



NALC

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Bulletin

Bargaining continues past contract expiration

Following 90 days of bargaining over the terms of a new National Agreement—culminating in a week of intense negotiations—NALC and the U.S. Postal Service announced on Friday, May 20, that the bargaining period would be extended beyond the midnight expiration of the 2011-2016 National Agreement.

During the extended period of negotiations, the terms and conditions of the 2011-2016 contract will remain in effect.

NALC President Fredric Rolando issued the following statement:

The intensive discussions we've had over the past three months—both at the main table on key economic provisions, and among the numerous committees composed of NALC Executive Council members and management representatives—have been productive and professional. Although we cannot say definitively that we will be able to reach an agreement without resorting to the law's mediation and interest arbitration procedures, there has been tangible progress and both sides remain committed to attempting to reach a mutually acceptable tentative agreement.



In the days leading up to the expiration of the 2011-2016 National Agreement, the NALC Executive Council, along with letter carrier staff members from Headquarters, held round-the-clock talks with USPS executives and employees.

The inadequacy of city carrier assistant (CCA) wages and the need to improve career conversion rights for CCAs are glaring problems that must also be addressed.

Repairing and improving the work culture in carrier stations across the country also is a major focus of our contract talks.

We are negotiating at a time of great challenges and great opportunities for the Postal Service of the 21st century. The Postal Service must evolve to become an indispensable public utility for the internet age, and it is NALC's responsibility at the bargaining table to shape that evolution constructively—both to improve service and to assure the Postal Service's long-term viability, while strengthening the terms and conditions of America's city letter carriers, the nation's most trusted workers. Our bargaining team is acutely aware of this responsibility and is committed to fulfilling it.

As long as we see a path toward success, we will stay at the table and work as hard as we can to reach a new National Agreement.

Visit nalc.org for the latest updates on the bargaining process, and follow NALC on Facebook (facebook.com/nalc.national) and on Twitter (twitter.com/nalc_national).

Letter carriers deliver food, hope during 24th national Stamp Out Hunger drive



NALC President Fredric Rolando helped Fredericksburg, VA Branch 685 letter carriers distribute customer-donated food on Food Drive Day.

Branch collection results forms are still making their way to NALC Headquarters as this *NALC Bulletin* was prepared. With totals still being tabulated, local and regional food drive coordinators across America are optimistic that the 2016 drive's national total could exceed last year's figure of 71 million pounds, worth an estimated \$150 million. (From the national drive's beginning in 1992 through last year, the drive had collected more than 1.4 billion pounds of food.)

"It's too early to tell what the final results will be," NALC Community Service and Outreach Coordinator Pam Donato said, "but it's never too early to hope for the best."

Donato said that a number of factors were making her think positively.

"For one thing, every address in the country got a reminder postcard," she said, "thanks to our partnership this year with the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union."

Volunteers, Donato added, recruited by countless thousands of UFCW's 1.7 million members and others, helped make food collection efforts a little easier.

"The other national partners really stepped up, too," Donato said, whether it was with a well-placed blog post by the AFL-CIO, near-constant tweets from Valpak on the endlessly scrolling Twitter platform, Facebook posts from USPS, or any of a variety of other types of outreach efforts by United Way Worldwide and its local affiliates, by the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association and by Valassis.

A concerted social media campaign designed to get the attention of the tens of thousands of followers of the Stamp Out Hunger Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts also helped spread the food drive message far and wide. And more than 1.2 million social media users saw that message through the special online flash-mob campaign via the Thunderclap service.



A Detroit Branch 1 letter carrier collects two bags filled with food donated by a generous customer on her route.

For the 24th year in a row, letter carriers across the United States could be counted on to display concern, compassion and commitment to their postal customers—and to the communities in which they work and live—by participating on Saturday, May 14, in the Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive, the nation's largest one-day food collection effort.

"It is gratifying to see so many NALC members and other volunteers sacrifice their time and energy to make sure this humanitarian effort is a success, year after year," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "I'm sure that the recipients of our efforts appreciate it."

Branch food drive coordinators and participants in most of the 10,000 cities and towns taking part in the drive had their local organizing efforts boosted by generally good weather. Even the cooler-than-normal temperatures in the country's northern and eastern sections did little to chill the spirits of participating letter carriers and their family members, friends and countless volunteer food drive helpers.



Volunteers joined New Jersey Merged Branch 38 letter carriers to help collect and distribute donated food.

"It wasn't hard to find evidence that there was some sort of national charity effort underway on Saturday, May 14," Donato said, "and in plenty of locales across the country, you could easily catch sight of Jeff Keane's Family Circus food drive art in post offices and countless other venues."

Food drive friends such as the American Postal Workers Union, the National Postal Mail Handlers Union and Union Plus lent an invaluable hand, too, in getting out the good word about the food drive, she said, as did a host of AFL-CIO member unions and other labor organizations.

Branch collection results forms are due at NALC Headquarters by June 10. A final national total for the drive is scheduled to be announced shortly after that; a detailed report on the drive, including branch-by-branch results and a roundup of partner and sponsor participation, will appear in *The Postal Record*.

Rolando testifies before House committee hearing



NALC President Fredric Rolando told a House committee on May 11 that America's letter carriers never doubted the long-term viability of the U.S. Postal Service.

NALC President Fredric Rolando was among those called to testify on May 11 before a House committee hearing on postal reform.

"Confusion about the relative contributions of technology, recession and public policy to the Postal Service's financial health has obscured the reality of today's Postal Service," Rolando told the members of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, which has oversight of the U.S. Postal Service.

"It is not 2009 anymore," he said, "when the Great Recession sent mail volume plummeting and the mandate to pre-fund retiree health crushed the Postal Service's finances, raising doubts in the minds of some about the long-term viability of the Postal Service. America's letter carriers and other postal employees never shared those doubts."

Rolando urged the committee to consider the consensus postal reform package promoted by NALC and numerous postal stakeholders—a plan that, if implemented, would go a long way toward relieving, or even eliminating, the pre-funding burden, as well as put on firmer footing USPS' investments in employee health care and retirement.

"There is a remarkable degree of stakeholder consensus about the principles of successful postal reform," Rolando said. "All four postal unions, the Postal Service, and a wide range of companies and postal trade associations have agreed on reform principles for your consideration."

One issue that the coalition still is working on is the way that postal rates are set. This is an especially timely consideration because the exigent rate increase expired in April, a fact that Rolando said complicates the task of stabilizing USPS' finances.

If Congress does not pass effective postal reform legislation this year, he said, the upcoming PRC review of the rate-setting process will be saddled with addressing pre-funding as well as USPS' need to make up for the deficits. (For more about the PRC's review, see the June *Postal Record*.)

Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) asked Rolando about another part of the coalition's plan, to direct the Postal Service's retiree health benefits fund (PSRHF) be invested in a mix of private-sector stocks and bonds as well as in government bonds.

"What we were talking about doing," Rolando answered, "is having a board that would govern this, that would invest 50 percent—up to 75 percent—in something like the Thrift Savings Plan's Lifecycle Funds."

Going back to 2007, the president noted, the PSRHF earned just 4 percent in Treasury securities.

"If it had been invested in a Lifecycle Fund—again, keep in mind, this would have been through the worst recession in 80 years," he said, "we would have earned about 7 percent, which would have raised the fund another \$10 billion."

Toward the end of the hearing, Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) asked Rolando whether the postal employee unions have stepped up as the Postal Service has changed over the last several years.

"Collective bargaining is a process that's worked well for a long time," Rolando answered, "in terms of negotiating agreements, whether by settlement or through interest arbitration."

"There are other arenas in which we deal with the Postal Service," the president said—for example, in the legislative arena, "along with the mailing industry, to develop a consensus and to move something through Congress that's going to preserve the Postal Service in the future."

The others called to testify at the hearing were Postmaster General Megan Brennan, Postal Regulatory Commission Acting Chairman Robert Taub, General Accountability Office Director of Physical Infrastructure Issues Lori Rectanus and Association for Postal Commerce Executive Vice President Jessica Lowrance.

Read more detailed hearing coverage in the June edition of *The Postal Record*.

2nd quarter USPS operating profit continues strong trend

On May 10, USPS released its financial report for the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2016, covering January, February and March, a report that revealed a sizable operating profit.

"The \$576 million quarterly operating profit is positive news for an agency that enjoys widespread public support," NALC President Fredric Rolando said in a statement. "The continuing financial upswing shows the importance of maintaining and strengthening the unparalleled—and profitable—postal network."

USPS' second-quarter performance brought its operating profit so far this fiscal year to \$1.833 billion—without a dime of taxpayer money, Rolando noted.

"These results show the vitality—and business viability—of the Postal Service in today's economy," he said. "An improving economy has helped stabilize letter revenue, and internet-driven online shopping has sent package volume sharply upward. As a result, overall revenue is up by 4.7 percent."

The report, Rolando said, also validates the emerging consensus among key lawmakers, the Postal Service, postal unions, businesses, mailers and industry groups to move forward with practical reform that all stakeholders can buy into.

Press coverage of the report was largely fair, comprehensive and nuanced, with NALC, besides USPS, quoted most often. Reports appeared in *The Hill*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Federal Times*, *Government Executive* and *The Business Journals*, as well as on Federal News Radio.

In Los Angeles, Aug. 15-19

More info about this summer's 70th biennial NALC convention

NALC's 70th biennial national convention is at the Los Angeles Convention Center, Aug. 15-19. Convention attendees who may require assistance due to a disability can avail themselves of the following accommodations in adherence with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

- **Deaf or hearing-impaired:** General-session video presentations, including podium and floor action, will be open-captioned so hearing-impaired delegates can sit with their delegations. Delegates who need other special accommodations, including a signing interpreter in workshops, should contact NALC Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine at NALC Headquarters by June 24.

- **Wheelchair and scooter rental:** Electric mobility scooters and wheelchairs are available for rent from Scootaround. For advance reservations or for more information, call 888-441-7575 or visit locations.scootaround.com/NALC.

- **Oxygen:** If you require oxygen refills while in Los Angeles, you may contact Oxygen Concentrator Inc., which can help you choose the portable concentrator that will meet your needs. Weekly rental packages start at \$245. Call 877-303-7062.

- **Parking:** Handicapped parking is available to individuals with valid disability parking permits in designated parking areas.

- **Wheelchair lift vehicles:** NALC is providing free shuttle bus service to/from the Los Angeles Convention Center for hotels within the block that are not within walking distance. (A complete list will be available later.) To comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a vehicle equipped with a wheelchair lift will be made available during all convention hours on an on-call basis. Requests for use of this service can be made directly by calling the operations manager on-site. The number will be listed on bus flyers available at the bell desks in all hotels for which shuttle service is provided.

Convention-week tours of Los Angeles attractions: Convention delegates once again will have the opportunity to take advantage of several tours of popular Los Angeles-area attractions. For example:

- Visit the Los Angeles County Museum of Art or the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.
- Take a tour of Hollywood and celebrity homes or of Warner Bros. or Universal Studios.
- Tour the Rose Bowl.
- Go on a shopping tour through Beverly Hills and Hollywood.
- Spend a day at the Annenberg Community Beach House.
- Or get a feel for Southern California car culture with a tour of the Petersen Automotive Museum.

A tour-reservation coupon and more information can be found at nalc.org and also will be in the June edition of *The Postal Record*.



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