NLC reaches impasse with USPS in negotiations

On Sept. 20, negotiations for a new collective-bargaining agreement between NALC and USPS came to an impasse. The current collective-bargaining agreement remains in force pending final resolution of the parties’ collective-bargaining dispute.

The new agreement is a mandatory 60-day mediation period required by statute. The parties will use the mediation period to continue negotiations while simultaneously attempting to agree on a neutral arbitrator in the event the parties remain at impasse after the 60-day period. That neutral arbitrator will chair an arbitration board that will also include one management and one union arbitrator.

The parties continue to have unresolved differences over major issues, including—but not limited to—letter carrier compensation, the non-career workforce, subcontracting, no-layoff provisions, and various memos regarding safety, city delivery, workplace intervention, route evaluations, route structure and wage theft.

Issues that remain in dispute after the mediation period will be addressed through the interest arbitration process, which will result in a final and binding decision on the contents of a new national agreement.

For more on the impasse, see the October issue of The Postal Record.

USPS Fairness Act and priority resolutions gain momentum

NLC’s five priority resolutions, as well as the USPS Fairness Act (H.R. 2382), the bill in the House of Representatives that would eliminate the mandate to pre-fund retiree health benefits, have continued to gain support from both sides of the aisle. At this time, a bipartisan House majority supports repealing the mandate to pre-fund retiree health benefits and maintaining six-day mail delivery and door delivery, while bipartisan majorities in the House and Senate oppose privatization of the Postal Service.

“This majority of support is due to the overwhelming and diligent work of letter carriers across the country who have taken the time to meet with their members of Congress during the August congressional recess,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “The strong House support means that NALC has the ability to protect pivotal services, fight back against calls for privatization and demonstrate that the mandate to pre-fund retiree health benefits should end.”

In 2006, Congress mandated that USPS pre-fund decades’ worth of health benefits for its future retirees. This mandate, which has cost USPS an average of $4.6 billion annually since 2007, is responsible for 92 percent of USPS losses over the last 12 years and 100 percent of losses over the past six years. Without this burden imposed, USPS would have record surpluses of nearly $4 billion since 2013.

“Repealing the pre-funding requirement is key to achieving sensible postal reform, investing in the Postal Service’s infrastructure and better utilizing its vast network to serve residential and business customers,” Rolando said.

Noting that “the work is far from done,” Rolando called on letter carriers to continue to reach out to all members of Congress. “There are many legislators who have not heard from us and who need an education about the Postal Service and the invaluable role that letter carriers play in serving their customers and our communities. Our hope is that every member of Congress—no matter their party, history or views—will hear from us.”

Resources are available on the NALC Government Affairs page of nalc.org for background information on pre-funding and H.R. 2382. You can find fact sheets about pre-funding or check the latest co-sponsors on H.R. 2382 to see if your member of Congress has co-sponsored the bill. (You also can check directly by going to Congress.gov and typing in “HR 2382” into the search bar at the top of the page.)

While the priority resolutions on door delivery (H. Res. 23), six-day mail delivery (H. Res. 54) and opposing the privatization of USPS (H. Res. 33/S. Res. 90) all have achieved majority support with more than 218 co-sponsors, the resolution on restoration of service standards (H. Res. 60) still needs more co-sponsors.

To contact your representative, call the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 and provide your ZIP code. Ask your representative to support the Postal Service and its employees by co-sponsoring H.R. 2382 and any resolutions they have not co-sponsored.