



Cleveland letter carrier fatally shot on route

President Fred Rolando expressed outrage and grief on behalf of all NALC members over the shooting death of Cleveland Branch 40 letter carrier Daniel Kondas as he was delivering the mail in Maple Heights, Ohio, on September 17.

“This is a senseless and outrageous tragedy for the family and friends of Brother Kondas, his fellow NALC members in Cleveland and the entire postal community,” Rolando said. “They all have the deepest sympathy of our union.”

Kondas, a 23-year veteran of the Postal Service, had just started delivering mail when he was shot in the back of the head about 9:40 a.m. He died that evening.

The 53-year-old resident of Garfield Heights, Ohio, was the only caregiver for his mother.

Police arrested a 19-year-old and charged him with aggravated murder on September 18. The crime was apparently a robbery gone wrong, police said, but nothing was stolen from the letter carrier. ☒

“Most Trusted” (yet again)



A new survey released September 16 places letter carriers and other postal employees in the top echelon of all workers that Americans trust the most—and the highest for any government agency.

The U.S. Postal Service was ranked third in the 2009 Most Trusted Companies for Privacy Award survey commissioned by the Ponemon Institute, an information security research company, and TRUSTe, a widely recognized Internet privacy company.

eBay, Verizon and the Postal Service were 1-2-3 in the assessment of privacy policies and practices of leading consumer brands. The rankings were based on a survey of 6,486 adult U.S. consumers and an expert review of corporate standards. No other government agency was in the top 10. ☒

Retirement counseling grievance settled

The NALC and the Postal Service have reached a settlement of a national level dispute over management’s responsibility to provide retirement counseling to letter carriers. NALC had protested the discontinuance of providing in-person counseling to letter carriers on postal premises. Instead, the Postal Service amended the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual* to permit that counseling to be conducted primarily by telephone with a retirement specialist at the Human Resources Shared Services Center (HRSSC).

The settlement provides that employees may request counseling on the clock, and that the local management will arrange reasonably private space for this purpose. The employee’s spouse and/or advisor may be with the employee at the time of the counseling. In addition, employees who cannot begin or complete the process of obtaining counseling from HRSSC without assistance will be offered assistance by local management.

This settlement does not affect a separate national level dispute over management’s failure to provide timely retirement counseling to employees eligible for Voluntary Early Retirement. That dispute remains pending. ☒

Sen. Edward M. “Ted” Kennedy

February 22, 1932–August 25, 2009

Massachusetts Sen. Edward M. “Ted” Kennedy, a long-time stalwart of labor unions and the NALC, died August 25 at the age of 77 following a year-long battle with brain cancer.

“Letter carriers and all working men and women have lost a dedicated champion of workers’ rights,” NALC President Fredric V. Rolando said in a statement.

“Throughout his 46-year career, Sen. Kennedy worked with this union on many issues important to postal workers and to the Postal Service,” Rolando said. “He helped ensure all Americans had access to an efficient, universal postal system, and he worked hard to protect the wages, benefits and safe working conditions of all postal employees.”

Rolando made specific mention of Kennedy’s role in helping to win Hatch Act reforms in 1993 that granted federal employees—including letter carriers—

the freedom to engage in off-the-clock political activism.

More recently, Kennedy was the sponsor of S. 560, the Senate’s version of the Employee Free Choice Act. If it passes, EFCA would strengthen the middle class by making it easier for workers to form unions. He had introduced similar bills in 2004 and 2007.

Under Massachusetts law, a special election for a replacement in the Senate will take place in January. However, as this issue of *The Postal Record* was being prepared, the Bay State House of Representatives, with strong support from the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, had approved a measure that would allow Gov. Deval Patrick to appoint a temporary interim replacement. With crucial votes on health care and labor law reform expected this fall, supporters of the measure stress the need for full representation in the Senate for the state. ☒



Senator Edward Kennedy at the 2003 Heroes of the Year award ceremony.

COLCPE contest enters its final quarter

There are only three months left to go in this year’s COLCPE contest—the final quarter of a year that has witnessed nearly 1,000 NALC and Auxiliary members sign up to automatically contribute to the political action fund that helps letter carriers maintain their place in America’s middle class.

The 2009 branch-focused competition asks current contributors to the Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education to convince fellow members to give \$5 or more per pay period, via payroll deduction or electronic funds transfer (EFT) from a checking account. Retired members can also “Gimme 5 for COLCPE” by contributing at least \$5 monthly from annuity payments or by EFT.

After all the new contributors are counted at the end of the year, the branches with the highest percentage of COLCPE contributors in five size categories will each hold a raffle to award a \$1,000 American Express gift card to one of their lucky members who donates at the Gimme 5 level or higher.

The size categories are 50 to 99 members, 100 to 499 members, 500 to 999 members, 1,000 to 1,999 members, and 2,000 members or more.

Laptop computers will also be awarded to those five top branches, plus \$200 gift cards will be presented to the COLCPE coordinators in each winning branch in recognition of their efforts.

Two other \$1,000 gift card raffles will be held—one for a winner from among all Gimme 5 donors in branches with 49 members or fewer, and another to select

a giver from the branch that showed the greatest percentage increase in 2009.

“With crucial issues like six-day delivery, the Postal Service’s financial condition, the Employee Free Choice Act and health care reform all at stake, we need to make sure our representatives in the House and Senate know where we stand,” said NALC President Fred Rolando. “COLCPE allows letter carriers’ voices be heard all over Capitol Hill.”

Contest winners will be recognized in the special COLCPE edition of *The Postal Record* in February. For complete contest rules and the latest branch standings, go to nalc.org and click on the “Win \$1,000” link at the top of the page. ☒

Note: Contributions to COLCPE are 100 percent voluntary and are not tax-deductible. Absolutely no union dues money is used to support political candidates.