NALC presses for sensible pricing as PRC weighs rate changes

In December, the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) finished its review of the system used to set postage rates for letter mail and other “market dominant” products delivered by the Postal Service. It found that the system was not working as intended under the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA).

“We’re pleased that the PRC came to this conclusion,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said, noting that the agency’s judgment agreed with that of NALC, the other postal unions and the Postal Service itself.

“But unfortunately, the replacement system that the PRC has proposed falls far short of what the Postal Service needs,” Rolando added.

As noted in the January Postal Record (available for review at nalc.org), the PRC’s report came at the end of its year-long review of the current rate-setting system, during which dozens of USPS stakeholders and customers—including NALC—submitted testimony for the agency’s consideration.

The PRC examined USPS’s financial situation and found that, while the agency had achieved short-term stability under the current rate-setting system—as evidenced by operating profits from FY2014 through FY2016—the system has failed to ensure medium- or long-term stability.

As President Rolando stated in his President’s Message in the January issue of The Postal Record, there were a number of flaws in the PRC’s approach to improving the current rate-setting system.

On the bright side, there still is time for the PRC to improve its proposal before it comes out with a final ruling. The PRC currently is sponsoring a 120-day comment period on its proposed rate-setting system. NALC will participate in this process and make our views known.

“We assume that we can get the basic rate structure right and make allowances for future congressional mandates, a more suitable price index, such as the CPI for Delivery Services, might be workable,” Rolando said. “A sensible rate-setting system is within our grasp—so long as the PRC takes advantage of its second chance to get things right.”

For more on the PRC’s decision and NALC’s analysis, see the February issue of The Postal Record.

OSHA:
USPS must post injury/illness summary beginning Feb. 1

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration reminds employers of their obligation to post a copy of OSHA’s Form 300A, which summarizes job-related injuries and illnesses logged during 2017. Each year, between Feb. 1 and April 30, the summary must be displayed in a common area where notices to employees are usually posted. Businesses with 10 or fewer employees and those in certain low-hazard industries are exempt from OSHA recordkeeping and posting requirements. Visit OSHA’s Recordkeeping Rule webpage (www.osha.gov/recordkeeping304/records.html) for more information on recordkeeping requirements.

Safety advocates should review the USPS posting to make sure that the local safety committee is provided with a copy of the corresponding Form 3079 to evaluate the cause of each injury and to assist in development of methods to prevent a similar injury. This is one of the responsibilities assigned to the local safety committee in accordance with the Handbook El-89.

Lassan appointed as Region 8 national business agent

NALC President Fredric Rolando has appointed Steve Lassan as national business agent (NBA) for Region 8 (Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee). Lassan replaces retired Region 8 NBA Pete Moss, a member of Gulf Coast Merged Branch 1374, who had served as NBA since being elected to the position in 2010.

“Our thanks go to Pete Moss for his many years of dedicated service to NALC members, and we wish him a happy retirement,” Rolando said.

Lassan, a member of Nashville Branch 4, joined the Postal Service as a city carrier in Nashville in 1985, and soon became a shop steward. He served as dispute resolution team (DRT) representative for the Tennessee District and then as an arbitration advocate for Region 8. Branch 4, elected Lassan as branch secretary in 2004. That year, then-NALC President William H. Young appointed Lassan to serve as regional administrative assistant (RAA) for Region 8.

Mutual Benefit Association

interest rates hold steady

The United States Letter Carriers Mutual Benefit Association (MBA) has announced that the interest rates paid on MBA policies will remain the same for 2018. The MBA is currently paying 3.25 percent interest on the Retirement Savings Plans (except for those policies which guarantee a higher minimum rate). Reminder: April 16, 2018, is the last day to make a contribution to a traditional IRA or Roth IRA for the 2017 tax year.

2018 Detroit convention hotel information

NALC has made special arrangements with 18 hotels to accommodate letter carriers attending the 2018 convention in Detroit July 16-20. Information on these hotels in Detroit and Dearborn (13 miles away) is in the February issue of The Postal Record and online at nalc.org/convention. There you can find information about parking availability and prices, and amenities such as whirlpools and gyms, listed by the size of the NALC hotel room block. Additionally, a map shows the location of those hotels and illustrates their proximity to stations on the QLine, Detroit’s recently opened streetcar system. Please do not contact the hotels. All room reservations will be made through NALC’s official housing company.