

Some strains, Some progress for joint contract committees

New contract, JCAM almost ready for printer

As this issue went to press, officers and staff at NALC Headquarters were putting the finishing touches on a pocket-size, bound-volume of the 2006-2011 National Agreement and were working to wrap up the 2008 edition of the *Joint Contract Administration Manual*.

Executive Vice President Fred Rolando explained that both documents were being prepared with considerable care. "We need to be certain that these versions accurately reflect the agreements we have made with the Postal Service," he said. In some cases, each side has somewhat different wording for a sentence or section that was settled at the bargaining table. Resolving those conflicts demands special attention. Even correct spelling and typographical issues require the agreement of both parties.

No printing dates had been set, but the actual production should be swift once NALC and USPS review and agree on all the details.

A third document nearly completed as 2007 drew to a close was a new question-and-answer agreement covering transitional employees. The national training session in Las Vegas in November revealed a concern among local leaders about the rights of TEs and limits on how the Postal Service may deploy them under the new contract.

As the old year wound down there were some signs of strain as well as some progress in the work of the special committees created under the 2006-2011 National Agreement to address critical workplace and job security issues.

The Article 32 committee on subcontracting delivery work, headed on the NALC side by President William H. Young, was in the process of reconciling lists of installations covered by the "Memorandum of Understanding Re: Subcontracting." When the new contract was settled, the Postal Service provided a provisional list of the 3,071 offices referenced in the MOU that bans contracting out in "offices with only city delivery."

The parties agreed to verify the list and NALC National Business Agents, working with local NALC leaders, generated a union database of affected offices. "We are now merging our list with their list to develop an accurate database," President Young explained in late December. One consequence of combining the lists may be the discovery of covered installations where Contract Delivery Service (CDS) is being used. "In those cases, the Postal Service will have to cancel those contracts," Young said. The process is slow but likely to be complete early this year, he added.

Young said, however, that the union also has some outstanding requests for information that must be resolved before the Article 32 group begins full-scale work toward its goal "to develop a

meaningful evolutionary approach to the issue of subcontracting."

While that committee works, there is a six-month moratorium on subcontracting in any office where city carriers are employed. That ban is in addition to the MOU that prohibits subcontracting for the life of the contract in the 3,000-plus offices on the "only city delivery" list.

The FSS committee, which had been making good progress in its study of the impact of flat-sorting machinery on letter carrier work methods, hit a snag over the use of any information gathered during field tests. The union insists that any future use of the findings be forbidden. "The success of the committee hinges on that issue," Young said. "There can't be any progress before it is resolved."

The flat sequence group had been nearly ready to begin two months of testing office and street functions in a simulated FSS work environment. Its goal is to find the most efficient and safest way to take advantage of the technology.

On the other hand, the committee on an alternate route evaluation process continued to make steady progress, with four meetings scheduled in mid-December as it narrows down possible test sites.

The memorandums and other agreements that created the contract committees may be found in the *National Agreement* booklet sent to all members at the time of the ratification vote. The agreement also is available at nalc.org under "News—National Bargaining." ✉

(For additional detail on the FSS committee, see Director of City Delivery Dale Hart's column on page 24.)

The Alternate Route Inspection Process Committee meets with USPS's Bob McLean (second from r). The Committee is (from l) Todd Brew of Cleveland Br. 40, Laurie Miale of South Florida Br. 1071, Assistant to the President for Compensation Linda Temple, Executive Vice President Fred Rolando and Region 15 NBA Larry Cirelli (not pictured).

