



June is 'Customer Connect Leads Month'

Throughout the month of June, each letter carrier is reminded to make a special effort to submit at least two Customer Connect leads.

Since mid-2003, letter carriers have successfully used Customer Connect to take advantage of their special relationship with businesses, encouraging business patrons to ship with the U.S. Postal Service instead of with a private delivery service.

"Please make an inquiry at businesses and ask if a USPS salesperson can make contact," said NALC Executive Vice President Timothy O'Malley, who oversees the Customer Connect program at the national level. "Then bring back those leads."

Even if a letter carrier has a purely residential route, O'Malley said, he or she can still be on the lookout for lead opportunities as they go about their daily activities.

"Look for the dry cleaners, shoe stores, pizza restaurants, lawn-care businesses," he said. "All of these are potential sites for leads for a Postal Service product—such as Every Door Direct Mail, better known as EDDM."

As of June 12, letter carriers had identified and submitted 33,565 leads this year alone—leads that have resulted in projected new revenue for the Postal Service of more than \$60 million. That amount brings the grand revenue total to just over \$1.9 billion.

"We are getting closer to our \$2 billion mark," O'Malley said, "and we expect to reach this milestone sometime this year."

"This is fantastic!" he said. "Thank you for your efforts, and keep up the excellent work."

Click the Customer Connect quick link at nalc.org to check out some of the program's recent success stories and to download a lead card.

Application period now open for 2016 Leadership Academy



The application period for participation in the Leadership Academy in 2016 is now open.

Every year since 2005, NALC's Leadership Academy has brought together letter carriers representing each of NALC's 15 regions for intensive training and development of the skills effective leaders need.

Under the tutelage of their mentors—established NALC leaders such as branch presidents or regional administrative assistants—the students combine three separate weeks of classroom learning at a facility near Baltimore with take-home assignments and special projects.

The mentor should be in a position to provide time and venues for the student to practice the skills he or she has been building at the Academy, to be available to observe their mentee's work and to provide appropriate feedback and critique.

Retired NALC Executive Vice President Jim Williams (standing), one of the Leadership Academy's coordinators, leads a class discussion.

Branch presidents or other branch officers are good choices for mentors. Previous Academy graduates often make the best mentors.

During the classes, students take part in lively discussions on such subjects as effective leadership skills and the union's legislative agenda. They learn about topics such as the Dispute Resolution Process, strategic planning, branch financial responsibilities, retirement issues, DOIS and route protection, workers' compensation, effective negotiation techniques, getting the NALC's message out and dealing with the media.

Each week of the Academy includes an ongoing emphasis on effective written and oral communication skills for use in forums such as membership meetings, awards ceremonies and dinners, as well as written reports and oral presentations about students' take-home projects.

Some Leadership Academy graduates may hold union office; others may simply lead their fellow carriers by inspiring them to support a common goal. All leave with new skills and a new sense of confidence, thanks to this rigorous but rewarding program.

Classes are held at the Conference Center at the Maritime Institute in Linthicum, MD, near BWI Marshall Airport outside Baltimore.

Students are required to complete outside learning projects upon returning home following Weeks 1 and 2, and upon graduation the students will spend a fourth week working in their national business agents' offices.

The application period ends on Aug. 31, and the schedule of classes in 2016 will be announced later.

To get a Leadership Academy application form, contact your national business agent's office, or visit nalc.org, select "Member Benefits" and click on "Education." Talk with your NBA if you have any questions about the Academy.

Future plant closures on hold

Citing "a barrage of pressure from across the spectrum of postal stakeholders," *Government Executive* joined other news sources in May in reporting that the Postal Service has postponed indefinitely the scheduled closures of mail-processing plants.

"Letter carriers have been a consistent part of that group of interested postal parties," NALC President Fredric Rolando said, "and we have done our best to spread this message in communities big and small. Not only would such closures hurt the Postal Service, but they're not financially justified and, in fact, would be counterproductive."

The Postal Service recently removed the dates for the scheduled closure of dozens of plants, marking them now as "to be determined."

Be safe in summer's heat

NALC joins the Postal Service in alerting letter carriers to the dangers of heat in the spring and summer.

"Learn about heat safety and pay close attention to the heat index where you work," NALC Director of Safety and Health Manuel Peralta Jr. said. "Take all necessary safety precautions when you are out delivering your routes. Don't let yourself be overcome by hot weather."

National business agents have received the May 2015 talk "Beat the Heat, Stay Cool" stand-up talk and have distributed it to their region's branches. If this mandatory stand-up talk has not been given in your station, please reach out to your NBA.

Here are key pieces of advice from the safety talk:

- Hydrate before, during and after work. Prevention is important, so make sure to maintain good hydration by drinking at least 8 ounces of water every 20 minutes.
- Dress appropriately for the weather. On warm days, make sure to wear light-colored, loose-fitting, breathable clothing to keep body temperatures down.
- Utilize shade to stay cool. When possible, use shaded areas to stay out of direct sunlight.
- Know the signs of heat stress. You should understand what heat stress is, and how it can affect your health and safety. Here are some things to look out for:

• Hot, dry skin or profuse sweating	• Muscle cramps
• Headache	• Weakness or fatigue
• Confusion or dizziness	• Rash
• Nausea	

Finally, it's important to notify your supervisor or call 911 if you're experiencing signs of heat-related illnesses.

For more on how to prepare for extreme heat and sun, visit the Safety and Health web page at nalc.org.

NALC to conduct special election for director of retired members

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has advised the NALC that it has rejected complaints filed by four unsuccessful candidates in the 2014 election of national officers. But at the DOL's request, NALC will conduct a special election for the office of director of retired members.

As previously reported, in December 2014, the National Election Committee received appeals submitted by four candidates for national office. The committee met at NALC National Headquarters in Washington, DC, during the week of Jan. 6 to review the election-result appeals. Its decision was to deny the appeals.

The four appellants subsequently filed election protests with the DOL, which has advised NALC that its findings do not provide a basis for action by the department to set aside the protested election.

However, the DOL also advised the NALC that it did not agree with the National Election Committee's decision to reject the nomination of Minneapolis Branch 9 member Ken Ring for the office of director of retired members.

In August of 2014, the committee determined that three nominations for national officer positions did not meet the requirements for certification under the terms of the *NALC Constitution*, and committee members voted unanimously to disqualify all three.

In the case of candidate Ring, the committee found that the nomination/acceptance form submitted on his behalf during the 2014 convention in Philadelphia did not contain his handwritten signature.

Ring's disqualification resulted in the uncontested election of Corvallis, OR Branch 1274 member Ron Watson as director of retired members.

The DOL found that the nomination/acceptance form submitted on behalf of candidate Ring had an electronic signature. It further concluded that neither the form nor the NALC's notice of nominations, as published in *The Postal Record*, provided sufficient notice that a handwritten signature was required.

During a teleconference conducted on June 2, the NALC Executive Council unanimously agreed to accept the DOL's request to conduct a special election for director of retired members between Watson and Ring.

Under the terms of a compliance agreement signed by NALC President Fredric Rolando on June 5, the election will be conducted before Oct. 15, 2015.

Further details regarding the special election will be published in a future *Postal Record* and will be posted on the NALC website.

Impressive results from this year's food drive

The 23rd annual Letter Carriers' "Stamp Out Hunger" Food Drive has come and gone, and this year's collection figures once again are impressive.

On Saturday, May 9, active and retired NALC members, alongside family members, friends and other volunteers, collected—in the form of non-perishable food as well as monetary donations—the equivalent of more than 70 million pounds donated by generous postal customers.

"Everyone involved in this year's food drive should be proud of this terrific result," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "Your generous donation of time and energy will help ensure that millions of our customers—children and adults—can put desperately needed food on their tables."



Letter carriers and volunteers in Arkansas prepare a bounty of food drive collections that are destined for the Northeast Arkansas Food Bank.

The official national tally, announced on June 15, showed that the more than 1,300 NALC branches participating this year had worked together to deliver to community food banks, pantries and shelters 64,572, 665 pounds of actual food, plus an additional \$1,668,799.13 in monetary donations. By a formula provided by national food drive partner Feeding America, \$1 can buy 3.6 pounds of food, so a bit of simple math turns \$1.6 million in cash into 6,007,677 pounds, for a grand total of 70,580,342 pounds of food collected this year.

Taking top honors for food collections among all NALC branches was Central Florida Branch 1091, which collected 1,725,772 pounds of food. West Coast Florida Branch 1477 came in second with 1,460,280 pounds, followed by Clearwater, FL Branch 2008 with 1,275,289 pounds. The top money collector was Oklahoma City, OK Branch 458, which recognized donations of \$851,452.48—a sum that converts to an additional 3,065,229 pounds of food.

Held as always on the second Saturday in May, this year's food drive was made possible by the participation of letter carriers and customers in more than 10,000 cities and towns in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam.

City letter carriers—full-time and part-time alike—were helped in many communities by their brothers and sisters in the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, a national sponsor of this year's drive. The other national sponsors offered equally invaluable support in a variety of ways: the U.S. Postal Service, United Way Worldwide, the AFL-CIO, Valpak and Valassis—not to mention Feeding America and its network of food bank affiliates.

"This year's achievement demonstrates the power of solidarity, the generosity of our customers and the determination of letter carriers to help those in need," he said. "It's solid proof of what has been said many times before: Our commitment to our communities doesn't end at the mailbox."

A list of the top branches in each of 11 categories, as well as a branch-by-branch breakdown of results, will be printed in the July *Postal Record*.

Congress not yet finished with Fast Track

The House of Representatives voted on June 12 to reject a trade adjustment assistance (TAA) bill, a surprising but positive move that applied some much needed brakes to the more contentious Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) legislation—the so-called "Fast Track" bill that called for granting a president, current or future, the authority to approve trade agreements quietly, without Congress having a chance to review or amend such agreements.

The Senate had approved a combined TAA-TPA package before the Memorial Day recess. But a few days before the House took up the package in June, the House passed a procedural move that required representatives to break the package apart and consider TAA as a separate bill first. Under House rules, only if TAA had passed would the House have been able to move on and consider the Fast Track piece.

As it happened, the House was voted down TAA on June 12 by a definitive vote of 302 to 126—even after President Obama personally visited Capitol Hill to lobby for its support.

Next, even though the disapproval of TAA should have spelled the end of further consideration of Fast Track, the House proceeded anyway to consider—and approve—its own stand-alone Fast Track bill. This was mainly a symbolic win, however; since the Senate had approved a joint TAA-TPA package, there appeared to be the slimmest of chances that it would be inclined to take up this separated, House-approved Fast Track bill without the TAA attachment.

A flood of calls from legislative activists around the country is credited with playing a key role in efforts to ensure that such threats get set aside.

But it appeared that, as this *NALC Bulletin* was being prepared, Fast Track was not completely dead. There were attempts in the House to find some path for reviving and pushing through a version of a Fast Track package that could find its way to the Senate for another round of consideration. Visit nalc.org for late-breaking updates.

What's so wrong with Fast Track? "It's a dangerous idea for many, many reasons," President Rolando said, "not least of which is the way it could open the door for a whole host of new threats against the U.S. Postal Service and letter carrier jobs."

The Trade in Services Agreement (TISA), for example, contains a call to deregulate the USPS, while the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP) wants the agency's monopoly on delivery of letter mail—with its roots in the Constitution—to be phased out. TISA also has language in it that, if approved, could jeopardize package delivery service as part of the agency's universal service obligation—and package delivery has been crucial to the Postal Service's financial recovery in recent years. And the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) would prevent USPS from being allowed to use its vast postal retail network to offer low-cost banking services for the tens of millions of Americans who are unbanked or under-banked.

"Trade agreements should be negotiated out in the open," President Rolando said, "where Congress can scrutinize and amend them if necessary."

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NALC Bulletin is published semi-regularly by the National Association of Letter Carriers. Postage paid at Washington, DC, and at additional mailing offices.
 POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Membership Department, NALC, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.
 CHANGE OF ADDRESS? Contact the Membership Department.

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 Circulation: 10,000. Union-printed using soy-based inks.
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