

FERS sick leave measure advances

Legislation to allow federal and postal workers under the Federal Employees Retirement System to receive credit toward their retirement benefits for unused sick leave appeared close to final approval as this issue went to press. Most current letter carriers are covered by FERS.

The provision was included in a conference committee report that worked out differences between the House and Senate versions of the 2010 Defense authorization bill—a “must pass” measure. The House approved the report on October 7 and it was awaiting action in the Senate, where advocates were concerned that conservative lawmakers might raise objections. Nonetheless, supporters expected final passage that would send the bill to President Obama for his signature.

Under the legislation, FERS employees would get half credit for unused sick leave through 2013; full leave credit would take effect in 2014. Employees under the old Civil Service Retirement System already receive full service credit for their unused sick leave.

The conference report also includes a provision to gradually move federal employees who live and work outside the continental United States away from territorial COLAs based on price differences and into a locality pay system based on wage differences. ☒

Carrier crushed by car dies

Veteran letter carrier Roy Rondeno of New Orleans, Louisiana Branch 124 died on October 2, six days after his legs were crushed by a car as he sorted mail at the back of his postal van. Doctors amputated both legs below the knee and he appeared to be recovering, according to local news accounts, but he died of heart failure during follow-up surgery.

The 57-year-old NALC member was less than a year from retirement. Normally he would have been off on Saturday, September 26, the day of the accident, but he volunteered to come in to deliver his route.

Rondeno, a 34-year postal employee, was injured when a car drove into an intersection and clipped another vehicle, which went out of control and slammed into the letter carrier.

Brother Rondeno—known as “Deno” around the Uptown Station—was immensely popular with both his patrons and colleagues. He was described as a “sweet and affectionate man” and “a very nice guy.” The USPS Louisiana District released a statement calling him “a difference-maker.”

The letter carrier’s son, Roy Rondeno Jr., told the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* that more than 1,000 mourners paid their respects October 10 at his father’s funeral, where the carrier was described by one speaker as “true gift from God.”

Roughly 1,000 people attended a memorial block party/fund-raiser held along Rondeno’s route to benefit the family. The event featured live music, a raffle and auction, with prizes and goods supplied by local merchants and



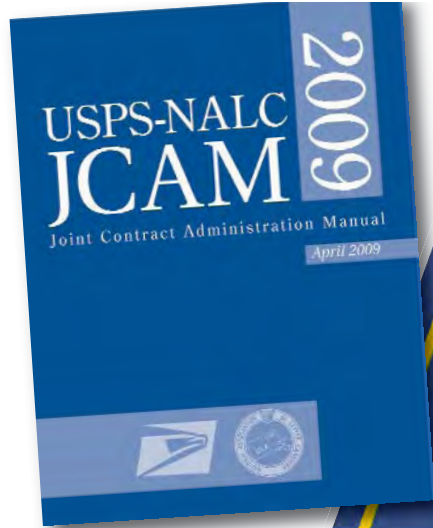
restaurants. Rondeno Jr. said the family had received more than \$30,000 in support donations, a testimony to the carrier’s standing in the community.

One patron, noting the diversity of the crowd at the fund-raiser, told the *Times-Picayune* the tragedy brought black and white residents together. “There are people in this city who don’t see color and rose to the occasion to help someone they loved,” she said.

The at-fault driver—publisher of a newspaper catering to the black community—was cited for failure to yield at a stop sign. Although eye-witnesses described the car as speeding, a police report released 10 days after the accident accepted the 67-year-old driver’s statement she had stopped but failed to look both ways when she proceeded.

A special fund initially set up to help with medical costs is now a fund for the family. Checks, made out to the “Roy Rondeno Sr. Donation Fund,” may be mailed to: Roy Rondeno Sr. Fund, Capital One Bank—St. Charles, 3540 Saint Charles Ave., New Orleans, LA 70115.

Condolences may be sent to the Rondeno family at 733 Thirba St., Metairie, LA 70003. ☒



Contract publications updated:

NALC has updated two important documents used by stewards and other union activists.

NALC and USPS have agreed to publish the 2009 *Joint Contract Administration Manual*. Posted online at nalc.org in June, the parties have made minor grammatical changes since and have now sent the manual to the printer for publication. The new version, now available online, will be sent to all NALC branches upon publication.

A new, updated Material Reference System (MRS)—a prime resource for NBAs, RAAs, branch officers and shop stewards in their duties enforcing the National Agreement—has been released online at nalc.org. ☒

COLCPE contest ends soon

The current branch COLCPE contest ends December 31. There's still time to get in on the action—but time is running out.

This competition encourages all NALC members to sign up for automatic contributions to the union's political action fund at the "Gimme 5 for COLCPE" level or higher—\$5 per pay period via payroll deduction or electronic funds transfer (EFT) from a checking account. For retired members, it's \$5 each month from annuity payments or by EFT.

Come January, the branches with the highest percentage of COLCPE contribu-

tors in five size categories will each hold a raffle to award a \$1,000 American Express gift card to a Gimme 5-level contributor. There are additional prizes for donors and the top branches will also receive laptop computers.

The special COLCPE edition of *The Postal Record* in February will list the contest winners. You can find contest rules and branch standings at nalc.org. ☒

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

NALC video wins 'Telly'

The NALC's food drive DVD promoting last May's drive, "Letter Carriers: Delivering in the Time of Need," has been honored with a Silver "Telly" for video production and creativity.

The statuette, designed by the same firm that makes the Oscar and Emmy awards, is the highest honor given by the Telly Awards, the promotional film and video production trade group. NALC's video was among only nine percent of more than 13,000 entrants to receive the Silver Telly in the 30th annual judging.

It was presented jointly to SAGE Media Productions of Owings, Maryland, which produced the video for NALC, and to NALC Director of Public Relations and

national food drive coordinator Drew Von Bergen, who served as executive producer.

Among other winners of a Silver Telly this year were NFL Films, Microsoft, the Outdoor Channel, Discovery Communications, Colonial Williamsburg Productions, HBO Latin America, Bass Pro Shops, Booz Allen Hamilton, and the American Cancer Society.

Von Bergen also shared a Bronze Telly with SAGE Media Productions in 2007 for a video produced for the Postal Employees' Relief Fund, "Rebuilding Homes...Rebuilding Lives," which depicted the postal charity's role in providing funds to victims of Hurricane Katrina and other Gulf Coast disasters. ☒



NALC Director of Public Relations Drew Von Bergen (l) and NALC President Fred Rolando admire the food drive 'Telly.'