

Extreme weather puts carriers at risk

Disasters can strike anywhere in the United States. No one, including letter carriers, is immune. From wildfires in the western United States to storms in the central and southeastern parts of the country, 2020 already has brought us examples of the destruction natural disasters cause and the impact they have on the lives of those in their path.

The Midwest felt the impact of severe weather in early August when a rare derecho, a severe type of storm that can produce high winds and tornadoes, caused widespread damage centered on Iowa.

Later in August, the first hurricane to hit land this season battered the Gulf Coast. Hurricane Laura, a powerful Category 4 storm when it made landfall on Aug. 26, pummeled Texas and Louisiana. A few weeks later, Hurricane Sally followed, slamming into Alabama and Florida.

While the southeastern United States was drenched, parts of California, Idaho, Oregon and Washington were burning. Massive wildfires have consumed millions of acres of forest



A wildfire burns outside of Los Angeles in California.

and grassland in those states, killing dozens so far and causing hundreds of thousands of people to flee the fires.

Any time disasters unfold, letter carriers' thoughts turn to their brothers and sisters in the affected areas. Whenever and wherever disaster strikes, NALC members across the country step up for their fellow union members in need by donating cash, uniforms and other assistance.

Many branches identified a need to establish a mechanism for donations, supplies and other assistance so that carriers affected by disasters could receive help faster and more effectively. That's why the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation was created.

At the 2018 national convention in Detroit, NALC President Fredric Rolando announced the formation of the

Foundation. Its mission is to quickly provide relief to letter carriers who are victims of natural disasters.

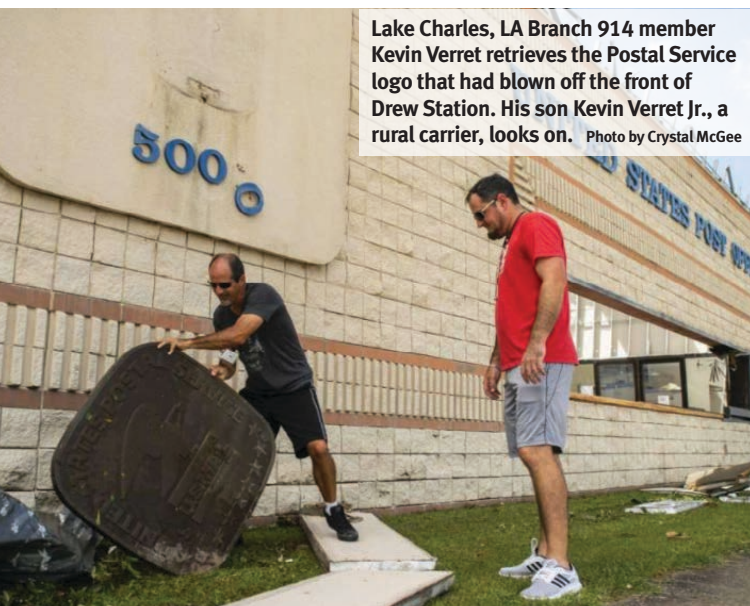
"With the generous support of NALC members, the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation is providing both financial support and immediate help with basic supplies to carriers in need," Rolando said.

The Disaster Relief Foundation accepts donations from individual letter carriers, branches and state associations, as well as from other sources. All donations from letter carriers, branches and state associations go directly to letter carriers who need assistance—no administrative costs are deducted.

With so many disasters affecting our members, contributions to the Foundation are as important as ever. Knowing that you are contributing to something that directly aids our fellow sisters and brothers in their time of crisis and need is extremely rewarding.

The Foundation published a *Member's Guide* to help letter carriers prepare for disasters, to give them information on how to donate to the Foundation and to let them know how

Lake Charles, LA Branch 914 member Kevin Verret retrieves the Postal Service logo that had blown off the front of Drew Station. His son Kevin Verret Jr., a rural carrier, looks on. Photo by Crystal McGee



to request assistance if they are affected by a disaster. The *Member's Guide*, the applications for grants and other information are available on the Foundation's web page at nalc.org/disaster.

Any NALC member who has faced hardship as a result of a natural disaster or wildfire can apply for assistance by completing the Application for Relief Grant. The eligibility requirements are outlined in the application. The Foundation's board of directors will consider the applications and will issue grants on an objective basis to eligible individuals as funds are available. Members do not have to wait for emergency relief or insurance claims to be settled to apply. Applications must be received no later than 120 days after the date when the natural disaster occurred, unless the applicant can provide sufficient reasons for the delay.

"The generosity of letter carriers never ceases to amaze me," President Rolando said. "The Disaster Relief Foundation is an invaluable lifeline for our sisters and brothers in need, in the true spirit of solidarity."

Donations should be sent to NALC Disaster Relief Foundation, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144. The foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and your contribution may be tax deductible. It is recommended that you seek further advice from your tax advisor. **PR**

Arbitration update

As this magazine was going to press, NALC was preparing to participate in interest arbitration hearings for a new national contract. Information on these hearings will be in the next issue of *The Postal Record*.

President Rolando appoints RAA

NALC President Fredric Rolando has named **Ken Janulewicz of Worcester, MA Branch 12** as a regional administrative assistant (RAA) for Region 14, serving Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. He began in the position on Sept. 14.

Janulewicz started his postal career as a casual in Worcester in 1995. He became a transitional employee (TE) in 1997 before converting to a career carrier as a part-time flexible (PTF) in 1998.

He previously served his branch as a steward, vice president and executive

vice president before being elected branch president in 2015, a position he held until his appointment. Janulewicz served the

Massachusetts State Association

as an executive board member and then as state secretary for the past six years. Janulewicz also is an arbitration advocate. He graduated from the NALC Leadership Academy in 2006. **PR**



Janulewicz

Correction

In the August edition of *The Postal Record*, we misidentified **Cie Siyavash Sharp** in the story about carriers sharing the stories of how their lives have changed because of COVID-19. Here is how his story should have read:

For Cie Siyavash Sharp, the pandemic has made it harder for him to care for his mother. "Two weeks after the first case of COVID-19 was recorded in America, my mother became

ill" from an unrelated cause, the Long Island Merged, NY Branch 6000 member said, adding that "in one day, she forgot most of what happened in the past 20 years."

Long Island was home to one of the first and worst outbreaks of COVID-19 in the country, which made it difficult for the second-year carrier to get the help he

needed.

"I could not find her a decent neurologist in a timely fashion because [most] outpatient doctors' appointments were canceled because I live and work in a COVID hot spot," Siyavash Sharp said. "My mother cannot stay alone anymore and needs a home health care aide. The provider and agencies told me they don't have anyone to be my mother's aide because of COVID-19."

Siyavash Sharp was able to use leave through the Family and Medical Leave Act, but only for 10 days.

"I am riddled with anxiety because I cannot simultaneously retain my job and be with my mother since the system failed her," he said. "I have contemplated resigning, but of course for now that would be financial suicide."

"This is an ongoing problem that has no end in sight." **PR**