging that key House and Senate staffers were planning to meet to hammer out a compromise bill that could be presented to both chambers of Congress as early as the first week of December.

"The NALC is committed to fighting any back-room deal, especially one that could get attached to must-pass legislation such as a 'fiscal cliff' measure or a Hurricane Sandy relief bill," Rolando said.



NALC President Fredric Rolando

Financial report

Pre-funding obscures USPS productivity records

On Nov. 15, the Postal Service released its financial report for Fiscal Year 2012, which ended Sept. 30. Of particular interest was the report's finding that the deficit from postal operations declined sharply from \$4.9 billion in 2011 to \$2.4 billion in 2012.

"The report makes clear that the financial crisis at the Postal Service is largely political in nature," NALC President Fredric Rolando said, "and that the Postal Service is actually returning to health in operational terms as the economy improves."

Rolando said that the report's highlighting of \$15.9 billion in losses obscures other key indications of improving financial health as well.

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"Shipping revenues are up 8.7 percent, which is a positive sign for the future. Meanwhile, the decline of first-class mail has slowed and employee productivity is at a record high," he said, "and only 16 percent of the overall losses actually had to do with mail delivery."

Those losses, Rolando said, would be easier to weather if it weren't for the future retiree health benefit pre-funding mandate, which accounts for 80 percent of all Postal Service red ink, including \$11.1 billion in 2012.

"While the Internet poses challenges, with more people paying bills online, it also presents opportunities for growth, with more people ordering goods online that need to be delivered," Rolando said.

Interest arbitration update

The interest arbitration board that will set the terms of a new National Agreement between NALC and USPS continues to meet and also to accept written testimony and exhibits from both sides.

The chairman of the three-person arbitration board is Shyam Das, a member of the American Arbitration Association's labor panel and a full-time labor arbitrator since 1977. The other members of the board are Bruce Simon, representing the NALC, and Robert Dufek for USPS.

The NALC anticipates that an award decision will be made sometime in January.

For late-breaking updates, you can check nalc.org, "like" the NALC's Facebook page at facebook.com/nalc.national, or follow the union's Twitter feed at twitter.com/nalc_national.

TSP offers help to Sandy victims

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) has made temporary changes to the financial hardship withdrawal rules for participants affected by Hurricane Sandy.

These changes allow participants who were affected by Hurricane Sandy, or who had a family member affected by Hurricane Sandy, to take a hardship withdrawal and to continue making TSP contributions in the six-month period after the hardship withdrawal.

The TSP will treat any "Financial Hardship In-Service Withdrawal Request" as a qualifying hardship, provided you meet all of the necessary criteria.

The complete list of criteria, plus the withdrawal request form, can be found at nalc.org/sandy. The web page also contains useful information for those who were affected by Sandy, as well as links to information about contributing to the Postal Employees' Relief Fund (PERF).

For those who continue to be affected by the aftermath of Sandy, the NALC has put together information and resource materials to help members deal with the recovery process at nalc.org/sandy.

"The NALC understands that a harm to one of us is a harm to all of us," Rolando said. "We always have and we always will take care of our own."

Benefits for which members might be eligible include those from the American Red Cross, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Postal Service's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), the AFL-CIO, Union Plus and United Way Worldwide, not to mention the Postal Employees' Relief Fund (PERF), the special charitable organization operated by the various union and management organizations of the Postal Service to solely benefit postal employees.

President Rolando has asked those outside the Northeast who escaped Sandy's devastation to consider making a special personal donation to PERF.

"For more than 20 years, PERF has been NALC's means of providing financial support directly to letter carriers in need," Rolando said. "We need to make sure that harm to those hit by Hurricane Sandy is met by the strength and solidarity of all of the NALC."

Any member who needs assistance in getting help can contact NALC Community and Membership Outreach Coordinator Pam Donato at 202-662-2489 or donato@nalc.org.

Coalition to Congress: Feds already have helped

The Federal-Postal Coalition—of which the NALC is a member—sent a letter to members of Congress on Nov. 19 asking that federal workers be excluded from any potential cuts that occur as part of talks to avoid the so-called "fiscal cliff":

We urge you to contact congressional leaders involved in negotiations, as well as President Obama, to remind them that the federal workforce already has borne the burden of substantial budget savings over the past two years.

Since the beginning of 2011, the budget savings derived from reduced compensation to the federal workforce has totaled at least \$103 billion (over \$50,000 per employee). This includes \$60 billion worth of budget savings from the first two years of the pay freeze, and at least \$28 billion worth of savings from the reduced 2013 pay raise proposed by the president.

Based on the Employment Cost Index, federal pay scales should increase by 1.7 percent in January, yet federal pay is frozen at least through March 2013. Unless federal employees receive the modest 0.5 percent raise proposed by the president, they will be taking yet another hit.

The federal workforce also contributed \$15 billion, achieved through a 2.3 percent increase in newly hired federal employees' retirement contributions, used to offset the cost of an additional nine months of unemployment insurance spending as part of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act.

Federal and postal employees and their families are hardworking, middle-class Americans who are struggling during these tough times just like other Americans. No other group has been asked to financially contribute the way they have, and it is time our nation's leaders found other ways to reduce the deficit than continually taking from those who have dedicated their lives to public service.

Read the complete letter posted at nalc.org under "Latest News."

21st Food Drive: Saturday, May 11



NALC branches throughout the country are getting an early start on preparations for the 21st annual NALC Food Drive, which will take place on Saturday, May 11.

"On the second Saturday in May, letter carriers once again will proudly lead the country's largest single-day drive to help fight hunger in America," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "What we see on our routes drives us to do what we can to help millions of Americans get the food their families so desperately need, and I once again call on every active and retired NALC member to get started now to prepare to make this coming drive another successful one."

Branch food drive coordinators should soon receive in the mail registration packets, which should be returned as soon as possible—by Jan. 31 at the latest—to NALC Community and Membership Outreach Coordinator Pam Donato. If you have questions or need help, call Donato at 202-662-2489 or send an e-mail to donato@nalc.org.

Open Season ends Dec. 10!

Are you in the NALC Health Plan?

With Federal Employees Health Benefits program Open Season ending Dec. 10, now is the time to think about how the new and improved benefits in the NALC Health Benefit Plan make it a great choice for letter carriers. If you already are a member, during Open Season you can make changes to your coverage, such as adding a spouse or family member as covered members.

A key change to the Plan in 2013 is lower rates. Active letter carriers will pay \$52.95 biweekly for Self Only coverage or \$103.26 for Self and Family coverage. The monthly annuitant premium will be \$160.66 for Self Only coverage and \$326.04 for Self and Family coverage.

Other changes include new or expanded benefits for conditions that letter carriers typically confront on their physically demanding job, such as back or foot problems.

Joining the NALC Health Benefit Plan gives you access to the preferred provider network of Cigna HealthCare Shared Administration Open Access Plus (OAP). The Plan also includes coverage of prescription drugs, with mail delivery available.

And when you call the NALC Health Plan, you will talk to a customer service representative at the Plan's headquarters who works for the NALC Plan and only the NALC Plan—someone who knows the benefits inside and out.

For more information about Open Season and your choices, go to opm.gov/insure/openseason. From this website, you can compare the NALC Plan with other choices available to you in the FEHB program, including coverage and rates.



Penalty Overtime Exclusion: As referenced in Article 8, Sections 4 and 5 of the National Agreement between the NALC and the USPS, the December period during which penalty overtime regulations are not applicable consists of four consecutive service weeks. This year, the December period begins Pay Period 26-12-Week 1 (Dec. 1, 2012) and ends Pay Period 01-13-Week 2 (Dec. 28, 2012).



National Association
of Letter Carriers

Fredric V. Rolando, President

Dec. 24, 2012 — No. 12-15

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100 Indiana Ave. NW Washington, DC 20001-2144 202.393.4695 www.nalc.org

NALC to Congress:

Don't rush postal reform!

With the clock running out on the 112th Congress, there were some promising signs out of Washington that negotiations over a flawed "compromise" postal reform bill appeared to be stalled, at least when this *NALC Bulletin* was being prepared.

"But the bad news is that Congress may stay in session beyond the holidays to finish so-called 'fiscal cliff' budget negotiations as well as any other unfinished business," NALC President Fredric Rolando said, "so our fight over postal reform is still far from over."

Thanks in part to the continued activism of letter carriers, NALC's sources on Capitol Hill had indicated that an agreement on the postal compromise bill remained out of reach for now, at least as this *NALC Bulletin* was being prepared.

"But during those talks, there seems to have been a new discussion about eliminating Saturday delivery one year from now," Rolando said of the negotiations. Such a one-year proposal would place the compromise halfway between the House's proposal in H.R. 2309 to eliminate Saturday delivery immediately, and the Senate's version in S. 1789 that retains six-day delivery but only for two years.

"Either way, 25,000 city carrier jobs—one-sixth of our workforce—would eventually be sacrificed, instead of removing the real problem: the future retiree health pre-funding burden," Rolando said.

So what's next? If a tentative agreement is reached at the congressional staff level, the compromise would then go to the small group of committee leaders from the House and Senate committees that oversee the Postal Service.



NALC President Fredric Rolando

"There's no guarantee that the committee leaders would sign off on the resulting postal reform," Rolando said. "But if they do, they will have to convince the congressional leadership to let the full Congress consider the legislation—and possibly attach it to other bills under consideration."

The NALC remains committed to convincing the entire Congress that it must oppose any rush to enact postal reform in the lame-duck session, Rolando said. "Congress must start over in the new year and do the job right."

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One of the best ways to get the latest updates on this and other news is to make sure you are signed up as an NALC e-Activist. Visit nalc.org to sign up or to update your e-mail address.

Interest arbitration update

As this *NALC Bulletin* was being prepared, the NALC and USPS were continuing to submit testimony and exhibits to the interest arbitration board that will set the terms of a new National Agreement between the two parties.

In recent weeks, the NALC has submitted evidence and testimony from a variety of expert witnesses, including a financial analysis of the Postal Service from the Lazard investment bank, a detailed presentation on health care costs and benefits from our consultants at Towers Watson and Lake Consulting, scholarly papers by academic witnesses to make the case for letter carriers on comparability and against the Postal Service on sub-contracting, and a comprehensive summary presentation by NALC President Fredric Rolando.

With proceedings still on track, the NALC anticipates that an award—the final decision by the arbitrators on the contents of our new contract—will be issued sometime in January.

Check nalc.org for late-breaking updates. Breaking news also will be posted to the NALC's Facebook and Twitter accounts. Links to each service are provided at the top of the home page of nalc.org.

Rolando denounces MI 'right-to-work' law

NALC President Fredric Rolando has denounced the passage on Dec. 11 of so-called "right-to-work" legislation in Michigan.

"The sneaky, lame-duck passage of a right-to-work (for less) law in Michigan is disgraceful," Rolando said, "and Governor Rick Snyder, as well as the anti-labor legislators in his state's House and Senate—some of whom were voted out of office in November—should be ashamed of this bald-faced kowtow to the Koch Brothers and other special interest groups."

Rolando noted that Michigan is home to a strong union, the United Auto Workers.

"Sadly, the state has become the 24th in America to adopt legislation that not only assaults workers' fundamental right to bargain collectively for their pay, benefits and working conditions, but also gives a free ride to those who don't join a union but still reap the benefits of a negotiated agreement," he said.

"This 11th-hour flip-flop by Snyder and Michigan's legislature is nothing short of an attack on the middle class, and to wage it in the final days of the legislative year, without so much as a debate, is an affront to the basic democratic freedoms that Michiganders—and, indeed, all Americans—hold dear."

Branch financial training set for Orlando, Cleveland

Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broedel reminds members that registration is still under way for two educational training sessions tailored to assist new branch secretary-treasurers and other local and state officers who are chiefly responsible for financial administration.

The first session will be held in Orlando, FL, Feb. 25-27. The second will take place in Cleveland, OH, April 22-24.

These seminars are intended primarily for branch secretary-treasurers, although other branch and state officers who deal directly with branch finances also are invited.

Priority will be given to first-time attendees and each session is limited to 150 participants.

A form to request registration for either the Orlando or Cleveland seminar is printed below and also may be found online at nalc.org. Registration forms must be received at NALC Headquarters in Washington by the registration deadline. **One form per registrant, please.**

The training will cover the basics for financial officers: taxes, including payroll withholding requirements; accounting systems and maintenance of proper controls; reporting to the Department of Labor, including LM-2, LM-3 and LM-30; fiduciary duties under the Landrum-Griffin Act; bonding of branch officers; NALC dues; legal limits on certain types of union spending; and IRS reporting requirements, including Forms 990 and 990-T.

The Orlando seminar room rate is \$129 single/double, plus tax. The registration deadline for the Orlando seminar is Jan. 23.

The Cleveland seminar room rate is \$99 single/double, plus tax. The registration deadline for the Cleveland seminar is March 27.

Training sessions will begin at 8 a.m. on the first day and conclude by noon on the third day. Branches will be responsible for transportation and lodging. **Please do not make airline reservations before receiving confirmation from the secretary-treasurer's office. Hotel information will be included with your letter of acceptance.**



Secretary-Treasurer Seminar registration form

Please register me for one of the following NALC Secretary-Treasurer Seminars:

Feb. 25-27 in Orlando, FL. Registration deadline is Jan. 23. Room rate [single/double] is \$129 plus tax.**

April 22-24 in Cleveland, OH. Registration deadline is March 27. Room rate [single/double] is \$99 plus tax.**

If your chosen seminar is already full, check here if you'd like to be registered for the other one.

Name _____

Branch or state position _____

Branch # _____ Branch city _____ State _____

Home address: Street _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone number (required) _____

Send to:
Secretary-Treasurer Jane E. Broedel
National Association of Letter Carriers
100 Indiana Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20001-2144

** Please do not make airline reservations until you receive an acceptance letter.

It's the season for giving!

Post-Sandy relief efforts continue



During his recent tour of areas affected by Hurricane Sandy, NALC President Fredric Rolando (r) checked in with Bergen County Merged NJ Branch 425 letter carriers.

For those letter carriers still dealing with the lingering impact of Hurricane Sandy, the NALC has put together a web page filled with information and resource materials to help members sort through the recovery process. Check it out at nalc.org/sandy.

"When some of us need help, there are NALC members a hundredfold across the country, standing ready, willing and able to give them a lift up," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "We always have and we always will take care of our own."

Many NALC members might be eligible to receive aid from the American Red Cross, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Postal Service's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), the AFL-CIO, Union Plus and United Way. Links to these and other benefits and programs are posted on the special web page.

For those postal employees who still require monetary help after insurance and other relief assistance have been paid out following disasters such as hurricanes, wildfires, floods and tornadoes, financial assistance might be available from the Postal Employees' Relief Fund (PERF).

"For more than 20 years, PERF has been NALC's means to provide financial support directly to letter carriers in need," Rolando said. "We need to make sure that harm to those hit by Hurricane Sandy is met by the strength and solidarity of all of the NALC."

The president also asked NALC members not directly affected by Hurricane Sandy to make a personal donation to PERF, and to come up with creative ways to raise money to support this worthwhile organization.

Tax-deductible donations to PERF can be made in a variety of ways:

- ▶ online using a credit card
- ▶ by sending a check directly to the fund by mail
- ▶ from your cell phone via text message (see box at right)

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) has made temporary changes to the financial hardship withdrawal rules for participants affected by Hurricane Sandy. These changes allow participants who were affected by Hurricane Sandy or who had a family member affected by Hurricane Sandy to take a hardship withdrawal and to continue making TSP contributions in the six-month period after the hardship withdrawal. The TSP will treat any "Financial Hardship In-Service Withdrawal Request" as a qualifying hardship provided participants meet all of the necessary criteria. An information PDF is available for download at nalc.org/sandy.

Any member who needs assistance in getting help can contact NALC Community and Membership Outreach Coordinator Pam Donato at 202-662-2489.

Using your cell phone, you can text the word PERF to 50555 to make a \$10 donation to the Postal Employees' Relief Fund. Charges will appear on your wireless bill or will be deducted from your prepaid balance. All purchases must be authorized by account holder. Must be 18 years of age or have parental permission to participate. Message and data rates may apply. Text STOP to 50555 to STOP. Text HELP to 50555 for HELP. Full terms: <http://mgive.org/terms-of-service.aspx>. Privacy policy: <http://www.mgivefoundation.org/privacy.aspx>.

In 'fiscal cliff' talks

Congress considers retiree benefit cuts

As part of the ongoing discussions to avoid the so-called "fiscal cliff," there are reports that a couple of troubling proposals are emerging that would affect the benefits of retired federal employees—a group that includes retired letter carriers.

One proposal calls for switching to what's known as a chained Consumer Price Index (CPI) in calculating cost-of-living adjustments for federal retirees—a group that includes retired letter carriers. The other is a possible raise of the Medicare eligibility age from 65 to 67.

"Moving to the less-accurate chained CPI would be a big mistake," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "It would hit hard our federal pensions and our Social Security benefits, merely to satisfy the demands of the conservative deficit hawks on Capitol Hill—lawmakers who seem hell-bent on making sure that lower- and middle-class American taxpayers take on the burden of paying for the economic damage caused by years and years of Congress' fiscal irresponsibility."

"And raising the Medicare eligibility age only kicks down the road the costs associated with health insurance and medical care to those who will be less able to afford it the older they get," he said.

"The NALC opposes such blatantly unfair proposals, and we strongly urge President Obama and our House and Senate representatives to do the right thing and delete them from future 'fiscal cliff' discussions," Rolando said.

IL carrier shot while on duty



East St. Louis, IL Branch 319's Willie Frazier

East St. Louis, IL Branch 319 letter carrier Willie Frazier was shot on the afternoon of Dec. 11 while he was delivering mail on his route.

Reports say Frazier, 60, was working his usual route in Cahokia, a small town across the Mississippi River from St. Louis, when a gun fight broke out about a block away from him.

The 20-year carrier, who has delivered mail on this route for 15 years, reportedly was struck in the left leg by a stray bullet.

Region 3 National Business Agent Neal Tisdale says that Frazier was treated at a local hospital and quickly released, and was recovering at home as this *NALC Bulletin* was being prepared.

Meanwhile, a police investigation into the shooting continues.

Letter carriers respond to tragedy in CT

The NALC has expressed its sincerest condolences to the families and friends of the victims of the mass shooting Dec. 14 in Newtown, CT, and President Fredric Rolando has extended his personal sympathies.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with those touched by this senseless act," Rolando said. "Sadly, there have been far too many such rampages in recent years."

"Letter carriers in Newtown have the especially difficult burden of delivering messages of condolences to the grieving families of the victims."

"This tragedy, and all similarly unspeakable crimes, should motivate Americans to come together to find ways to prevent them in the future."

The NALC Executive Council extends its best wishes for a healthy, happy and prosperous new year to our letter carrier brothers and sisters and their families.

May you enjoy all the blessings of peace and liberty, and the benefits of the special strength that flows from solidarity.



Fredric V. Rolando, President

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George C. Mignosi, Vice President
Jane E. Broedel, Secretary-Treasurer
Nicole Rhine, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer
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