Rolando announces RAA appointments

NALC President Fredric Rolando has announced the appointment of several letter carriers to regional administrative assistant (RAA) positions.

Rolando has appointed Van Nuy, CA Branch 2462 President Calvin Brookins as an RAA for Region 5, which serves letter carriers in California, Hawaii, Nevada and Guam. Brookins’ appointment fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Santa Clara Branch 1427 member Brian Voigt. Brookins served as a shop steward from 1989 to 2001. For the past 13 years, he has served as Branch 2462 president; before that, he served as branch vice president and trustee. He also is an arbitration advocate.

Rolando also has appointed Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100’s Allan Rios as a Region 1 RAA. Rios, a Leadership Academy Class 16 graduate, began his advocacy for letter carriers as a shop steward in 2009. In 2010, he became an area steward; a year later, he took on the role of local business agent. Rios also is an arbitration advocate and has served on the Santa Ana District’s Dispute Resolution B Team.

Brookins and Rios are joining RAAs Bryant Almarino (a member of Branch 1427) and James Henry (a member of Branch 1200) as assistants to Region 1 National Business Agent (NBA) Christopher Jackson.

In Region 5, which serves the letter carriers of Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska and Kansas, Rolando has appointed St. Louis, MO Branch 345 Recording Secretary Charles Sexton as an RAA to fill the vacancy created when former RAA Michael Birckett was elected last year as Region 5 NBA. Sexton is a Leadership Academy Class 2 graduate who has served as a local business agent and as an arbitration advocate.

President Rolando also has appointed Central Iowa Merged Branch 352 President Stephanie Stewart as an RAA for Region 5. Stewart, a Leadership Academy Class 9 graduate, also is the vice president of the Iowa State Association of Letter Carriers. She is an arbitration advocate as well, and among her other duties she has served on the district’s safety committee.

Stewart’s appointment fills the vacancy created by the detail of RAA Mark Sims, a member of Springfield, MO Branch 203, to Washington, DC, to the position of NALC Headquarters contract administration assistant.

And in Region 9, which serves the letter carriers of Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina, President Rolando has appointed Central Florida Branch 1905 letter carrier Lynne Pendleton as an RAA to fill the vacancy created when former RAA Kenneth Gibbs was elected last year as Region 9 NBA. Pendleton has served as a local business agent for Region 9, branch trustee and as a Dispute Resolution Team representative, as well as vice president of the Florida State Association. She is a graduate of Leadership Academy Class 5.

All of these appointments are effective as of Feb. 2.

Monitoring of USPS responses to cyber breach continues

NALC is staying on top of the Postal Service’s handling of the cyber breach in September that compromised the agency’s computers that hold workers’ personal and employment information, including medical, injury compensation, banking, Social Security and other personal information.

On Nov. 10, NALC received the first notification from USPS about the hack. A few days later, the union filed an unfair labor practice charge with the National Labor Relations Board against USPS, alleging that the Postal Service had violated its duty to negotiate with the NALC over the impact of the security breach on letter carriers. That charge remains pending.

Current and former USPS workers whose information was compromised by the breach should have received in December a letter from the Postal Service containing important new information. Meanwhile, individual letter carriers may elect to enroll in the credit monitoring services offered by the Postal Service, with the knowledge that NALC may seek different or additional remedies. Search for “hacked” at nalc.org to learn more.

NALC joins postal banking coalition

NALC President Fredric Rolando has announced that the union has joined a new coalition to explore ways the U.S. Postal Service could provide affordable financial services to the tens of millions of Americans who lack access to such services.

The coalition, the Campaign for Postal Banking, is made up of consumer advocates, community groups, worker representatives, faith-based groups and civil rights organizations.

“The Postal Service already provides several affordable financial services,” Rolando said—such as money orders, Treasury check cashing and international electronic money transfers. “Not only do we as letter carriers touch every community in America, six days a week—and sometimes seven—but every community in America has at least one post office nearby, something that can’t be said about banks and other similar financial institutions.”

According to the latest Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) “National Survey of Unbanked and Underbanked,” 28 percent of U.S. households—or nearly 100 million people—are underserved by currently available banking options.

“This coalition will help us explore opportunities to close this gap and help move millions of Americans away from payday lenders and other predatory alternative financial services,” the president said. “Our nationwide post office network, combined with its highly skilled and dedicated workforce, could help solve this serious public policy problem.”

National election appeals denied

The National Election Committee met at NALC National Headquarters in Washington, DC, during the week of Jan. 6 to review the election-result appeals that the committee received in December from four unsuccessful candidates in the 2014 election of NALC national officers. The results of the national election were published in the December 2014 Postal Record.

Following a thorough review, the committee’s decision was to deny the appeals submitted by candidate for national president David Noble, candidate for national trustee Eryca Bloom, candidate for vice president Deidre Beal and candidate for assistant secretary-treasurer Sharella Spikes.

Letters from the committee notified the appellants of this decision.

Unfortunately, during the investigation of the appeals, NALC’s election contractor, Peake-Delancy, discovered that there were errors in the preliminary report of the election results in the final report that was mailed to branches. None of these errors affected the outcome of the election for any office. Moreover, the vote totals reported for each individual branch in the final report were not added correctly, which, in turn, resulted in errors in the national total. The corrected national vote totals for each candidate are actually higher than the totals reflected in the report.

A corrected report that also lists the discrepancies will be posted at nalc.org. Note that the discrepancies affected the vote count only in NALC Regions 2, 5, 9 and 15, and they affected only the national office races. The regional office races were not affected.

Pro-postal resolutions introduced

The 114th Congress was sworn in on Jan. 6, and in the House of Representatives, Reps. Sam Graves (R-MO) and Gerry Connolly (D-VA) wasted no time in renewing their commitment to preserving six-day mail delivery by quickly introducing H.Res. 12. H.Res. 12 is identical to previous sessions’ resolutions that called on Congress and the Postal Service to take all appropriate steps to continue six-day mail delivery. The version introduced early in the 113th Congress (2013-2014) wound up with 228 co-sponsors from both political parties.

“Attempts to eliminate Saturday delivery or any other postal services are, in reality, short-sighted excuses for failing to address an enormous pre-funding mandate that perpetuates a cut-cut-cut mentality,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “Six-day mail delivery service meets the demands of American households and businesses, and we applaud Congressmen Graves and Connolly for leading efforts to preserve it.”

A few days later, Reps. Susan Davis (D-CA), David Joyce (R-OH) and Peter King (NY) introduced a resolution that calls on Congress to “take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of delivery for all business and residential customers.”

The resolution, H.Res. 28, is identical to H.Res. 711, which was introduced last August during the 113th Congress and which ended up with 75 sponsors from both parties.

“This resolution affirms our message that cutting a vital service like door delivery is not the way to strengthen the Postal Service,” President Rolando said. “We are grateful to Representatives Davis, Joyce and King for introducing this resolution right out of the gate in this session of Congress.”

Visit nalc.org to download fact sheets and other information about these resolutions.

Saturday, May 9!

Registration for 2015 Food Drive in full swing

NALC President Fredric Rolando has sent a letter to branch presidents to encourage them to sign up as soon as possible to take part in the 23rd annual Letter Carriers’ “Stamp Out Hunger” national food drive, set for Saturday, May 9.

“Our extraordinary history of filling local food shelves is possible because of the dedication and hard work of leaders such as you,” Rolando wrote. “While our history provides us with confidence, what matters most is our renewed commitment to the Food Drive.”

Included with Rolando’s letter was the official branch Food Drive registration form. Branch Food Drive leaders can visit nalc.org/email to find the form and submit it, and the drive is designed by “Family Circus” artist Jeff Keane.

The Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is the nation’s largest single-day food collection effort—last year, it gathered 275 million pounds of food, marking the 11th consecutive year the drive has surpassed 70 million pounds and bringing the total to more than 1.3 billion pounds since the national drive began in 1992.

The registration form must be returned by mail (no faxes or e-mails) to NALC Headquarters by Feb. 15.

NALC FACT SHEET

Stamp Out Hunger

About the national drive

The Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is the nation’s largest single-day food collection effort—last year, it gathered 275 million pounds of food, marking the 11th consecutive year the drive has surpassed 70 million pounds and bringing the total to more than 1.3 billion pounds since the national drive began in 1992.

The registration form must be returned by mail (no faxes or e-mails) to NALC Headquarters by Feb. 15.

NALC FACT SHEET

Door delivery

About the national drive

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The registration form must be returned by mail (no faxes or e-mails) to NALC Headquarters by Feb. 15.
Strong 1st quarter for USPS

On Feb. 6, the U.S. Postal Service reported that it made a $1.1 billion operating profit in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2015, up from $765 million in the same period last year and $343 million two years ago. In addition, USPS cash balance grew by $1.9 billion as of Dec. 31, 2014, an increase of more than $5 billion from the same point in the previous year.

“The Postal Service financial turnaround is continuing into its third year of operating profitability, never more evident than in this quarter,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “This is great news for Americas throughout the country and for the millions of businesses that rely on a strong Postal Service.”

Overall revenue increased by $79 million over the same period last year, an increase of 4.3 percent. Volume increased as well, to 14.6 billion pieces in the first quarter of 2015, up from 14.2 billion pieces in the first quarter of 2014.

As letter carriers can attest, the package business was off the charts. The “Parcel Select, Parcel Return, and Standard Parcel” package segment volume increased by 2.4 percent over last year. Priority Mail volume increased by 8.5 percent over last year. Overall package revenue was up by 10.5 percent, boosting the Postal Service’s bottom line.

“The continuing rise in letter and package revenue—and now even in overall mail volume—yets another reason why the Postal Service should strengthen—not degrade—its non-profit networks,” Rolando said. “We hope to work with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to ensure the Postal Service has the tools it needs to build on the progress achieved in the last Congress, within the mailing industry and among major stakeholders on consensus postal reform that promotes a strong and vibrant Postal Service.”

2015 NALC ‘Rap Session’ announced

NALC is finishing up the arrangements for holding the 2015 national rap session (also known as the national conference) in Houston, TX, from July 17 to 19.

A reception will be held on Friday, July 17, with workshops on Saturday and the rap session held on Sunday. Article 5 Section 4(b) of the NALC Constitution states: “The National President shall, once each year except in the year of the National Convention, call a national conference. This conference shall be voluntarily attended by only State and Branch Presidents or their designees, with their expenses to be borne by the State Association or Branch represented.”

Information on registration and hotel accommodations will be available at a later date. Please check nalc.org for updates.

Local work key to Food Drive’s success

While national-level preparations are full-steam ahead for the 23rd annual Letter Carriers’ “Stamp Out Hunger” Food Drive on Saturday, May 9, some of the hard work that will make the drive possible is happening every day around the country.

What makes this drive truly successful, year after year, is the amount of effort our food drive volunteers put in to help bring in as much food as possible,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “Rather than taking a well- deserved nap after finishing the deliveries, some letter carriers spend their precious free time working out ways to make their local food drive a success.”

Last year, letter carriers and dedicated volunteers helped collect almost 727 million pounds of non-perishable food, bringing the total to more than 1.3 billion pounds of food collected since the national drive began in 1992.

“Our food drive is a clear demonstration of the power of solidarity,” Rolando said. “It starts with the individual letter carrier, who not only delivers the mail as usual on Food Drive Day, but also voluntarily collects the often heavy bags of non-perishable food that get left alongside our patrons’ mailboxes.”

All of that picked-up food then gets sorted by volunteers at the carrier’s local office before it’s hauled off to nearby food banks and food pantries.

In the past, the food drive has been supported by the union and mailing industry stakeholders with a mission to advance in Congress a multi-point postal strategy that includes comprehensive change of the Postal Service into a non-loss-making operation and freedom to offer new products, but on an equal footing, without subsidies and with government-backed loans. The drive’s success is still not guaranteed, however, no such sponsor has come forward.

In the year of the National Convention, call a national conference. This conference shall be voluntarily attended by only State and Branch Presidents or their designees, with their expenses to be borne by the State Association or Branch represented.”

Each year, the MBA’s board of trustees reviews the financial aspects of that plan to set its interest rate. The rate is based on actuarial studies of mortality changes, current market conditions and the MBA’s operations. Due to changes in the annuity mortality table calculation of annuities minimum reserve, the CCA RSP for 2015 now offers an interest rate of 4 percent. The guaranteed interest rate will never be lower than 2 percent.

While much of the attention was on the New York City strikers, carriers throughout the country were engaged in join solidarity actions.

“Once the strike started, some local union officers would have to ‘disappear’ to avoid being served with court injunctions,” he said. “Real rank-and-file leadership was being exercised by those who often had little or no experience in daily union affairs, and whose only communication was telephone, word of mouth, or news reports.”

While much of the attention was on the New York City strikers, carriers throughout the country were engaged in the movement. “Participants frequently told how they felt they owed so to New York strikers to not leave them stranded,” Rubio said. After the book is completed, Rubio intends to house the oral histories at the Duke University archives in Durham, N.C., where the interviews he conducted for his previous book are housed.

Those who wish to get in touch with Rubio about his work or to share a story with him can e-mail The Postal Record at postalrecord@nalc.org or call 202-612-4246.

Cost of living adjustment announcement

Based on the Feb. 26 release of the January 2015 Consumer Price Index (CPI), there will be no cost of living adjustment (COLA) for letter carriers under the 2011-2016 National Agreement, because there was no increase in the CPI between January 2014 and January 2015.

Visit nalc.org to download the latest chart.

Update concerning dues error

Due to a system error, the Postal Service did not receive approximately 30,000 NALC members’ bi-weekly dues for 2015 in their Pay Period 1 paychecks as reported in the November/December Treasurer’s article in The Postal Record. Therefore, dues amounts for 2015 will be corrected in Pay Period 1.

As reported recently on the NALC website, a temporary adjustment to recoup the dues amounts not paid from Pay Period 1 through Pay Period 2 will be made in the near future.

The NALC membership will have their dues paid for Pay Period 2 and the dues amounts not paid reflected in Pay Period 3 (covering Feb. 23-Mar. 6, 2015) and Pay Period 4 (covering March 7-20, 2015) paychecks. Branches will also receive an adjustment to Pay Period 3.

Affected members’ dues will then be decreased in Pay Period 8 (covering March 21-Apr. 4, 2015) to the adjusted amount to the correct amount.

Any questions should be directed to the NALC Membership Department.

On the March 2014 NALC Bulletin cover, 906-312-3763 and 906-312-3763 were on the cover. The correct phone number is 906-312-3765. Any questions should be directed to the NALC Membership Department.
Memorandums renewed, modified

The NALC and USPS have agreed to renew three Memorandums of Understanding: Re: Full-time Regular Opportunities – City Letter Carrier (M-01856), Re: Sunday Delivery – City Carrier Assistant Staffing (M-01857), and Re: City Letter Carrier Craft (M-01858).

The memorandums remain largely intact with one significant change in M-01856, where the parties agreed to continue the 360-day requirement for city carrier assistants (CCAs) who served a cumulative 360 days as a city carrier assistant directly before being

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Postal Service’s quarterly report shows continued revenue growth

On May 8, the U.S. Postal Service released another positive financial report, showing that it had made a $113 million operating profit for the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2015 (covering January–March 2015). The figures also showed that, for the first half of FY 2015 (covering October 2014–March 2015), USPS had made more than $1.4 billion in operating profit—surpassing the profit it had made during the entire previous fiscal year. “These results show the impressive Postal Service financial turnaround continuing in full force,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said in a statement following the report’s release. The operating profit for the three months ending March 31 increased by $52 million—or 20 percent—over the results for the same period of Fiscal Year 2014. The $1.437 billion USPS made in operating profit for the first half of this fiscal year represented an increase of 44 percent over the results for the same period in the last fiscal year.

“Equally encouraging is what produced the operating profit,” Rolando said: “Continuing revenue growth as an improving economy and rising online shopping drive better performances in letter mail and package deliveries.” Package revenue was up a striking 12.3 percent so far this fiscal year, and revenue from first-class letter mail and standard mail was higher than the same period last fiscal year. Operating profit excludes items that are unrelated to postal operations. The first is the 2006 mandate that the Postal Service pre-fund the health benefits of future postal retirees by setting aside about $5.5 billion a year over a 10-year period. As the government agency or private enterprise is required by law to pre-fund these benefits. The second involves non-cash accounting adjustments to workers’ compensation. Such adjustments are not payments, but merely ledger adjustments, and they are driven primarily by the ups and downs in market interest rates and resulting actuarial remeasurements. “Excluding these items gets us to a picture of what is really going on with the business of selling postage and delivering mail,” Rolando said, “and this picture continues to improve.” The Postal Service’s fiscal years run from Oct. 1 through Sept. 30, and Rolando noted that the agency now is well into its third consecutive year of operating profits. “This trend makes it clear that we need to work to strengthen the now-profitable networks, not degrade them,” he said. “We hope to work with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle, the White House and Postmaster General Megan Brennan to build on the progress toward consensus postal reform that was achieved in the last Congress, within the mailing industry and among major stakeholders—reform that promotes a strong and vibrant Postal Service.”

Forward motion on ‘Fast Track’

As this NALC Bulletin was being prepared, the Senate was getting close to a deal to move forward on granting the White House so-called “Fast Track” authority for the next several years. Fast Track would enable the United States Trade Representative (USTR) under this and future presidential administrations to negotiate trade and investment deals quietly and would force Congress to give these deals up or down votes—with no opportunity to strike or amend problematic provisions in such trade agreements.

On May 12, Senate Democrats, led by Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), had successfully filibustered debate on the measure. A new deal that was struck the next day, however, had the potential for allowing the full Senate to debate the legislation. NALC President Fredric Rolando sent a letter to Congress, calling on lawmakers to ensure “that there is transparency and equity in the trade process.”

“Congress must maintain its ability to approve trade partners in advance,” Rolando wrote, “to determine whether America’s objectives are being met inclusively and to have the ability to strike or amend from trade deals those provisions that fail to incorporate your input.”

At issue, Rolando said, is giving President Barack Obama—as well as future presidents—streamlined author- ity to negotiate trade deals such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a 12-country free-trade deal that would dwarf the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

“Many letter carriers will well recall how NAFTA devastated the American labor force by sending millions of jobs overseas,” Rolando said.

Fast Track faces significant opposition in the House of Representatives as well, where it needed to obtain 218 votes for passage. However, dozens of Republicans reportedly have raised concerns about the Obama admin- istration’s trade agenda, so the leadership potentially would need to secure the votes of dozens of Democrats to offset any Republican defections by the time the measure reaches the House floor. (Republican lawmakers tend to be more supportive of free trade agreements than do Democrats.)

If approved, the TPP could impose a ban on postal banking in the United States. Even worse, other trade agreements that are up for possible Fast Track approval could pose a direct threat to our jobs and our system of available universal service.

The World Trade Organization, for example, is sponsoring the negotiation of a trade-in-services agreement (TISA) among dozens of countries, while the U.S. government is in talks with the European Union on a Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which would cover our economic interaction with the EU’s 27 countries.

In their continuing efforts to push trade, the Europeans are calling for the United States to phase out the Postal Service’s monopoly on the delivery of letter mail—a policy that the EU already has adopted. Assuming that both Fast Track measures pass their respective chambers, the next step for the House and Senate bills would be a conference to iron out differences between the bills. To stay on top of these and other developments, make sure you’ve signed up for the NALC e-Activist Network. Visit nalc.org to learn more.

Online ‘rap session app’ now available

The 2015 national conference (“rap session”) for state and branch presidents (or their designees), which is authorized in non-convention years by the NALC Constitution under Article 3, Section 3(h), will take place July 17-19 in Houston. To assist the national union’s planning for this event, branch presidents must log into a special application that the NALC has developed, to identify who is representing their branches at the rap session.

Branch presidents can go to nalc.org/houston and follow the link to create usernames and passwords for logging into the application. Once you are logged in, simply supply the requested information.

Note that this online form does not reserve a room at the Hilton Americas-Houston. Rap session participants must make their own reservations through the hotel.

Visit nalc.org/houston for information.

Budget plans move ahead—without hits to USPS workers

Following a House and Senate conference to work out the differences between each chamber’s Fiscal Year 2016 budget plans, the House passed on April 15 a measure that promoted the USPS a chance to find savings through budget reconciliation, but conferees ultimately agreed to the Senate’s plan, which opted to focus reconciliation on the committees with jurisdiction over the Affordable Care Act.

“This is a minor victory for letter carriers and all federal employees,” Rolando said. That’s because House and Senate conferees ultimately rejected proposals in the House plan that took aim at federal employees by seeking an additional $538 billion from the federal postal community.

The president said that while this is a bit of good news from the ongoing budget battle, the agreed-upon levels of cuts continue to be insufficient because sequestration remains in place. That means Congress will be looking at federal and postal employees in its quest to find an estimated $9 billion in savings in 2016 and nearly $134 billion over the next 10 years.

On May 5, the Senate approved the measure by a vote of 51 to 48. It’s important to remember that this bud- get measure is non-binding; it simply sets a blueprint for Congress as lawmakers continue their appropriations process over the coming weeks and months.

Another food drive is in the books

Once again this year—on Saturday, May 9—thousands of active NALC members, joined by countless throngs of retired letter carriers and volunteers, not only went about their daily rounds to deliver mail and parcels, but also picked up bags and boxes of non-perishable food ultimately destined for local food banks in more than 10,000 cities and towns in all 50 states, as well as Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam and the District of Columbia.

NALC President Fredric Rolando expressed his gratitude on behalf of the NALC to the letter carriers from the more than 1,700 branches that took part this year, and also to the U.S. Postal Service and the National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association, both of which served as national food drive sponsors. He also thanked the other national sponsors—the AFL-CIO, Feeding America, Valpak, United Way Worldwide and Valassis—for their ongoing support of the food drive.

“It is truly amazing to see the level of cooperation,” Rolando said, “not just between labor and management, but among all of the postal employee crafts, coming together to provide a way for millions of our customers to do some- thing to help curb the continuing problem of hunger in America.”

The weather on Food Drive Day often plays a significant role in determining the success at the local level. Many let- ter carriers this year had warm sunshine and blue skies, while some encountered various levels of rainfall. Carriers and residents throughout Texas and Oklahoma, meanwhile, had to deal with tornado-producing storms that weekend, while an early-May surprise snowfall brought with it some logistical problems for letter carriers from Colorado to the Dakotas.

“It’s a sad reality that hunger continues to affect so many people in America,” President Rolando said. “About 49 million people around the country, including millions of children and senior citizens, aren’t sure where their next meal is coming from. And one in four households with a member currently serving in the U.S. military turns to the Feeding America network for food assistance.”

Rolando said the food drive’s effectiveness ultimately comes down to the solidarity of letter carriers.

“We’ve seen time and again, our successes are connected to the level of activism and engagement not just of our local branch leaders and our rank-and-file members who work together to achieve a goal,” Rolando said. “And year after year, our efforts to help ‘stamp out hunger’—one bag at a time, one delivery point at a time—to add up to prove that in a big and noticeable way.”

Both official results of this year’s campaign are due at NALC Headquarters by May 23. The grand total is sched- uled to be announced by June 12, with a complete report on the drive, including branch-by-branch weight totals and photos, to appear in the July issue of The Postal Record. The final reports mailed by branches to NALC Headquarters will be used to determine the top branches in 25 membership categories.

House bill aims to modernize fleet

On April 22, Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA) introduced H.R. 165, the Federal Leadership in Energy & Efficient Transportation (FLEET) Act. The bill seeks to modernize the Postal Service’s fleet of aging Long Life Vehicles (LLVs). If passed, H.R. 165 would provide USPS an opportunity to save money while reducing its vehicles’ effects on the environment, and it would offer letter carriers a more efficient vehicle that would better accommodate the agency’s booming package delivery service.

The FLEET Act was introduced by Huffman with a companion bill for energy-efficient schools, in honor of Earth Day. Each Earth Day, people across the country and around the world pledge themselves to become the better stewards of our planet,” Huffman said. “By working constructively with these American institutions— public schools and the U.S. Postal Service—we can reduce energy use, modernize our infrastructure and fight climate change—together.”

Fueling currently accounts for 10 cents of every dollar spent by the Postal Service, and the agency operates the largest commercial fleet in the world. Most LLVs in service are between 18 and 24 years old, and the current fleet has an average fuel economy of just 10 miles per gallon. Modernized and fuel-efficient vehicles could help reduce their impact on the environment.

Lowering fuel costs also would free more funds for USPS to spend on increasing customer satisfaction and on investment in new technologies.
June is ‘Customer Connect Leads Month’

Throughout the month of June, each Carrier has the opportunity to participate in a special effort to submit at least two Customer Connect leads.

Since mid-2015, letter carriers have successfully used Customer Connect to take advantage of their special relationship with businesses, encouraging business partners to ship with the U.S. Postal Service instead of a private delivery service.

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

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 total revenue to more than $360 million.

“We are getting closer to our $5 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 recent success stories and to download a lead card.

Impressive results from this year’s food drive

The 21st annual Letter Carriers’ “Stamp Out Hunger” Food Drive has come and gone, and this year’s collection once again is impressive.

On Saturday, May 9, active and retired NALC members, along with friends and others, collected—on the line of non-profit food banks as well as monetary donations—the equivalent of more than 70 million pounds of food, plus an additional $50,686,393 in monetary donations. By law, this program is provided by national food drive partner Feeding America, and is a tax deduction for donors.

More than 20,000 letter carriers and 45,000 other volunteers took part in the 23rd annual Letter Carriers’ “Stamp Out Hunger” Food Drive.

During the classes, students take part in lively discussions on such subjects as effective leadership skills including decision making; conflict resolution; training; team building; planning, branch financial responsibilities, retirement issues, DOIS and route protection, workers’ compensation and many others.

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.

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

Employees at the national, NALC’s headquarters, have together brought letter carriers representative of 65 regions for intensive training and development of the skills effective leaders need.

Unlike the training of their mentors—established NALC leaders such as branch presidents or regional directors—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 for the students to go to his office and discuss the skills he or she has been building at the Academy, to be available to observe their mentor’s work, and to provide appropriate feedback and critique.

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 OPM 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 offices; 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.

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

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 positioned 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 been out there and we’ve made a lot of headway in our discussions with them.”

The Postal Service recently removed the dates for the scheduled closures of 126 plants, marking them now as “to be determined.”

Be safe in summer’s heat

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

“Learn about heat safety hazards. Yes, you can get heat-related illness without the sun, too,” NALC Director of Safety and Health Manuel Peralta said. “Take all necessary safety precautions when you are delivering your routes.

Don’t let yourself be overcome by heat, thirst or hazy weather. NALC urges all letter carriers, service agents and Postal Service employees to go easy on yourself.

National business agents have received the May 2015 talk “Beat the Heat, Stay Cool” stand-up talk and printed in the July 2015 issue of The Postal Record.

“Learn about heat safety and pay close attention to the heat index where you work,” NALC Director of Safety and Health Manuel Peralta said.

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

Here are key pieces of advice from the safety talk:

• Drink plenty of water, FL Branch 2008 with 1,275,289 pounds. The top money collector was Oklahoma City, OK Branch 458, which recognized donations of $89,452.48—8% that converts to an additional 3,106,229 pounds of food.

The House of Representatives voted on June 12 to reject a trade adjustment assistance (TAA) bill, a surprising move that moves approval of the popular and broad-based trade adjustment act to the more conservative Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TiSA) negotiation. The bill—so-called “Fast Track” bill that called for granting a president, current or future, the authority to approve trade agreements quickly, without Congress having a chance to review or amend such agreements.

The Senate had approved a similar TAA-TPP 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 vote to amend the pact and consider it as a separate bill. Under House rules, only if TAA had passed would the House have been able to move on and consider the Fast Track piece.

As of Wednesday, the House was not expected to take it up this week, so the approved Fast Track bill would not go to the White House for the president’s signature. But it didn’t pass.

A flood of calls from legislative activists around the country is credited with playing a key role in ensuring the movement to unfurl the TAA bill and bring it to the floor.

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 would “find a way to the Senate for another round of consideration,” nalc.org reported for late-breaking updates.

“Somebody is happy about the president paying into the worker savings plans to offer low-cost banking services for the tens of millions of Americans who are underbanked or unbanked.

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

Food Drive has come and gone, and this year’s collection once again is impressive.

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Notice: NALC special election

Pursuant to an election complaint received by the United States Department of Labor’s Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS), the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) entered into a voluntary agreement with OLMS to conduct a new officer election for the position of NALC Director of Retired Members, under OLMS’ supervision. There will not be new nominations for this position. This new election will take place in September and October 2015. The election will be conducted by mail ballot. All NALC members are encouraged to update their addresses with the union by contacting the NALC Membership Department at 202-662-2411 or by visiting http://forms.nalc.org/update. Ballots will be mailed to eligible members in the middle of September 2015 and will be due back in the beginning of October 2015. Further details and dates for this election will be provided in an official election notice to be included in The Postal Record and in the mail ballot packages.

Campaigning: Union or employer equipment (including copiers, computers, printers, telephones, e-mail, etc.), office supplies, websites, newsletters, social media, membership lists,opolitical contributions cannot be used to promote or attack any candidate in the election. This prohibition extends to the use of union funds or resources to publicize a branch’s endorsement of a candidate. Campaigning cannot be conducted on union or Postal Service time (including during union meetings or training events) and Postal Service rules regarding campaigning must be followed.

These rules apply to any union (including the national, state association, branch and any other union) and to any employer (whether or not they employ union members). However, these rules do not prohibit branches from publishing campaign advertisements in their newsletters that have been paid for by a candidate. Branches also may sponsor a debate between the candidates, or invite the candidates to speak at meetings, so long as both candidates are afforded an equal opportunity to appear. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the new election and/or campaign activities, please contact the OLMS Election Supervisor Brian Lucy at OLMS-Election@dol.gov.

NALC’s 2015 National Conference:
Future in focus during Houston ‘rap session’

The future was very much on the minds of the nearly 1,500 letter carrier activists who were present for NALC’s 2015 National Conference in Houston July 17-19. “None of what we do as a union works without you, the brothers and sisters of this union who step up as leaders,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said as he opened up the rap session portion of the weekend-long conference on Sunday.

Such conferences are called for by the NALC Constitution, which states that in years in which there is no national convention, the president shall call a national conference for state association and branch presidents or their designees. Attendees began arriving and checking in on Friday afternoon. On Saturday, these branch and state leaders attended a selection of educational workshops in the morning and afternoon. On Sunday at 9 a.m., President Rolando called the rap session to order in the Hilton-Americas Houston’s Grand Ballroom. Getting down to business, Rolando told the audience that the legislative arena is the most important thing that we as letter carriers must deal with presently.

“In Congress, we have a 535-member board of directors,” he said. “They don’t all have the same agenda that we do, and that’s why we have to be so vigilant.”

“The good news for us is that we are profitable and we have been for a while now,” he said. By the end of May, USPS’ year-to-date operating profit was $1.5 billion, about $700 million ahead of the Postal Service’s projected operating profit for the period, and higher than the $1.4 billion operating profit for all of last year.

The conventional wisdom—that the Internet is the enemy of the Postal Service—is a myth, he said. “What the Internet took away, the Internet turned around and gives,” he said with a laugh. “Customers nowadays want the ability to use their smartphones to buy things and to have them delivered tomorrow.”

“Any thing that all of these big box online companies—Amazon, Walmart, Google—have in common, whether they know it or not, is that they need a delivery network,” he said. “They need us.”

“We’ve done a great job of playing political defense over the last five years,” Rolando said, “but fighting off the bad stuff isn’t enough.”

NALC has taken the lead, and continues to do so, in what postal employe

Two national-level arb decisions announced

On July 2, National Arbitrator Shyam Das issued an award (C-39759) upholding the U.S. Postal Service’s position that former city carrier assistants must complete a 90-day qualifying period following their conversion to career status before they may be credited with, or take, annual leave.

The award interprets section 312.333(a) of the ELM, which provides that “new employees are not credited with and may not take annual leave until they complete 90 days of continuous employment under one or more appointments without a break in service.”

The arbitrator rejected NALC’s argument that this requirement should not be applied to newly converted CCAs because they are not “new employees” and concluded that the ELM language that restricts the use of annual leave for 90 days applies to new “career employees,” which includes CCAs.

National Arbitrator Dennis Nolan issued an award (C-39758) on June 29 that denied NALC’s position that Section 126.3 of the M-39 Handbook is enforceable under Article 19 of the National Agreement.

NALC had contended that Section 126.3 requires management to schedule in advance replacements for carriers it knows will be absent on a given day. However, the arbitrator disagreed, finding that this section is only “an instruction to supervisors to complete a particular form, described as a ‘Unit Daily Record,’ several days in advance.”

The arbitrator concluded that these instructions on the proper use of a form do not “assign or guarantee employees any hours.” Accordingly, the form does not “directly relate to wages, hours, and working conditions” as required by Article 19.

Although the award addresses only M-39 Section 126.3, Arbitrator Nolan’s opinion discusses criteria for determining when handbook and manual provisions are enforceable under Article 19. Nolan’s analysis should prove helpful to NALC stewards, branch officers, and arbitration advocates when preparing and presenting Article 19 grievances.

Both of these decisions are available for review on the Contract Administration page at nalc.org.

Nearly 3,500 letter carrier activists were on hand for NALC’s 2015 National Conference in Houston July 17-19. Here, the assortment of state association and branch presidents listens attentively during Sunday’s ‘rap session,’ where NALC activists are doing even on the offense. “We see we can’t do it alone,” he said, “which is why we started forming and joining all of these different coalitions, starting with the other postal unions to make sure all four unions are on the same page.”

While working closely with the other postal unions, NALC also has worked with mailers and enlisted the support of a number of groups and organizations interested in the future success of the Postal Service. Now that we’ve built these coalitions, Rolando said, “The trick is fixing pre-funding without dismantling the network.”

“Our pre-funding account is basically a low-interest loan to the federal government,” he said, “so getting rid of the mandate to prefund will be difficult.” So NALC has had to look for more creative ways to address pre-funding’s costs.

“Our goal is to develop a narrow bill that fixes the basic problems and grows the networks,” Rolando said.

Fortunately, our issues aren’t partisan issues. “Serving all Americans, serving rural communities, employing veterans—these are things all political parties can agree on,” he said.

Another thing we have going for us is our diversity. “Politically, we mirror America,” Rolando said. “You find any point on the political spectrum and we have members on it.”

In addition to such topics as the new name for NALC’s political action committee (now known as the Letter Carrier Political Fund) and USPS’ ongoing problems with a shrinking postal Board of Governors, Rolando spoke about a number of other important issues:

- Bargaining: “We enter collective-bargaining talks in February, with our contract expiring in May,” Rolando said. “But as always, we began preparing for this next round of negotiations from the moment the last contract began,” with the Das arbitration award in January 2013. “It’s a long, difficult process.”

- CCAs: “We’ve converted about 18,000 CCAs to career since the Das award,” the president said. “And remember: CCAs will replace every one of us in this room.” He added that there are about 5,000 more potential conversions in the coming weeks and months to increase full-time staffing where needed.

City Delivery Route Alternative Adjustment Process (CDOAAP): “Halfway through this process, we’ve seen about a thousand routes added, mostly due to the rise in parcel volume,” Rolando said.

Dispute Resolution Process (DRP): “We must focus on achieving the best results for our members, especially in areas of the process under our control,” the president said. “At the same time we will work with and engage management to jointly improve the process over time.”

Workers’ compensation: NALC’s seven regional workers compensation assistants (RWCA) show the union’s commitment to helping members navigate the workers’ compensation maze, Rolando said. “It’s a complicated process with a lot of potential bureaucratic pitfalls for the injured workers. NALC is the one source of help injured workers can count on. Bottom line: If you get hurt, call your NALC office to get some guidance.”

Rolando then took questions from audience members for the last hour of the meeting. Members asked about working on shoe floor issues, concerns over local management’s handling of actions related to this year’s national “Stamp Out Hunger” Food Drive, vehicle problems (and how best to deal with them), overtime-desired list issues, worries over letter carrier safety and health in extreme temperatures, and more.

The president adjourned the national conference shortly before noon. The next national gathering of letter carriers will be at NALC’s 79th Biennial National Convention, Aug. 15-19, 2016, at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

Number 15-06 July 27, 2015
Election notice for national director of retired members

Pursuant to an election complaint received by the United States Department of Labor’s Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS), the National Association of Letter Carriers has entered into a voluntary agreement with OLMS to conduct a new officer election for the position of NALC Director of Retired Members under OLMS’ supervision. There will be no new nominations for this position. The term of office for this election is the remainder of the unexpired term, which will end in December 2018.

The election will be conducted by mail ballot. NALC members in good standing as of June 1, 2015, are eligible to vote. All NALC members are encouraged to update their addresses with the union by contacting the NALC Membership Department at 202-662-2836 or by visiting http://forms.nalc.org/update.

Ballots will be mailed to eligible members on Sept. 14 and Sept. 15, 2015. Ballots are due back in the post office box by 12 p.m. on Oct. 5, 2015. The tally will commence immediately afterward at Peake-DeLancy Printing, 2505 Schuster Drive, Cheverly, MD 20781. The results will be published on the NALC website, with the vote totals broken down by branch.

If you have not received your ballot by Sept. 15, or if you spoil your ballot or need another ballot for any reason, contact your local branch office and request that it contacts the NALC Membership Department to provide a duplicate ballot to you. When requesting a duplicate ballot, please provide your branch office with your name and current mailing address. The NALC Membership Department will process your duplicate ballot request. If you cast your original ballot and a duplicate ballot, only the duplicate ballot will be counted.

All phases of the election are being supervised by OLMS. If you have any questions, please call U.S. Department of Labor, OLMS, Election Supervisor Brian Lu at 202-513-3718 or e-mail OLMS-NALC-Election@ dol.gov. Any NALC member wishing to file a protest regarding the conduct of this election must do so in writing to the NALC Secretary-Treasurer in Houston by the registration deadline for the Orlando seminar set for Orlando, Cleveland April 22-24.

The registration deadline is Aug. 26. A preview of the new Branch Officers’ Training was given by NALC Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine and Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Judy Willoughby in July at the national rap session in Houston. The training will cover the basics for branch secretaries-treasurers and other local and state officers who are chiefly responsible for financial administration. The training is under way for two educational seminars that will take place in Orlando and Cleveland April 22-24.

The Orlando seminar room rate is $99 single/double, plus tax. The registration deadline for the Orlando seminar is March 27. The registration deadline for the Cleveland seminar is Jan. 23.

Branch Officers’ Training set

Branch Officers’ Training is an expansion of the secretary-treasurer educational seminars that NALC conducted for many years, tailored to assist branch secretaries-treasurers and other branch (and state) officers who are chiefly responsible for financial administration. What’s been added are specialized sessions for branch presidents/vice presidents, recording secretaries, financial secretaries and trustees.

Because of the expansion, the training will now run for three and a half days, instead of the previous two and a half days. It will be held Sept. 21-24 in Atlanta. The registration deadline is Aug. 26. A preview of the new Branch Officers’ Training was given by NALC Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine and Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Judy Willoughby in July at the national rap session in Houston.

The new training includes sessions on:

- The NALC Constitution and branch bylaws
- Ethics
- Department of Labor and LMRA reporting
- Preparing LM forms and 990s
- Managing branch finances and creating transparency
- Fiduciary issues and practices
- Payroll and wage issues
- Travel, reimbursements and per diem
- Handling MDA and PFC funds
- Why minutes matter
- Internal controls
- Fraud prevention and detection
- Running a branch meeting
- Auditing branch records
- Membership issues
- Membership issues
- Planning and budgeting
- Management

There will also be a session for branch presidents and vice presidents that cover the responsibility and legal exposure that go along with signing certain documents, a session designed to identify policies that every branch should have in place, and a session focused on helping officers learn more about branch operations.

Clip the coupon below and mail it to NALC Headquarters as soon as you can. You also can fax it to Headquarters, or you can register online via the Secretary-Treasurer’s web page at nalc.org.

Branch Officers’ Training registration form

Please register me for the Sept. 21-24 NALC Branch Officers’ Training in Atlanta

Registration deadline is Aug. 26. Room rate (single/double) is $169 plus tax.**

Name ________________________________

Branch or state position _______________________

Branch # ____________________

Branch city _____________________________ State __________

Home address: Street _____________________________ City ________________ State _______ ZIP ________

Phone number (required) _____________________________

Home address: Street _____________________________ City ________________ State _______ ZIP ________

Phone number (required) _____________________________

e-mail (required) _____________________________

** Please do not make airline reservations until you receive notification of acceptance.

‘Impressive’ USPS financial turnaround continues

On Aug. 10, the U.S. Postal Service released its financial report for the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2015, a period covering April, May and June. The figures in the report revealed an operating profit for USPS of $1.2 billion so far this fiscal year, compared with $1 billion at the same point last year.

“These results show the impressive Postal Service financial turnaround continuing in full force,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said in a statement. “The relatively small operating loss of $395 million for the third quarter isn’t unexpected—the third quarter is typically the slowest—but it doesn’t change the fact that 2015 is turning into one of the USPS’ most impressive annual performances since the Great Recession.

Moreover, this reflects the positive trend in operating profits that began in 2013 and that includes last year’s $1.4 billion operating profit,” Rolando said, adding that when the report was released, USPS officials said that they expect “positive controllable income for the fiscal year.”

The report showed that as the economy improves, letter-mail revenue has stabilized. Meanwhile, rising online shopping has produced skyrocketing package income—a striking 10.6 percent rise over the same three-month period in 2014.

“Because these operating profits stem from structural factors, they augur well for the future,” Rolando said. “This three-year trend in operating profitability makes clear the need to strengthen, not degrade, the now-profitable postal networks.”

The president said that the NALC hopes to continue working with lawmakers from both parties, with the White House and with postal officials at L’Enfant Plaza to build on progress made in the last Congress, within the mailing industry and with other interested parties toward consensus on a legislative postal reform package that promotes a strong and vibrant USPS. (For more on that proposal, see the September Postal Record.)


Arlington wreath-laying planned

Representatives of the NALC will have the honor of laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia as part of ceremonies honoring the 2015 NALC Heroes of the Year. All NALC members, their families and friends are invited to observe the event. It will be held on Wednesday, Oct. 7, directly following the noon changing-of-the-guard ceremony.

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is a monument dedicated to U.S. service members who have died but whose remains are unidentified. Traditionally, presidents and other dignitaries have laid wreaths there as a way of honoring the country’s military veterans.

The Postal Service is the largest civilian employer of veterans. Currently, 120,000 postal workers—21 percent of USPS’s workforce—are veterans.

Combined Federal Campaign

As federal employees, letter carriers can participate in the world’s largest annual workplace charitable giving program, the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Pledges made by federal civilian, postal and military donors during the campaign season (Sept. 1 to Dec. 15) support eligible non-profit organizations through donations deducted voluntarily from their paychecks each pay period.

“The CFC is a wonderful way to help make the world a better place, a few dollars at a time,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “Carriers can choose a charity, or several, to support, and an amount they choose will be deducted from their paychecks and automatically sent to each charity.”

“By giving automatically, a little each pay period, you probably won’t even notice the money coming out of your check,” Rolando added. “But the charities notice, because the steady support of millions of participants makes a big impact on their ability to help people and do good throughout the year.”

All letter carriers can participate in the CFC, and Rolando recently sent his annual reminder asking NALC members to contribute through the CFC in addition to the other ways they support the community.

“Each day, many of us encounter people enduring real life problems within the communities where we live and deliver the mail,” Rolando wrote. “Throughout the year, we help by collecting food, providing clothing, mentoring children and looking after those who are vulnerable. We must continue to be good citizens by involving ourselves in these and other community efforts. However, it does not end there. The Combined Federal Campaign allows us easy access to contribute to charities that we care about through payroll deductions.”

Rolando asked letter carriers to consider donating to three charities in particular: the Postal Employees’ Relief Fund (PERF), the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) and United Way Worldwide.

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6th contract COLA: $0

Based on the Aug. 19 release of the July 2015 Consumer Price Index (CPI), the sixth cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for career letter carriers under the 2011-2016 National Agreement will be $0.
Carper’s iPost Act: A starting point

On Sept. 17, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs (HSAG) Ranking Member Tom Carper (D-DE) introduced the Improving Postal Operations, Service and Transparency—or iPost—Act, S. 2952.

“While Senator Carper’s new bill contains several provisions we cannot support and raises a number of serious concerns for letter carriers and the larger federal employee community,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said in a statement, “we believe it is a good place to begin the conversation about how to preserve and strengthen the Postal Service for the American people while protecting the legitimate interests of all the key stakeholders.”

Over the past few months, the president said, NALC has been working with a coalition made up of the four major postal unions, several key mailing industry groups, and the executive leadership of the U.S. Postal Service, to develop consensus postal reform legislation.

“Our coalition intends to work with House and Senate leaders and members to pass postal reform legislation that makes sense and that fairly meets the needs of our country, its people and its businesses,” he said. “NALC appreciates the tireless efforts of Senator Carper and his staff to craft a bill that will advance the process of achieving much needed postal reform.”

Postal issues seem to have been drowned out by more headline-grabbing activities on Capitol Hill, such as the efforts to avoid a government shutdown, presidential primary season posturing and the House leadership elections. But the president said that if Congress finds the opportunity, the time and the willingness, it could take up postal reform.

“Carper’s bill is, for now, the only real ‘reform’ bill being considered,” Rolando said, “and it’s expected to change over the next few months as stakeholders provide feedback.” He added that members in the House of Representatives also continue to hold bipartisan discussions on some form of postal reform as well.

Visit the Government Affairs page at nalc.org to review a new fact sheet about postal reform efforts.

Watson wins special election for NALC Dir. of retired members

Pursuant to an election complaint received by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS), NALC entered into a voluntary agreement with OLMS to conduct, under OLMS’ supervision, a new officer election for the position of NALC director of retired members.

The election was conducted by ballots mailed on Sept. 14 and Sept. 15 to all NALC members in good standing as of June 1. Ballots were due back in the post office box by 12 noon on Oct. 5.

The ballot tally for this election took place immediately afterward at Peake-DeLancey Printing in Cheverly, MD, and it was completed on Oct. 7. The preliminary results of the count are:

- Corvallis, OR Branch 1274, member Ron Watson: 4,2608
- Minneapolis Branch 9 member Ken Ring: 9,129

OLMS is reviewing the vote totals to ensure they are correct and accurate, and it will release a final tally report shortly. This report will include a breakdown of the vote totals by branch.

The term of office for this election is the remainder of the unexpired term, which will end in December 2018.

Next Branch Officers Training set

NALC Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine has announced that the next Branch Officers Training will be held Jan. 11-14 in Las Vegas. The room rate is $80 and the room reservation deadline is Dec. 4. Note: Please do not make air-

Branch Officers Training is an expansion of the secretary-treasurer educational seminars that NALC conducted for many years, tailored to assist branch secretary-treasurers and other branch (and state) officers who are chiefly responsible for financial administration. What’s been added are specialized sessions for branch presidents/vice presidents, recording secretaries, financial secretaries and trustees.

Because of the expansion, the training now runs for three and a half days, instead of the previous two and a half days. A preview of the new training was given at the national rap session in Houston, with the first Branch Officers Training held in September in Atlanta.

The new training includes sessions on:

- The NALC Constitution and branch bylaws
- Internal controls
- Ethics
- Fraud prevention and detection
- Department of Labor and LMRAA reporting
- Running a branch meeting
- Preparing LM forms and 990s
- Auditing branch records
- Managing branch finances and creating transparency
- Membership notification requirements

There will also be a session that covers the responsibilities and legal exposure that goes along with signing certain documents, a session designed to identify policies that every branch should have in place, and a session focused on helping officers learn more about branch operations.

Branch Officers Training registration form

Please register me for the Jan. 11-14 NALC Branch Officers Training in Las Vegas. Registration deadline is Dec. 4. Room rate [single/double] is $80 including resort fee.**

Name__________________________

Branch or state position________________________

Branch #__________Branch city__________State__________

Home address: Street__________City__________State__________ZIP________

Phone number (required)________________________

** Please do not make airline reservations until you receive notification of acceptance.

Letter carriers who helped save a woman who had been shot, got residents out of burning homes or rescued the unconscious driver of a submerged car were honored by NALC President Fredric Rolando at a special luncheon in Washington, DC, on Oct. 8.

What these individual letter carriers gathered here today did to merit selection as our Heroes of 2015 is truly exceptional,” Rolando said. “And yet, in a profound sense, there is nothing extraordinary about what they did, nothing unusual—because every day, in communities across this vast nation, letter carriers are on the lookout for, and often chance upon, opportunities to protect the families and neighborhoods they know so well.”

Rolando noted that many of the most impressive acts go unreported. “Because after responding to a need or a potential catastrophe,” he said, “most of our carriers simply dust off—or dry off—their uniforms and go back to work.

“For many of our carrier heroes,” the president said, “looking out for the community simply comes with the uniform.”

Here are this year’s 2015 Letter Carrier Heroes of the Year:

- In just his fourth week on the job, 2015 National Hero Alan Symonette, a Marine Corps veteran who extracted a driver whose car had plunged into a pond and was filling with water.

- Akron, OH Branch 146 letter carrier Kizzy Spaulding, who pulled an unrestrained woman from her burning home, and Tulsa, OK Branch 1538 letter carrier Steve Shipman, who rescued an 11-year-old girl from a house fire, are the Central Region and Western Region Heroes, respectively.

- Retired Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100 letter carrier James Robledo, a Vietnam War veteran who through the Gun Safes/Visits program helps others deal with their combat experiences, is Humanitarian of the Year.

- Carrier Alert winner Denise Howard, a Plainfield, NJ Branch 396 letter carrier, located an elderly customer who had fallen on ice, after concluding that the way he had parked his car indicated trouble.

- Eugene, OR Branch 316 letter carriers Terrence Graves, a Navy veteran, and Bryce McLean spotted and detained a suspected thief; they are recipients of the Unit Citation award. And retired Central Maine Merged Branch 391 letter carrier John Curtis, who received the Education Award, wrote a booklet about past labor struggles that resonates today.

Visit nalc.org/heroes to learn more.

Heroes honor heroes

Representatives of the NALC had the honor of laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia on Oct. 7, directly following the noon changing-of-the-guard ceremony. Representing NALC were four of the Letter Carrier Heroes of the Year for 2015 who are also military veterans: (from left) Eastern Region Hero Terrence Graves, Carrier Alert Hero Monica Howard, Central Region Hero Alan Symonette, Eastern Region Hero Kizzy Spaulding, USPS Postmaster General Megan Brennan, Unit Citation Hero Bryce McLean and Education Award winner John Curtis.

“Our honorees’ actions reflect something larger,” Rolando said. “They symbolize what is special about our craft. “Letter carriers are part of the fabric of the communities they serve,” he said. “They exhibit professionalism in the way they carry out their everyday duties, and every so often they get the opportunity to rise up and meet an unexpected challenge and improve—or protect—someone’s life.”

Special guests providing remarks at the Oct. 8 Heroes event were Rep. Ami Bera (D-CA), Rep. Norma Torres (D-CA), USPS Postmaster General Megan Brennan and AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Tefere Gebre.

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NACL responds to flawed Brookings paper on USPS

A paper published in September by the Brookings Institution, a Washington, DC-based think tank, absurdly calls for Congress to partially privatize the U.S. Postal Service, under the assumption that, as First Class Mail volumes continue to decline, such a move would help the agency compete with private-sector competitors.

NACL President Fredric Rolando wrote a letter to the author of the paper, urging her to withdraw the paper, which he labeled as “deeply and irretrievably flawed.”

He largely misdiagnoses the major problems the Postal Service faces,” he wrote, adding that the paper “fundamentally misunderstands the Postal Service’s universal service obligation, which covers and includes both market-dominant services and competitive services. This makes the paper’s chief recommendation—to break up the Postal Service in two—both illogical and unfeasible.”

“Finally,” Rolando wrote, “after proposing the break-up and partial privatization of the Postal Service, [the paper] fails to analyze and explore the implications such a proposal would have on the country, the U.S. economy and on the major stakeholders in the postal industry.”

Since its publication, the paper has been quoted and referenced in a number of news stories—including in *The Washington Post* and *The Baltimore Sun*. Rolando wrote a letter to the editor of *The Post* about the paper’s article on the study.

“The article lacked any serious discussion of how the Brookings plan would work or whether it makes sense,” he wrote. “It doesn’t. What was the point of this article, beyond touting *The Post’s* policy preferences?”

NACL Chief of Staff Jim Sauber was quoted in a separate Oct. 7 *Washington Post* story about the reaction to the study.

“The conventional wisdom is that the Internet is killing the Postal Service,” Sauber said. “I’m not denying that the Internet is having profound effects both positive and negative. But most of the loss is from pre-funding [requirement] and the recession itself.”

In *The Baltimore Sun*’s story about the study, Sauber noted that USPS has reported an operating profit for the last two years and that the agency’s $5.5 billion net loss in 2014 was entirely the result of the 2006 congressional mandate that the Postal Service pre-fund its retiree health care costs decades into the future—a requirement placed on no other employer.

The chief of staff also said that UPS and FedEx now use USPS to deliver up to 30 to 40 percent of their packages for the “last mile.”

And USPS spokeswoman Toni G. Delaney told *The Sun* that separating and privatizing the agency’s package delivery business “is poorly conceived at best. At worst, and aside from being politically and economically unrealistic, the proposal aims to shift an enormous financial burden onto taxpayers—which is unnecessary and unwanted in any policy context.”

Study: Millions depend on trillion-dollar postal industry

The Envelope Manufacturers Association’s (EMA) Institute of Postal Studies recently released its latest “Mailing Industry Job Study.”

The study found that the U.S. Postal Service remains at the center of the $1.4 trillion industry that provides 75 million jobs—6 percent of all jobs in the United States. And 73 percent of these jobs are dependent on a thriving delivery infrastructure.

The study also includes manufacturing and distribution, as well as mail management and actual mail delivery.

Further, as the economy has continued to improve, it follows that the Postal Service, and the mailing value it offers, is vital to the successful delivery of the mail climbed to $108.8 billion in 2014, a 4.9 percent increase over figures from just three years before.

Visit the “Latest News and Updates” page at nalc.org to learn more.

Building an NACL Veterans Group

NACL is made up of approximately 225,000 active and retired members, of which almost a quarter are veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces. As we all commemorate Veterans Day on Nov. 11, we remind ourselves that these veterans traded their military uniforms for letter carrier uniforms, and that they continue to serve their communities and this great nation.

In an effort to express the union’s sense of gratitude for our veteran members’ service, NACL President Fredric Rolando invites all military veteran members—active and retired, part time and full time—to join the NACL Veterans Group.

“The Veterans Group is intended to be something tangible and useful,” Rolando said, “providing NACL members who are military veterans access to the information and tools specific to veterans’ rights and benefits within the Postal Service.”

The group seeks to provide to these particular members resources, rights information and a sense of camaraderie, he said.

Veteran Group members receive a pin as a special symbol of gratitude for their military service and their membership in the NACL.

If you are interested in joining the group, complete the sign-up card included in the October issue of *The Postal Record* and return it to: NACL Veterans Group, National Association of Letter Carriers, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

You may also visit nalc.org/veterans to download a PDF version of the card.

Rolando asks all members to take a special moment on Veterans Day to remember the sacrifices made by our fellow members to serve, protect and defend the freedoms we hold dear.

Customer Connect brings in $2 billion

Because of the diligence and dedication of city letter carriers, NACL and the U.S. Postal Service are celebrating $2 billion in estimated revenue earnings generated by the Customer Connect program.

When the Customer Connect program was deployed 12 years ago," NACL President Fredric Rolando said, “its purpose was to call on letter carriers, through our valuable relationships with our customers, to generate new business while providing them with a better mailing value.

Over the last decade, the Customer Connect program has become a successful generator of new customers and revenue for USPS. The power of individual letter carriers is a key element in growing package volume and revenue.

As and letter carriers,” Rolando added, “we are a trusted and integral part of our customers’ day—so there is no group better than letter carriers to communicate with the more than 15 million potential new customers.”

NACL and USPS will observe National Customer Connect Day and will officially announce reaching the $2 billion milestone. (Please note that this is a change from the Nov. 10 date reported in the November *Postal Record*.)
James H. Rademacher: 1921-2015

James H. Rademacher, national president of the NALC from 1968 to 1977, died on Dec. 15 of natural causes in Roanoke, VA. He was 94 years old.

“Jim spent his working life in the service of letter carriers, even through his retirement years,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “We will long remember his efforts and we offer our condolences to his family and friends.”

The son of a letter carrier, Rademacher joined the Post Office in 1941, when he became a temporary substitute carrier in Detroit. He became a station representative in 1946 after two years in the Navy. He was elected secretary of Detroit Branch 1 in 1948 and president in 1950, a position he held until he became national assistant secretary-treasurer in 1962. In 1962, he was elected NALC’s vice president and also became editor of The Postal Record, which he served as vice president until he was elected president by acclamation at the 1968 convention in Boston. Within a year, he would face one of his first major tests as president: The Great Postal Strike.

By the late 1960s, many letter carriers were forced to work a second job just to make ends meet. NALC lobbed again, and for a pay increase that would finally raise the rank-and-file above the poverty-level—lobbying efforts that often fell on deaf ears or, worse, resulted in broken promises. As letter carrier tempers flared, Rademacher urged members to keep calm, and in late 1969, he met privately with President Richard Nixon in an effort to forge a compromise on postal pay and postal reform. But after Nixon in February of 1970 again deferred another scheduled wage increase, letter carrier frustration reached a new height—and on the evening of March 17, NALC members in New York City voted to go on strike. Soon, letter carriers from other NALC branches across the country—not to mention employees from other crafts—would join in the walkout.

Rademacher called an emergency meeting of the presidents of the union’s 300 largest branches on March 20 in Washington, while in a televised address three days later, Nixon declared a national emergency, ordering 25,000 soldiers into New York City to break the strike and move the mail. Unsurprisingly, the troops were ineffective since they had none of the skills that postal workers possessed.

Eight days after the strike began—and after receiving assurances from NALC leaders in Washington and from the Nixon administration—most letter carriers returned to their routes. Rademacher and other postal union leaders began to round-the-clock negotiations with the Post Office Department.

Postal reorganization and collective bargaining: By April 2, 1971, an agreement was reached that included a succession of pay raises, support for the establishment of an independent postal authority, and provisions for collective bargaining and binding arbitration.

Political action: The collective-bargaining rights that postal employees now enjoyed were a product of congressional action—and letter carriers understood that what Congress could give, Congress could take away. So in March 1971, Rademacher announced the establishment of a Legislative Liaison Network designed to build relationships between NALC members and their congressional representatives. And in July, the wholly voluntary political action fund that the union had established the previous year was formally christened the Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education—COLCPE. (In 2015, COLCPE was officially renamed the Letter Carrier Political Fund.)

The “Kokomo Plan”: In April 1974, the cost-minded managers of the U.S. Postal Service—who were increasingly pressuring letter carriers to deliver their routes at break-neck speed—milked out the Postal Route Examination System (CREX), although it became better known as the “Kokomo Plan” because it was to be tested first in Kokomo, IN.

The system involved establishing work and time standards for each letter carrier function. These were fed into a computer that would then calculate an eight-hour route for each carrier.

NALC and USPS entered into arbitration over the Kokomo Plan; with Rademacher charging that USPS had violated the National Agreement by unilaterally increasing the workload of letter carriers. In August 1976, right before NALC’s national convention in Houston, the arbitrator ruled in Rademacher’s favor, allowing Rademacher to announce to convention delegates “Kokomo is dead.” It was at that same convention that the president announced his retirement. He lived his later years near Roanoke, VA, where he resided in the home he shared with Elva, his wife, 82 years, 4 months, and 1 day. Elva had passed away in 2002.

In 2013, Rademacher joined a Roanoke, VA, protest against a USPS plan to unilaterally end Saturday mail delivery.

James H. Rademacher served as president of NALC from 1968 to 1977.

Survey: USPS is ‘most favorable’ agency

A national poll conducted by the Pew Research Center has again shown that the U.S. Postal Service is the most favored among federal agencies.

“This honor recognizes the hard work and dedication of letter carriers and everyone who works for this venerable agency,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “I’m confident that as the public face of the Postal Service, letter carriers will continue to do what we can to ensure that our employer maintains and even strengthens that trust.”

The national survey’s findings, released on Nov. 23, were based on more than 6,000 interviews conducted by Pew between the end of August and the beginning of October. Favorable ratings were provided by 84.9 percent of those surveyed—up one percentage point from a similar survey conducted in 2010.

Rounding out the top five agencies were the National Park Service with 79 percent, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with 71 percent, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration with 70 percent and the Federal Bureau of Investigation with 68 percent.

What entity was at the bottom of the list? Only 27 percent of those polled gave a favorable rating to Congress, the same body that has not yet eased the financial burden it created under the 2006 postal law that forces USPS—alone among government agencies and private enterprises—to pre-fund 75 years’ worth of future retiree health benefits and to do so over a 10-year period.

While the study found what it called “substantial partisan gaps” in the views of several federal departments and agencies, the Postal Service was not one of those entities. In fact, 89 percent of Democrats polled, including those whose political views lean to the left, held a favorable view of USPS, only 11 percentage points higher than Republican and right-leaningrespondents.

Pew found that public attitudes about government and politics are not easy to categorize. “In general, the federal government continues to be viewed less favorably than state and local governments,” its survey report said. “The last time the federal government was viewed as favorably as state and local governments was in the period after the September 11 terrorist attacks and during the early phase of the Iraq War.”

“Year ahead of the presidential election,” the Pew report added, “the American public is deeply cynical about government, politics and the nation’s elected leaders in a way that has become quite familiar.”

OPM, USPS cyber attack update

The recent cyber attacks against the Office of Personnel Management and the U.S. Postal Service data systems remain under investigation.

While the President has received a letter from OPM’s acting director advising that postal employees and retirees were affected by the OPM incident. According to OPM, it is highly likely that NALC members were affected if they underwent a background investigation through OPM in 2000 or afterward (which occurs through the submission of forms SF 86, SF 85 or SF 85p).

Individuals who submitted this information prior to 2000 may be affected as well.

OPM has begun notifying affected individuals beginning in late September and such notifications will continue on a rolling basis. NALC members are encouraged to review available resources on OPM’s cyber website at opm.gov/security. Individuals may sign up for cybersecurity updates directly on this website:

http://iotwsecurity.us

Meanwhile, NALC and the other major postal unions are continuing to negotiate over issues arising from the earlier cyber attack on the Postal Service. Such negotiations are required by the settlement of the unfair labor practice charge against the Postal Service filed by NALC.

Joint summary overview of FMLA released


Qualifying exigency leave: The Postal Service must grant an eligible employee up to 12 workweeks of FMLA leave during the 12-month FMLA leave period for qualifying exigencies that arise out of the fact that the employee’s spouse, son, daughter, parent, or a member of the Regular Armed Forces, National Guard, Reserves, or a retired member of the Regular Armed Forces or Reserves, is under a call or order to covered active duty (or notification of an impending call or order to covered active duty) during the deployment of the member with the Armed Forces to a foreign country. For those military members in the National Guard or Reserves, the call to active duty must also be made in support of a contingency operation.

Military caregiver leave: USPS must grant an eligible employee who is a spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin of a covered service member or covered veteran with a serious injury or illness up to a total of 26 workweeks of leave during a 12-month period to care for the covered service member or covered veteran. While the 12-month period for every other category of FMLA leave coincides with the postal leave year, the 12-month period for military caregiver leave begins on the date that the eligible employee first takes military caregiver leave.

For more information, refer to M-08-086 in the Materials Reference System (MRS) at nalc.org.