



National Association
of Letter Carriers

William H. Young, President

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Inauguration of President Barack Obama Set for January 20

Young Thanks APWU's Burrus for Invitation to Celebrate in D.C.

Despite troubling economic times, members of the broad progressive coalition that helped elect our nation's first African-American president in November 2008 are preparing to celebrate the historic inauguration of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States. "The labor movement is rightly proud of our role in electing Sen. Obama," NALC President Bill Young said. "Not since the 1930s has our country needed hope and change more than it does right now — and that's precisely what President Obama offers."



Millions of Americans are expected to gather in Washington to kick off the new administration. The Secret Service has ordered the NALC headquarters building on Capitol Hill closed on January 20, citing the need for security and its proximity to stage where President Obama will be sworn into office. NALC activists who plan to attend the Inauguration have been cordially invited to join their brothers and sisters from the American Postal Workers Union at the National Association of Home Builders office building on January 20. APWU President William Burrus graciously invited NALC visitors in a letter dated December 18, 2008 that is posted on the NALC website. President Young thanked President Burrus for his show of hospitality and solidarity: "We have long fought together for the rights of postal employees, so it is fitting that our activists should celebrate an electoral victory that both unions worked so hard to make happen," Young said.



Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), swears in members of the House of Representative January 6, 2009. (Photo by Chip Somo Devilla/Gretty Images)

The 111th Congress Convenes Economic Crisis Tops Agenda

NALC Fighting for Relief for Postal Service

The 111th Congress of the United States of America convened January 6 in Washington, DC as the country's economic crisis deepened. Retail sales plunged, home prices continued to fall and another 700,000 Americans lost their jobs in December. With the outlook for 2009 increasingly grim, the new Congress had little time to celebrate the results of the 2008 elections and the fruits of our democracy. Lawmakers immediately began work on a massive economic recovery bill to prevent the country from sliding into an even deeper recession. Not waiting for his Inauguration on January 20, President-elect Barack Obama met with the bipartisan leadership of Congress to outline his program of tax cuts, infrastructure spending and economic assistance that could top \$750 billion over the next two years. "NALC welcomes the new Congress and the new President to Washington," NALC President Bill Young said, "we stand ready and able to work with both parties to overcome the dire circumstances that now confront our country."

Even as the NALC and the Postal Service work tirelessly to implement the Interim Expedited Route Adjustment Process, they have joined forces with the key stakeholders in the postal industry to obtain financial relief from Congress. A bill to reduce the burden of pre-funding health benefits for future retirees was introduced by Rep. John McHugh (R-NY) and Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL) on the opening day of the session. Under current law, the USPS must pay for both current retiree health benefits — at a cost of more than \$2 billion annually — and pre-fund future retiree health costs by paying some \$5.5 billion per year into the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefit Fund (PSRHBF). That fund is held by the Office of Personnel Management and is closed to the USPS until 2016. It now has a balance of \$32 billion. The McHugh-Davis bill, introduced as H.R. 22 to use the same bill number used for the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006, would allow the USPS to pay for its current retiree health benefits out of the OPM fund immediately — saving the USPS more than \$2 billion per year while maintaining a more affordable pre-funding schedule.

"No other company in America is required to pre-fund retiree health benefits over 10 years," President Young told Congressional leaders in a letter. "The Postal Service should not be required to do so at a time when the economic crisis has severely damaged its financial stability." He went on to add that "H.R. 22 is no taxpayer bailout — we simply want access to our funds to cover our own costs."

NALC is urging Congress and the new administration to add H.R. 22 to the economic recovery legislation now being drafted. Noting that giving a hand to the Postal Service will serve the same purpose as aid to struggling state and local governments, Young added: "Relief for the Postal Service early in 2009 will help avert painful service cuts and postage rate increases that would only deepen the recession."

"A strong Postal Service is vital to the economic recovery we all want and need," he added.

In Memoriam: Don Neal, 1948-2009

NALC lost one of the pioneers of the Dispute Resolution Team process on January 7, 2009 when Brother Don Neal of Dallas Branch 132 passed away. "We have lost a great brother and a great trade unionist with the loss of Don Neal," President Bill Young said. "Don served five years as the NALC's primary DRT representative in Dallas and was there from the beginning — he was a champion for letter carriers and we will miss him tremendously."

Brother Neal began his postal career in 1978 and was trained in 2003 to serve as an NALC Step B representative. NALC offers sincere condolences to Don's family and friends. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Don's family at: 2919 Rio Verde Way, Dallas, TX 75228.

National Training Conference, Rap Session Set April 25-26, 2009 in Las Vegas

In accordance with Article 3 of the NALC Constitution a national Rap Session and special training conference will be held over the April 25-26 weekend in Las Vegas, Nevada. Branch and State Presidents or their designees are invited to attend at the expense of their branches and state associations. The meeting will take place at the Luxor Las Vegas hotel. "Given the severity of the current economic crisis, I believe it is essential to gather the leadership of our great union in the first half of the year," President William Young said. "The NALC and the Postal Service face the biggest crisis in decades — I hope every branch will send at least one representative to this important conference."

A welcoming reception will be held the evening of April 24. A National Training Conference will be held on Saturday, April 25 and will feature a wide range of workshops that will be repeated during the day to maximize the number who can take advantage of the training. Among the topics to be covered in the Saturday workshops are the results of the Interim Route Adjustment agreement, the economic crisis and its impact on the Postal Service, the legislative campaign to rebuild the middle class through labor law and health care reforms, the NALC's Community Service agenda, and other contract administration issues. President Young will preside over a plenary Rap Session on the morning of Sunday, April 26, 2009. "The Las Vegas meeting will provide an invaluable opportunity to share views on the future course of the union and our country," he observed.

A block of rooms offered at a group rate will be available for reservations on a first come, first served basis in the near future. Look for an announcement on the NALC website (www.nalc.org) and in a future edition of the *Bulletin*. NALC leaders are urged not to contact the Luxor until national union has completed arrangements for the room block.

The NALC Constitution calls for the President to convene a national conference in years when there is no National Convention.

Postal Service Dues Snafu

2009 NALC Dues Increase Delayed for Some Members and Branches Problem to be Fixed by PP 2-2009

Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broedel wishes to alert members and branch leaders of a computer error reported by the Postal Service's Postal Data Center in Eagan, Minnesota that affected the dues withholding of some 40,000 members in Pay Period 1 of 2009. As a result of the computer processing error, the increase in NALC dues scheduled for Pay Period 1 of 2009 was not implemented for one-fifth of the NALC's membership. The Postal Service expects to correct the error in Pay Period 2. NALC's Membership department at Headquarters is working with the Postal Service to make NALC and its branches whole for any loss of dues income due to the error. NALC properly submitted the data needed to implement the new dues amounts in a timely matter, but nonetheless regrets any inconvenience to branches and members.