

**NALC**

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Jan. 14, 2013

Bulletin

NALC President Emeritus Vincent R. Sombrotto 1923–2013

Vincent R. Sombrotto, 89, a towering figure in the history of the National Association of Letter Carriers and one of the most significant U.S. labor leaders of recent decades, died Jan. 10.

As a rank-and-file letter carrier at Grand Central Station in New York City, Sombrotto assumed leadership of the pivotal 1970 wildcat postal strike that led directly to the creation of the modern United States Postal Service.

The following year, he was elected president of NALC Branch 36 in New York City. Seven years later, he was elected as NALC's 16th national president, a position he would hold from 1978 to 2002.

His seven-term tenure atop the union was marked by extraordinary changes in the letter carrier craft and by remarkable progress for letter carriers. He also served as a vice president of the AFL-CIO.

"Vince's long tenure and tireless work for this union, at both the local and national levels, has left a lasting, positive impact on all the men and women who have carried the mail since the Great

Postal Strike, and on those who will do so in the decades yet to come," NALC President Fredric V. Rolando said.

"The deep sadness we all feel at his passing mixes with the fond and happy memories of him that those of us he touched will carry with us for the rest of our lives," Rolando said.

Sombrotto was born in New York City on June 15, 1923. He joined what was then the Post Office Department in 1947 as a part-time letter carrier after serving with distinction in the U.S. Navy in World War II.

In 1970, New York City letter carriers walked off their federal jobs—risking arrest in what was effectively a strike against the U.S. government—to protest dismal working conditions and poverty-level wages that entitled some to federal assistance programs. Within hours, carriers and other postal employees in one city after another across the country joined the strike. President Richard Nixon called in the troops to deliver the mail, but they proved unable to carry out the task in an effective manner. The walkout eventually resulted in the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 with full collective-bargaining rights for all postal employees.

Though he held no union office at the time, Sombrotto's personal charisma, street smarts and military background led to his taking charge and to other carriers following his lead.

His seven-term tenure atop the national union was marked by extraordinary changes in the letter carrier craft and by remarkable progress for letter carriers. As national president and chief contract negotiator, Sombrotto led the NALC in seven highly productive rounds of collective bargaining that provided basic wage increases in every contract, preserved uncapped cost-of-living adjustments and improved letter carrier working conditions. His efforts made the carrier's job a more rewarding and satisfying one, and they made the NALC a stronger, more united union, well-equipped to meet the challenges it faced.

Sombrotto's many achievements as NALC president included turning the union's political action fund, the Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education (COLCPE), into one of the largest and most effective political action committees in the labor movement while dramatically improving the union's political and legislative operations. Under his leadership in 1993, the NALC played a critical role in winning reform of the Hatch Act, breaking the political shackles that made letter carriers and other federal employees second-class citizens for more than 50 years.

A firm believer in civic responsibility, Sombrotto tirelessly promoted the letter carrier tradition of assisting those in need. His active support of the Muscular Dystrophy Association helped raise tens of millions of dollars to fight the ravages of neuromuscular diseases. In 1992, he began the NALC Food Drive, which has developed into the country's largest one-day food drive. Held the second Saturday every May, it has to date provided more than 1.2 billion pounds of food for food banks in communities throughout the nation, with letter carriers collecting non-perishable food postal patrons leave near their mailboxes.

Knowing that carriers are both familiar with and dedicated to the communities they serve, Sombrotto and the NALC joined forces with the U.S. Postal Service, local United Ways and emergency services organizations to establish Carrier Alert, a nationwide program where carriers can watch over elderly or housebound postal customers. A great many of these letter carriers perform heroic and humanitarian deeds on their routes, saving lives, putting out fires, finding missing children and stopping crimes, something that Sombrotto and every NALC president since have recognized annually with the NALC Heroes of the Year awards.

Sombrotto retired from national office in 2002. Since then, he had remained engaged in the service of his beloved

union, taking part in many national conventions as well as in a special video commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Great Postal Strike. His last appearance at a national NALC gathering was at the National Rap Session in Las Vegas in October of 2011.

Sombrotto, who passed away after a long illness, is survived by his wife Rae, by seven grown children and by 14 grandchildren. Condolences can be sent to Mrs. Sombrotto and family at: 24 Soundview Drive, Port Washington, NY 11050. Donations in lieu of flowers to the National Kidney Foundation.



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Arbitration board issues award

Sets terms of the 2011-2016 National Agreement; ‘NALC achieves its major goals,’ Rolando says

The three-person board of arbitrators has issued a final and binding award that sets the terms of a four-and-a-half-year collective-bargaining agreement between the National Association of Letter Carriers and the U.S. Postal Service, NALC President Fredric Rolando announced on Jan. 11.

“NALC had three primary objectives in this critical round of collective bargaining,” Rolando said. “First, to protect the jobs and living standards and working conditions of the nation’s 180,000 city letter carriers. Second, to protect the integrity of our historic institution—the United States Postal Service. And third, to work cooperatively with all stakeholders to enable the USPS to continue to serve the American public, in the Internet age, by strengthening our unequalled ‘last-mile’ delivery capacity.

“This agreement meets all three of those objectives,” he said.

The arbitration board was chaired by Shyam Das, a member of the American Arbitration Association’s labor panel who has been a full-time labor arbitrator since 1977. NALC’s member of the arbitration board was General Counsel Bruce Simon of New York-based Cohen, Weiss & Simon. USPS counsel Robert Dufek was the Postal Service’s arbitrator.

The award follows months of work by the NALC, including its officers, staff, consultants and expert witnesses who diligently assembled the union’s case in the interest arbitration proceeding.

“Although we would have preferred to reach a negotiated settlement in November 2011,” Rolando said, “the process worked as intended to resolve all outstanding issues and to address both sides’ key concerns while laying the groundwork for a productively innovative Postal Service in the years to come.

“I thank all the members of the NALC for their patience during this long process and for the hard work they do every day to make USPS the most affordable and efficient postal service in the world,” he said. “This agreement rewards city carriers for these contributions and sets the stage for a major comeback for the Postal Service, provided that Congress does its part to enact real reforms that will allow us to serve the American people and the U.S. economy for decades to come.”

Here are some highlights of the contract, which covers the period from Nov. 20, 2011, to May 20, 2016:

Wage provisions:

- **No two-tier pay scale**
- **Three general wage increases and seven COLAs awarded**

The Das board rejected the Postal Service’s proposals to freeze pay, eliminate cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) and implement a two-tier wage schedule for career city carriers. Instead, the new contract provides three general wage increases between now and the end of the contract: 1 percent in November 2013, 1.5 percent in November 2014, and 1 percent in November 2015. It also provides for the payment of seven COLAs between now and 2016, though the two COLAs calculated in 2013 will be deferred and paid in 2014. These wage and COLA provisions follow the wage pattern established by the negotiated American Postal Workers Union (APWU) contract and the arbitrated National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association (NRLCA) contract.

However, the award lowered the entry wage for new career letter carriers (appointed on or after Jan. 12, 2013) and created a new step progression that ends at the existing Step O in both Grades 1 and 2 of the current NALC pay charts. Moreover, this new step progression (labeled Table 2 of the City Carrier Schedule) will reach the top step pay of the existing pay chart (now called Table 1 of the City Carrier Wage Schedule) in exactly 644 weeks, the same 12.4 years that applies to career carriers appointed before Jan. 12, 2013.

New career letter carriers hired under Table 2 will initially earn \$16.71 per hour at Step A. They will earn step increases worth 2.75 percent of top step pay every 46 weeks until they reach Step O of Table 2 (\$27.17 per hour)—the same top step pay of Grade 1 of Table 1.

Step A of Grade 2 under Table 2 will be paid \$17.06 per hour and carriers will earn step increases worth 2.75 percent of top step pay every 46 weeks until reaching Step o (\$27.74 per hour)—the same top step of Grade 2 of Table 1.

NALC successfully argued that reducing the top step pay of city carriers was not justified given the extension of street times in recent years and the increased physical demands of our jobs.

Workforce structure:

- **New non-career category with career path replaces TEs**
- **All part-time flexibles (PTFs) converted**

Over the course of the collective bargaining, the parties worked hard to create a win-win agreement on the workforce structure of the city carrier craft. The Postal Service sought the cost savings and flexibility of a larger non-career workforce, while the union has been deeply dissatisfied with the structure of the transitional employee (TE) workforce, where TEs had no right of reappointment and no real path to career employment. Meanwhile, we also sought to convert thousands of part-time flexible (PTF) carriers to full-time regular.

The Das award creates a new category of non-career employees called city carrier assistants (CCAs) to replace TEs. Like TEs, CCAs will be members of the NALC bargaining unit and will be appointed for 360-day terms. But unlike TEs, CCAs will earn a pre-career appointment version of seniority (called “relative standing”) that will give them preference for career job openings in their installations. All career carrier vacancies will be filled by converting CCAs to full-time regular status in order of their relative standing in the installation.

This new path to career status will be extended to existing TEs as well. All TEs will be given an opportunity to take the city carrier entrance test and to accept an appointment as a CCA within 90 days, and they will be given credit for time served as a TE for purposes of “relative standing.”

The new contract will limit the number of CCAs to 15 percent of the total number of full-time carriers in each District and will allow the Postal Service to hire an additional 8,000 CCAs to facilitate the development of new products and services (such as evening or Sunday e-commerce delivery).

The initial pay of CCAs will be set at Steps BB and AA of Table 2 of the City Carrier Schedule. New CCAs will be paid \$15 per hour (Step BB) and current TEs who become CCAs will be paid \$16.25 per hour (Step AA). In lieu of COLAs prior to their career appointments, the CCAs will receive additional general wage increases of 1 percent in November 2013, 1 percent in November 2014 and 1.5 percent in November 2015 (in addition to those provided to all bargaining unit employees indicated above).

Although we fought hard for better CCA pay rates, CCAs will be eligible for health insurance after one year and

the Postal Service will contribute toward their premiums and offer coverage beyond that required by the Affordable Care Act starting in 2014. They also will qualify for regular carrier uniform allowances and will be covered by the opting provisions of Article 41. And NALC will investigate the establishment of a non-contributory 401(k) plan for CCAs that would allow non-career carriers to save for retirement, with provisions to transfer such savings to the Thrift Savings Plan once they obtain career positions.

Part-time flexible carriers also will benefit from the Das award, as it calls for the conversion of all PTFs to full-time regular status and for the elimination of the PTF category over the term of the contract.

Job security:

- **Ban on sub-contracting continued, strengthened**

NALC’s approach to improving job security did not just involve the workforce structure issues outlined above, which will help us capture a growing share of the booming package and competitive products market. Our approach also included efforts to strengthen our contractual protections on sub-contracting and to maintain our no-layoff protections. We succeeded on these fronts in the contract awarded by the Das panel.

By retaining the historic ban on sub-contracting achieved in the 2006 round of bargaining and by adding a new Memorandum of Understanding on the Delivery and Collection of Competitive Products, the new contract strengthens the job security of all letter carriers. The new MOU ensures the assignment in city delivery areas to the city carrier craft the delivery and collection work involving competitive products (during or outside regular business hours). All of the MOUs restricting sub-contracting were retained.

Management’s demand for the elimination of the no-layoff clause for carriers with at least six years of service also was rejected; the existing provision is retained.

Health benefits

- **Task force offers alternative to cost shift pattern**

The pattern set by the most recent contracts reached with the APWU and NRLCA calls for the continued shift of health insurance premium costs from the USPS to postal employees, as occurred in the NALC’s 2006 contract. The Das award applies the pattern to city carriers in the new contract, calling for a reduction in the Postal Service’s share of weighted average health premiums in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP)—from 80 percent in 2012 to 78 percent in 2014 (with no change in 2013), and then to 77 percent in 2015 and 76 percent in 2016 for all current career employees. For carriers appointed to career jobs on or after Jan. 12, 2013, the USPS share will be set at 77 percent between 2013 and 2015 and fall to 76 percent in 2016.

NALC resisted this continued cost shift and sought an alternative approach. In fact, the NALC and the Postal Service conducted intensive and productive negotiations over the possible creation of a separate USPS set of health plans for city carriers. The talks faltered on a number of difficult issues that could not be resolved by the arbitration deadline, including whether the USPS plans would be offered through FEHBP or outside of FEHBP. Nevertheless, both parties believe further work on this issue is worth the effort and the Das award includes an MOU on the Resolution of Health Benefit Issues that calls for a task force to resume discussions in this area. Should the task force reach agreement, the cost shift called for by Article 21 might be reversed or otherwise revised.



Representatives from NALC and USPS were on hand Jan. 10 for the signing of the arbitration award that sets the terms of the 2011-2016 National Agreement between the two parties. Pictured (clockwise from upper left) NALC Chief of Staff Jim Sauber, NALC President Fredric Rolando, NALC General Counsel Bruce Simon, Arbitration Board Chairman Shyam Das, USPS Vice President for Labor Relations Doug Tulino, and USPS General Counsel Robert Dufek.

Local bargaining and other notable MOUs:

The period for negotiating new Local Memoranda of Understanding has been set by the new contract from April 1-30, 2013.

Unless otherwise addressed in the Das Award, most of the MOUs in the 2006 National Agreement will be continued in the 2011 contract. In addition, there were more than a dozen new MOUs awarded in this contract and eight existing MOUs were updated. Some highlights of the new or amended memos include:

- A new MOU creates an Article 8 Task Force to develop and test improvements in the process for assigning overtime hours.
- A new MOU creates a joint task force to explore and test possible improvements to the Dispute Resolution Process.
- A new MOU regarding a City Delivery Task Force will seek to improve the work climate while investigating ways to raise operational efficiency. The parties will focus specifically on ways to address factors that create workplace conflict over daily work times.
- An updated MOU on Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process revives the joint exploration of improvements to the route inspection methods.

A complete copy of the Das Award, including updated contract language, the new wage schedules and a full set of new and amended MOUs can be found on the NALC’s website. The March issue of *The Postal Record* will offer more information about the award.

President Rolando and the members of the Executive Council will be available to answer questions from branch leaders at a just-announced 2013 national Rap Session in Las Vegas. Check nalc.org for dates and registration information. In addition, members will receive a letter from President Rolando about the new contract in the weeks to come.

The NALC Contract Administration Unit will work with the Postal Service in the weeks ahead to assemble and publish an official version of the 2011-2016 contract, and NALC Headquarters will distribute copies of the contract to branch presidents when it is ready.

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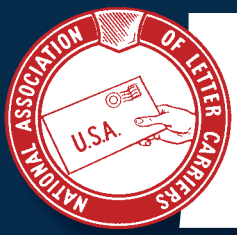
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NALC

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Bulletin

USPS future, new contract will be hot topics at Feb. 9 rap session

NALC President Fredric Rolando has announced that the 2013 national “rap session” will be held on Saturday, Feb. 9, at the Aria Resort & Casino in Las Vegas.

The main topics on the rap session agenda will be the future of the Postal Service and the final and binding award issued Jan. 10 by the three-person board of arbitrators that sets the terms of the 2011-2016 collective-bargaining agreement between the NALC and the U.S. Postal Service.

“This rap session will be a great opportunity for us to talk about the challenges ahead and to answer members’ questions about the provisions of our new agreement,” Rolando said.

A reception will take place at the Aria on Friday night, Feb. 8, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. The session itself will run all day on Saturday, Feb. 9, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with a break for lunch.

The Aria Resort & Casino is located about 3.5 miles from McCarran International Airport. The deadline for room reservation was Jan. 25, although reservations still might be accepted by the hotel based on availability and hotel rate. Call the Aria’s reservation department at 702-590-7757 or toll-free at 866-359-7757. Make sure you identify yourself as being with the National Association of Letter Carriers.

Visit nalc.org for more information.



Notice for transitional employees

If you are a transitional employee (TE), by now you should have received a letter from NALC President Fredric Rolando concerning the process for applying for a career-track city carrier assistant (CCA) position.

In addition, you should have received a booklet offering advice on taking the postal exam as well as practice exams.

Please note: The Postal Service has now confirmed that past exam scores are good for **six years**, not three years as indicated in the booklet.

If you have not yet received the letter or the booklet, contact the national business agent’s office for your region immediately. Visit nalc.org to find your NBA’s telephone number.

“Applying for the CCA position is the first step toward securing a career city carrier job,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “And as expected, implementing the TE application process is complicated and subject to bureaucratic obstacles and misinformation.

“We understand the frustration many TEs are feeling and we want to help,” Rolando said.

If you have any questions about the process or if you are experiencing any problems applying, immediately contact your NBA and provide details to him or her.

Space still available for Cleveland secretary-treasurer seminar

Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel has announced that some spaces still are available for the second of two educational training sessions tailored to assist new branch secretary-treasurers and other local and state officers who are chiefly responsible for financial administration.

This second session will take place in Cleveland, OH, April 22-24, and the deadline to register for it is March 27. These seminars are intended primarily for branch secretary-treasurers, although other branch and state officers who deal directly with branch finances also are invited.

Training will cover the basics for financial officers: taxes, including payroll withholding requirements; accounting systems and maintenance of proper controls; reporting to the Department of Labor, including LM-2, LM-3 and LM-30 forms; fiduciary duties under the Landrum-Griffin Act; bonding of branch officers; NALC dues; legal limits on certain types of union spending; and IRS reporting requirements, including Forms 990 and 990-T.

Sessions will begin at 8 a.m. on the first day and conclude by noon on the third day.

Priority will be given to first-time attendees. The session is limited to 150 participants.

A form to request registration for the Cleveland seminar can be found online at nalc.org. **One person per form, please.** Registration forms must be received at NALC Headquarters in Washington by March 27.

Branches will be responsible for transportation and lodging. The Cleveland seminar room rate is \$99 single/double, plus tax. **Please do not make airline reservations before receiving confirmation from the secretary-treasurer’s office. Hotel information will be included with your letter of acceptance.**

What we can expect from Congress in 2013



NALC President Fredric Rolando

A new Congress was sworn in on Jan. 3, giving letter carriers a chance to fight for reform that actually will address the main problems the Postal Service faces: unaffordable and unreasonable retiree health pre-funding mandates, grossly unfair pension allocations, an outdated business model and an inadequate USPS governance structure.

“The last Congress was the least productive Congress in modern American history,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “But one piece of good news resulting from all that gridlock was that deeply flawed postal reform legislation that had emerged over the past two years did not pass.”

Broader legislative battles also remain, Rolando said, and letter carriers have a stake in several of them.

“Congress may have agreed to raise the debt limit for a few weeks,” Rolando said, “but if it refuses to allow a more permanent raise in March, it could plunge the country—and the world—into a deep economic recession that would cripple the Postal Service.”

Scheduled spending cuts under sequestration would not directly affect letter carriers, he said, but some proposed Republican alternatives to those cuts would target federal employee pay and benefits—such as a proposal to raise federal and postal employee contributions for FERS and CSRS pension benefits by 5 percent of pay.

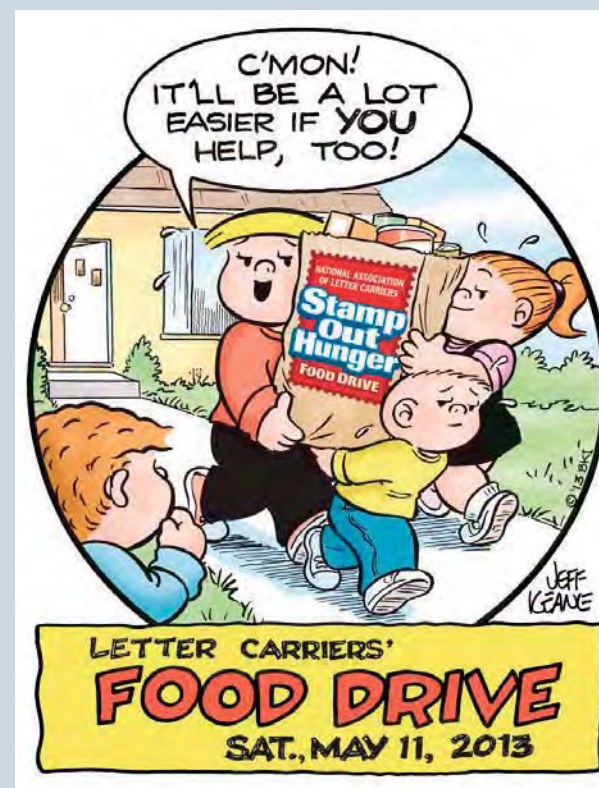
“In other words, despite the fact that our postal pensions are over-funded, our take-home pay as federal workers still could be cut by 5 percent,” Rolando said.

The president also reminded letter carriers that the requirement to deliver mail on Saturdays has been included in annual appropriation bills for more than 30 years, so letter carriers will need to let legislators know that this provision must be part of any continuing resolution to fund the government for the rest of the fiscal year.

“We have our work cut out for us,” Rolando said. “We will have to be better than ever as legislative activists in 2013. The crisis at the Postal Service is real and it is not going away. The federal budget crisis is real and it is not going away, either. Blocking bad legislation won’t be good enough this year. We must fight and win the enactment of meaningful postal reform this year, even as we fight to defend our benefits in the midst of the budget wars around us.”

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New artwork revealed as Food Drive preparations kick into high gear

Preparations continue to pick up speed for the 21st annual NALC National Food Drive on Saturday, May 11.

“In too many of the communities we serve six days a week, hunger remains a huge challenge,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “That’s why each year on the second Saturday in May, thousands of letter carriers enlist the help of family members, friends, co-workers, and managers to participate in the largest one-day food-collection drive in America—our sincere effort to make a real difference.”

The deadline for branches to register for this year’s drive was Jan. 31. Resource guides and other materials continue to be mailed out to branch food drive coordinators in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

“Family Circus” cartoonist Jeff Keane has created new artwork for this year’s drive, suitable for use on postcards,

T-shirts, banners and more. The artwork, along with numerous other useful resources, is available for download via the food drive’s page at nalc.org.

Questions regarding the food drive should be directed to NALC Director of Community Services Pam Donato at 202-662-2489 or at donato@nalc.org.

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NALC

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Bulletin

Timely rap session provides answers, raises new questions



NALC President Fredric Rolando addresses the 2013 National Rap Session in Las Vegas on Feb. 9 as Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broen-del and Executive Vice President Timothy O'Malley look on.

media blitz in a clumsy attempt to jam his decision down the throat of an unsuspecting Congress.

The postmaster general launched his surprise attack with little advance warning to the employees and mailers whose jobs and businesses depend on the Postal Service. President Rolando learned of the plan in a telephone call from Donahoe less than 24 hours before the planned announcement, well after the radical decision was made.

The president relayed the Tuesday night conversation to the 1,400 rap session attendees, noting how Donahoe made it clear that he intended to go forward with the plan even if Congress renews the mandate for six-day delivery in a new continuing resolution (CR) at the end of March.

"I told him that we considered his move a direct attack on the nation's letter carriers, the Postal Service's customers, the American people and the Congress of the United States," Rolando reported. "I told him that the NALC would direct its lawyers to take the most aggressive legal action possible to stop this plan," he added.

Rolando promised the rap session attendees that "we will spare no expense and use every available resource to mobilize our grassroots, lobby our legislators in Congress and seek every media avenue available to us to get the job done." But he emphasized that the leaders in the meeting hall had to do their part to mobilize the members in their branches to fight back if we are to succeed.

The postmaster general's media blitz added an urgent new topic to the rap session's agenda, the president said, but he called the announcement's timing, so close to the meeting, "fortuitous."

"When news of this magnitude breaks," Rolando said, "we at Headquarters often wish we could quickly gather all of the union's leaders in a room to talk about it. Fortunately for us, our wish this time was granted. And we will use it to plan our all-out resistance to Donahoe's disastrous plan."

A full day

Promptly at 8 a.m. on Saturday morning, President Rolando called the rap session to order. Leading off the day's agenda were several members of Las Vegas Branch 2502, who sang the National Anthem, led delegates in the Pledge of Allegiance, and gave a brief invocation to start the day.

Rolando then asked the gathered members for a moment of silence in memory of NALC President Emeritus Vincent R. Sombrotto, who died on Jan. 10. The president also called for the showing of a brief, moving video tribute to Sombrotto, who led the union from 1978 to 2002.

"Those of us who knew Vince will miss him immensely," the president said. "But his memory will live on for decades to come."

Next, Rolando got the session's business started by explaining that, since an extensive array of workshops was offered at the Minneapolis national convention just six months ago, it was decided that this particular national meeting would consist of a single, day-long rap session.

The president then related the roller-coaster sequence of events in the days leading up to the session.

"When Donahoe called me on Tuesday night," Rolando said, "he seemed convinced that his dubious justification for eliminating Saturday mail delivery was well within the law—that the continuing resolution (CR) Congress passed in January to prevent the government from shutting down was not binding on him, even though it contains the six-day mandate. He made it clear to me that he was going to act even if the CR was renewed after the current one expires."

For more than 30 years, Congress has included language in its appropriations bills and CRs that requires the USPS to deliver mail six days a week. But in his phone conversation with Rolando on Feb. 5, the postmaster general noted that the current continuing resolution expires on March 27, and he expressed a surprising level of confidence that any new CR would not contain this language.

"Brothers and sisters, this is a 'my way or the highway' act of defiance aimed at the United States Congress," the president said. Even if the postmaster general were right on the law—and he is not—he is brazenly ignoring the clear will of the Congress.

"The bottom line is this," Rolando said: "If Donahoe firmly believes that he is above the law, then it is time for him to go."

Next moves

Rolando told the gathering that he was drafting a special letter to all active NALC members to explain the dire threat that five-day delivery poses to the future of our jobs and to the viability of the Postal Service. He asked every leader in attendance to communicate the union's message to all members as well.

"The postmaster general does not have a growth plan for the Postal Service," Rolando said, "and without a growth plan, we are doomed to fail. With downsizing as the only strategy, we will continue to lose money, and that will lead to further reductions in days of delivery—the beginning of a downward spiral, from five delivery days a week, to four, to three, to two, to one, to done."

The president took exception to Donahoe's press-conference assertion that letter carriers were fully sympathetic to, and even supportive of, a planned move to five-day delivery. "Nothing could be further from the truth," Rolando said, "something I clearly stated in a second press statement I released following his announcement. In fact, I told him that I would jointly administer a poll on the question of Saturday delivery with the Postal Service, if he would be bound by the results.

"Congress should be just as outraged as we are by this unusual power grab," he continued, noting how the initial responses from Capitol Hill ranged "from good to bad, but some members of Congress have gone after Donahoe, even before I had a chance to speak with many of the nation's top congressional leaders. This authority that the PMG has pulled out of thin air is now being strongly challenged.

"Meanwhile, our focus is not the implementation of Donahoe's plan, but its destruction," the president said.

Marshalling our forces

Rolando announced that, before the current continuing resolution expires on March 27, the NALC is planning rallies at post offices in each state, in crucial media markets—probably on a Sunday. "We want to make this fight about how losing Saturday mail would affect people in each and every state," he said.

As noted above, Donahoe has stated his intention to go through with eliminating Saturday mail even if the six-day language is included in a new continuing resolution. With that in mind, after such a measure gets approved—and assuming the six-day mandate remains in place—the NALC plans to hold a massive rally at USPS Headquarters at L'Enfant Plaza in Washington, "to demand that Donahoe obey the law." (Further details about these rallies will be posted at nalc.org as they become available.)

Food Drive 2013: Register now!

The 21st annual national NALC Food Drive is Saturday, May 11, and branches still can register to take part in the country's largest one-day food-collection event.

"When each of us picks up a bag of food from one customer, and then another and another, it doesn't take long before our LLVs are full, our loading docks are overflowing—and soon we're filling trucks and warehouses with literally tons upon tons of food," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "Sadly, our drive can't erase this country's widespread hunger problem, but there's no doubt our efforts make a huge difference in our customers' lives."

Branch food drive coordinators should mail in their registration packets as soon as possible to NALC Community and Membership Outreach Coordinator Pam Donato. Questions? Contact Donato at 202-662-2489 or donato@nalc.org.

Financial and legislative updates

Next on stage at the rap session was NALC Chief of Staff Jim Sauber, who provided members with a recent history of USPS' financial situation. "The years 2007 to 2012 were the worst five years in Postal Service history," he said. "As the country endured the worst recession since the 1930s, USPS had \$41 billion in losses."

Sauber pointed out that 80 percent of these losses were attributable not to postal operations but rather costs associated with the mandate to pre-fund future retiree health benefits.

"Making things worse," he said, "during this recent Great Recession, mail-intensive sectors, such as housing and finance, took huge hits—and at the same time, electronic substitution of mail accelerated."

But the economy is recovering, and growth in housing and the overall job market helps USPS, he said. "And with the e-commerce boom, consumer spending and package delivery are up, and that helps us, too."

Sauber also reviewed the Postal Service's quarterly financial report to the Postal Board of Governors, released the day before the rap session on Feb. 8. "In the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2013, which covers October, November and December of 2012, the Postal Service showed a net loss of \$1.3 billion. But the accrued cost of pre-funding totaled \$1.4 billion, accounting for all of the Postal Service's losses in this most recent quarter and masking the Postal Service's \$100 million in operational profit.

"We have done our part in collective bargaining to reduce labor costs," Sauber said. "Now, Congress must act to fix the pre-funding problem."

Following Sauber was Director of Legislative and Political Affairs Jennifer Warburton, who presented an update on our lobbying efforts on Capitol Hill. "Our grassroots work paid off in 2012," she said. "Thanks largely to the work we did, Congressman Issa's 'anything-but-postal-reform' bill, H.R. 2309, was kept off the floor of the House throughout 2012, including during the lame-duck session. But in 2013, playing defense will not be good enough." Warburton also gave an overview of the legislative landscape for the 113th Congress.

A strategy for reform

"At last summer's Minneapolis Convention," Rolando said, "we adopted a resolution calling for a new governance structure at the Postal Service—one that provides for a new business model that will allow the Postal Service to innovate and grow, free of the political and regulatory micro-management that threatens to cripple the USPS.

"Since then, the Executive Council has been intensely debating and developing the detail of such a new Postal Service structure," he said, "and one of our ideas is to transform the Postal Service into a government-owned corporation." Such a move would transform the USPS from a highly regulated independent agency into an organization with greater commercial freedom and the ability to attract the kind of board and executive leadership talent needed to revitalize the USPS, he said.



Nearly 1,400 delegates, representing NALC branches, state associations and regional offices from all across the country, attended this year's national rap session.

Such a corporation, Rolando continued, would not have to resort to politicking to make needed revenue-raising changes. "It would be free to introduce new products, to index stamp prices to the consumer price delivery service index, and so on," he said.

"We're still working out the details on this idea, and we will share our findings with you once the picture becomes clearer. But even as we pursue a new governance structure we will demand the protection of our health and retirement benefits, our collective-bargaining rights and the provision of universal service.

"Universal service is our DNA," Rolando said. "Advocating change is risky, but there is no greater risk to this agency and its employees than doing nothing at all."

In the meantime, our immediate legislative priorities remain unchanged, Rolando said: fix pre-funding, gain access to surpluses in the Civil Service Retirement System and the Federal Employees Retirement System—and above all, hold on to six-day delivery. As President Rolando noted to the Executive Council before the rap session, "The PMG's brazen power grab on Saturday delivery has poisoned this issue—it should not be tampered with in any postal reform legislation."

But there are many obstacles that stand in our way to reform, he told the rap session. "The House leadership wants to destroy unions, the Senate is dysfunctional, the White House is disengaged—and then there are divisions with other postal stakeholders over priorities."

To overcome these obstacles, we will need the help of NALC's state associations, Rolando said. "We need our legislative efforts to work in every state, but we realize that our current field plan is broad and doesn't necessarily work in every state, so we will brainstorm ways to tailor this plan to include some best practices, to mobilize members to push for meaningful reform."

Analyzing the Das award

For the better part of the day, President Rolando went through each page, section and line of the Jan. 10 arbitration award, taking questions from members as he went along.

"We want to give members a good chance to review everything contained in the award," Rolando said. "The folks back home will have lots of questions, and going through line-by-line like this will help us to deal with those questions."

The review also served to help shape a question-and-answer document that is being negotiated by the NALC and postal management, and that will be released as soon as both parties approve it.

Organizing importance

The new national agreement removes the transitional employee (TE) classification and creates a job called city carrier assistant (CCA).

"Over the coming weeks, we will see an influx of 30,000 new CCAs," Rolando said. "It is very important that we organize these workers who now have a direct career track thanks to the arbitration decision. They are truly the future of our union."

But our organizing numbers are somewhat troubling, the president said. "Ninety-three percent of our career workforce nationwide is organized, but our overall organizing percentage has been dragged down by sub-par organization among TEs.

"It is vitally important that we organize non-career members of our bargaining unit as well as we do career letter carriers," Rolando said, "because CCAs are the future of our union."

Director of City Delivery Lew Drass then offered a presentation on organizing, aimed at assisting leaders who must organize thousands of new CCAs. "A 100-percent organized carrier workforce has always been NALC's goal," he said.

There also was a special discussion of a memorandum of understanding included in the new national agreement that calls for the formation of a city delivery task force, designed to find ways of improving the work climate, and exploring means to make mail delivery more efficient.

"Any ideas for how to make city delivery more efficient have to come from those of us who actually deliver the mail," President Rolando said. "And they must also provide for the end of the relentless pressure placed on letter carriers by misguided supervisors."

Rolando used the last hour of the day to take general questions from the floor on any topic. A lively and freewheeling discussion ensued, with many questions answered and concerns noted.

Shortly before 5:30, when Rolando noted that no one else was at a microphone, he ended the rap session. He emphasized the importance of fighting for Saturday delivery and organizing CCAs before concluding: "Safe travels home, everyone," he said. "Let's get to work."

Electronic filing for LM-3, LM-4

Branch treasurers are reminded that the Department of Labor has instituted an Electronic Filing System (EFS) for annual LM-3 and LM-4 reports, which helps eliminate math errors. Also, electronic signatures no longer must be acquired weeks in advance and are free.

In addition, once transmitted, the form is received and posted online the same day, which reduces chances of late filing.

The new EFS is highly recommended. To learn more about EFS, visit dol.gov/olms/regs/compliance/efs/efshelp.htm.

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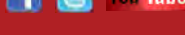
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NALC plans March 24 ‘day of action’ to support 6-day mail

On Sunday, March 24, letter carriers will lead the charge across America in sending a message to Congress and the postmaster general that they cannot “fix” the USPS by reducing services such as six-day mail delivery.

“Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe’s destructive plan to discontinue Saturday letter mail delivery, in violation of the law and in flagrant defiance of Congress, is a direct threat to the very existence of the Postal Service,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “What’s needed, instead, is a plan that will strengthen the Postal Service, not slowly dismantle it.”

To support this message, NALC members, alongside other unions, small-business owners, civic organizations and faith groups—not to mention our families, friends and neighbors—will gather on Sunday, March 24, near prominent post offices in at least one large city in each state, sites chosen to provide us access to maximum news media exposure.



**ON MARCH 24 WE’LL TELL CONGRESS:
“DON’T DISMANTLE THE POSTAL SERVICE”**

“On that Sunday, we will let our customers and our fellow citizens know that our fight is their fight, that losing Saturday mail would affect the residents of each state in the union,” Rolando said.

NALC members who have signed up to receive e-Activist Network e-mail messages have also been getting special notices via Delivering for America (D4A), our web-based coalition of Postal Service supporters. These D4A e-mails have asked members to participate in nearby events to support Saturday mail service and a plan for growth. The D4A website (DeliveringForAmerica.com) will provide supporters with the necessary tools and information to make sure our voice is heard, on March 24 and beyond.

It’s true that, for now, six-day mail delivery seems poised for preservation in the law through Sept. 30 (the end of the Postal Service’s fiscal year—see story at right). But Donahoe has stated that he still plans to plow ahead and drop Saturday mail beginning in August.

“Donahoe’s so-called plan clearly flouts the will of Congress,” Rolando said, “and it sets the stage for a move to four-day and three-day delivery in the years ahead.

“And to call it a ‘plan’ is laughable,” he said. “Donahoe and the Board of Governors simply don’t have any plan—or vision, or growth strategy—for the future. Their only plan is to cut service, reduce headcounts and continue to shrink. They have simply thrown in the towel.

“We, however, have not thrown in the towel,” the president said, “because we know that eliminating a day of mail delivery will hit senior citizens, rural communities and small businesses the hardest.

“We know that cutting service to the 33 percent of American businesses that say they want Saturday delivery will drive mail volume out of the system and invite new competitors into our business to provide Saturday service.

“And we know that once those competitors emerge on Saturdays, they will agitate to get access to America’s mailboxes every day of the week.

“We have a solemn responsibility to send our representatives in Congress this clear message,” Rolando said: “They cannot let Donahoe get away with his destructive, unilateral move to eliminate Saturday mail delivery.

“So on March 24,” he said, “I am asking you to demonstrate; to communicate; to educate the public and elected officials; to hit the streets legally, loudly, boldly and with passion. Join your brothers and sisters for this crucial day of action—the latest milestone in our ongoing campaign to halt the systematic destruction of America’s only truly universal delivery network. We must protect this 237-year-old institution that has its roots in the U.S. Constitution and that supports 8 million private-sector jobs in a \$1.3 trillion postal industry.”

Please note: Letter carriers should not wear their uniforms for this event.

Special thanks from Sombrotto family

“From the thoughtful cards and letters, the many generous donations to the National Kidney Foundation, to the moving tribute posted this past February, the outpouring of support from the members of the NALC has been overwhelming. You should know that it has helped us enormously at this difficult time. Just knowing what an impact ‘Vince’ had on so many of you makes him even more special to us. We are forever grateful.”

Perhaps you sent a lovely card,
Or sat quietly in a chair.
Perhaps you sent a funeral spray,
If so, we saw it there.
Perhaps you spoke the kindest words,
As any friend could say,
Perhaps you were not there at all,
Just thought of us that day.
Whatever you did to console our hearts,
We thank you so very much, whatever the part.

—The Sombrotto Family

(Note: NALC President Emeritus Vincent R. Sombrotto, who served as the union’s leader from 1978 to 2002, died of natural causes on Jan. 10. He was 89.)

NALC Food Drive: Saturday, May 11

Preparations for the 21st annual NALC Food Drive continue to pick up steam as May 11 draws closer, with letter carriers working hard to get postal customers excited about the largest national one-day drive designed to help out community food banks and pantries. Last year’s drive netted more than 70 million pounds of nonperishable food donations.

“We are fortunate,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “Most of us have never known what it’s like to go hungry or wonder when our next meal is coming. But millions of our customers face this challenge every single day. Our dedication and hard work each year on the second Saturday in May help ease the hunger of these families.”

Joining NALC as supporters of the letter carrier effort this year to “Stamp Out Hunger” are the National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association, Campbell Soup, Valpak, the USPS, United Way Worldwide, the AFL-CIO, Feeding America, Uncle Bob’s Self Storage, AARP and its “Drive to End Hunger” campaign, GLS Companies (a full-service commercial printing firm), Source Direct Plastics (manufacturer of plastic grocery bags used in many areas of the country), the Publix grocery store chain and Valassis/Red Plum.

Visit nalc.org for Food Drive resources and information.

Next *Postal Record* to be delayed

The Postal Record

Please note that production of the April 2013 *Postal Record* will be delayed to allow for proper in-depth coverage of the March 24 national day of action. Members should receive the April magazine sometime mid-month. Also, this temporary shift in our production schedule might result in your copy of the May 2013 edition of the magazine arriving a few days later than expected.

Are you an e-Activist?

Stay informed and get the very latest alerts from the NALC via the e-Activist Network. Go to nalc.org today to sign up or to update your e-mail address.



Legislative interest in postal issues gains momentum



NALC President Fredric Rolando

pre-fund the health benefits of future retirees.”

Rolando submitted written remarks for the committee’s consideration.

“NALC is committed to working together with both [political] parties to fashion a bipartisan reform bill that will preserve a strong and vibrant Postal Service for decades to come,” he wrote. Attached to his 31-page testimony were copies of an Opinion Research Corp. study on the impact of USPS’ planned service cuts, letters from the White House and the USPS inspector general regarding the Postal Service’s plans, and the Lazard white paper on strategies for revitalizing the USPS.

The same day as the Senate hearing, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) introduced legislation—S. 316 and H.R. 630, respectively—that addresses many of the key issues the Postal Service faces.

“The NALC gladly endorses these measures, which, if passed, would help the Postal Service return to financial stability while protecting the services offered to Americans and their businesses throughout the country,” Rolando said, pointing out that both bills call for continuing the six-day delivery schedule that has been the law for 30 years. As this *Bulletin* was prepared, 11 senators had co-sponsored S. 316 and 54 House members had signed on to H.R. 630.

Elsewhere in the House, Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) on March 5 introduced H.R. 961, the Postal Service Stabilization Act, a bill crafted to address the billions of dollars the Postal Service has overpaid into its account within the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). The measure calls for the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to calculate the FERS surplus fairly and accurately and to return the overpaid amount to the USPS so it can apply the funds toward its financial obligations.

“The NALC is grateful to Congressman Lynch for taking the lead on addressing this nagging pension over-funding problem,” Rolando said, “and we are pleased to fully support H.R. 961 as a sensible and fair approach to providing the Postal Service with much-needed financial relief.”

Lynch is the ranking member of the House subcommittee with Postal Service oversight. In the last session of Congress, he was the author of H.R. 1351, which addressed the postal pension surpluses in the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund.

Independent audits have shown that, since 1970, the Postal Service has overpaid its FERS and CSRS liabilities by tens of billions of dollars, because of a calculation formula used by the Office of Personnel Management that fails to consider the unique position of the USPS within the federal government.

According to a report by the Hay Group, an independent actuarial consulting firm, if OPM were to fairly adjust its calculations to account for postal-specific factors rather than government-wide ones, it could result in a FERS surplus of at least \$12 billion, instead of the \$3 billion figure OPM derived using government-wide factors. Lynch is currently working on separate legislation that would specifically address the CSRS surplus.

H.R. 961 had 13 co-sponsors as this *Bulletin* went to press.

On March 6, the House of Representatives approved a new continuing resolution (CR) to fund the government through the current fiscal year, ending Sept. 30. (The current CR expires March 27.) The language mandating six-day-a-week mail delivery that is part of the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act was included in the CR that was passed. Unfortunately, for reasons not pertaining to the six-day language, the measure received very little support from House Democrats. Fortunately, the Senate version of the CR also included the six-day mandate. However, as this *NALC Bulletin* was being prepared, Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) and other senators offered an amendment to the Senate’s version of the CR that specifically called for removing the six-day clause from the resolution.

NALC has unleashed a major print, cable TV and web-based advertising campaign to convince Congress to resist more service cuts. Meanwhile, President Rolando sent targeted e-Activist Network and prepared possible text-message blasts to urge NALC members to lobby for the clause’s preservation.

Visit nalc.org for the latest updates.

Advertising:

NALC has placed full-page ads in several Capitol Hill newspapers for members of Congress and their staff members to see just how far out of line the postmaster general has stepped in his effort to end Saturday delivery. Also, we have placed two TV commercials in rotation on highly watched cable news channels. Watch the commercials on NALC’s YouTube channel—visit nalc.org to find the link.



Our first postmaster general would not be amused.

Six-day mail delivery is in the law.

For the past 30 years, Congress has required the Postal Service to deliver six days a week. Nothing in the law has changed.

The postmaster general used to believe Congress alone has the authority to change the mail delivery schedule.

“Congress must act ... [to] grant the Postal Service the authority to determine delivery frequency.”

Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe, September 2011

But now he says he doesn’t need Congress to get rid of Saturday delivery.

Is the postmaster general above the law?



Florida carrier killed in car crash



Juan Carlos Riestra of Ft. Pierce, FL and a 12-year member of West Palm Beach Branch 1690, died March 7 from injuries he sustained after his LLV was hit by a car in Port St. Lucie the day before. St. Lucie County sheriff’s deputies told WPTV-TV that the 53-year-old Riestra was driving his mail truck south on Indian River Drive north of Walton Road when the other driver, who was heading north, crossed a double-yellow line and sideswiped the LLV, causing it to roll over on its side. According to a Palm Beach Post obituary, Riestra is survived by a son, a stepdaughter, a stepson and two brothers. “The thoughts of the entire membership of the NALC go out to Juan Carlos’ family at this difficult time,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. Memorial services for Riestra were still being arranged.

Q-and-A for City Carrier Assistants (CCAs)

A jointly developed question-and-answer document provides the mutual understanding of the national parties on issues related to city carrier assistants (CCAs)—the new classification of letter carrier created by the Jan. 10 interest arbitration award that set the terms of the 2011-2016 National Agreement. This jointly developed document provides the mutual understanding of the national parties on issues related to CCAs. This Q-and-A, M-01804, is available for download at nalc.org/depart/citydel. Note that this document may be updated if agreement is reached on additional matters concerning CCAs.

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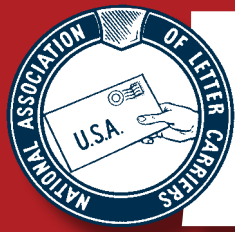
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Bulletin

USA for 6-Day!

Letter carriers rally nationwide to support USPS, 6-day mail



Photo by David Schrager

NALC President Fredric Rolando addressed a “USA for 6-Day” rally Sunday, March 24, at the Boston Common bandstand in Massachusetts.

weather might have varied wildly from one region to the next, the letter carrier message on rally day remained sharp, focused and consistent.

“The Postal Service itself is the hub of a \$1.3 trillion national mailing industry, with 7.5 million private-sector jobs,” Rolando said later. “Ending Saturday delivery—a 17 percent reduction in service—would save taxpayers nothing, because the Postal Service funds itself solely through the sale of stamps and other postal products.”

Judging from the hundreds of news reports about the event that continue to pour in to NALC Headquarters in Washington, letter carriers succeeded in debunking the notion that eliminating Saturday will help solve the financial problems facing the USPS.

Georgia State Association President Don Griggs, for example, told *The Augusta Chronicle* that what has hurt the Postal Service is legislation passed in 2006 that requires USPS to pay for future postal workers’ retiree health insurance decades in advance—a mandate that has forced USPS to come up with billions of dollars up-front for future annuitants when that money could be used to address today’s financial troubles. “Anything worth having is worth fighting for,” Griggs said. “The battle is not over.”



At a rally in Burlington, VT, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT, I) spoke with NALC Vice President George Mignosi (C) and Burlington Br. 521’s Kevin Donovan.

changes the most, because residents there rely on USPS and often cannot afford to pay their bills or do business online. “The Postal Service is incredibly valuable to them, and it’s something they want to see maintained six days a week,” he said.

It makes no sense to degrade what’s clearly working to fix Congress’ mistake, President Rolando said. “The idea of cutting a day of mail delivery is part of an irrational business formula that would drive mail out of the system and reduce postal revenue.

“Our message on March 24, which rang loud and clear across America, is one that we continue to hammer home today,” he said: “Congress should not dismantle the Postal Service; it needs to fix the pre-funding fiasco it created and not allow the postmaster general to slash services in ways that hurt the public, businesses and the USPS itself.”

Visit nalc.org to check out close to 2,000 photos from events across the country, as well as hundreds of links to print, radio and television coverage of events.

“Don’t dismantle the Postal Service; keep six-day mail delivery!”

That’s the main message that was conveyed by thousands of letter carriers across America on Sunday, March 24, as active and retired NALC members in scores of cities joined family members, friends, co-workers, allies from the business and labor communities, and members of the general public to raise awareness in Congress and in the news media about just how essential the Postal Service and Saturday mail is for tens of millions of Americans and businesses.

“Reducing service by one day a week would impose hardships, raise costs to our customers and drive business away,” said NALC President Fredric Rolando, who led one such rally in Boston. “It would do nothing to fix the financial problems facing the Postal Service, but rather worsen them and set the USPS on a path to destruction. Ending Saturday delivery, which is indispensable to many rural residents, the elderly, small businesses, the millions who lack access to reliable Internet service, and many others, would be the beginning of the end.”

The early springtime date for the day of action meant that some rally-goers on the East Coast and in the Midwest had to endure sometimes heavy snowfall while their compatriots in places like Boise and Los Angeles held up signs and chanted slogans while wearing short-sleeve shirts and shorts. But while the



Letter carriers in St. Louis rallied in a late-spring snowstorm.

ance decades in advance—a mandate that has forced USPS to come up with billions of dollars up-front for future annuitants when that money could be used to address today’s financial troubles. “Anything worth having is worth fighting for,” Griggs said. “The battle is not over.”

No other public or private entity has to comply with a similar mandate, Perth Amboy, NJ Branch 457 President Raymond Winegrad told the *Home News Tribune*. “This is not just about a union, this is about the community,” he added. “It is about businesses that thrive because of us. It is about the clergy and the elderly that depend on us. It’s about food banks. We do more than just deliver mail.”

At a rally in Pittsburgh’s Northside neighborhood, Mon-Yough, PA Branch 332 President Paul Rozzi told *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* that the country also can’t afford the loss of about 80,000 postal service jobs that would result from cutting a day of delivery. “Thirty percent of businesses say they cannot operate without Saturday service,” Rozzi told. “Who would go against that?”

Rallying in the Pacific Northwest, Eugene, OR Branch 82 activist Kevin Card told KVAL-TV that he thinks rural communities would feel the



Hundreds of ralliers lined the street in South Florida.

New deadline for Cleveland financial training session

Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel has announced that the registration deadline for the April 22-24 branch financial training session in Cleveland **has been extended to April 11**. The seminar is tailored toward new branch secretary-treasurers and other local and state officers who have financial administration responsibilities. More details and a form to request registration for the Cleveland seminar is available on the Secretary-Treasurer’s page at nalc.org. **Branches are responsible for transportation and lodging. Please do not make airline reservations before receiving confirmation from the Secretary-Treasurer’s office. Hotel information will be included with your letter of acceptance.**

Lynch bill addresses FERS surplus

Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) on March 5 introduced H.R. 961, the Postal Service Stabilization Act, a bill crafted to address the billions of dollars the Postal Service has overpaid into its account within the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). The measure calls for the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to calculate the FERS surplus fairly and accurately and to return the overpaid amount to the USPS so it can apply the funds toward its financial obligations.

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According to a 2013 report by the Hay Group, an independent actuarial consulting firm, if OPM were to fairly adjust its calculations to account for postal-specific factors rather than government-wide ones, it could result in a postal FERS surplus of at least \$12 billion, instead of the \$3 billion figure OPM derived using government-wide factors. Hay’s separate audit of the Postal Service’s CSRS account in 2010 revealed a surplus of up to \$75 billion.

Das award implementation continues

New MOU on filling vacancies

On March 19, NALC President Fredric Rolando signed a new memorandum of understanding (MOU), Re: Part-time Flexible Opportunities (M-01808). This MOU establishes a national-level workgroup to develop and implement a process for filling residual letter carrier vacancies by converting part-time flexibles (PTFs) and/or allowing letter carriers to transfer into vacancies in installations where there are no PTFs to convert.

“The transfer process has been frozen for some time now,” NALC Director of City Delivery Lew Drass said. “There are a number of letter carriers with transfer requests that should have been granted a long time ago.”

This MOU is intended to reduce the number of PTFs around the country; provide an opportunity for PTF and full-time letter carriers to transfer into installations that have no PTFs and also have residual vacancies not under a proper Article 12 withholding order; and allow all the transitional employees (TEs) who will become city carrier assistants (CCAs) to be hired so the relative standing order will be finalized in each installation before consideration is given to converting CCAs to full-time career status.

The joint workgroup agreed to begin by identifying residual vacancies not under proper withholding. Once the residual vacancies are determined, the workgroup agreed on a three-step process to fill them:

1. Residual vacancies not subject to a proper withholding order will be filled by assigning unassigned regulars and full-time flexibles in the installation who are able to do the job.
2. PTFs will be converted to full-time status and placed into the residual vacancies not filled by the first step.
3. Any remaining residual vacancies after the first two steps will be filled by transfers from the letter carrier craft before consideration is given to converting CCAs to full-time career status.

This MOU does not apply to employees from other crafts. Transfers awarded under this MOU will allow career letter carriers to transfer into their new installations as full-time regulars.

Here are the mechanics of the process that will be used for transfers:

1. All transfer requests will be processed through the eReassign system.
2. Transfers will be awarded on a “first in, first out” basis. Accordingly, carriers don’t have to do anything if they are interested and they already have an active request in eReassign to go to an installation where a vacancy exists as described above. Any letter carrier who desires a transfer and who hasn’t previously applied on eReassign should do so immediately. If you know where you want to go, just go on eReassign and apply. **There is no need to wait for the list of available vacancies to come out.**
3. The normal transfer considerations (attendance, safety and work record) will apply. Given the short duration of this MOU, the workgroup agreed that if a letter carrier declines an opportunity to transfer, the carrier will not be considered for a different transfer request under this MOU. Therefore, the best advice is this: Don’t put in for a transfer you don’t really want.
4. There will be no relocation benefits available to those letter carriers who accept transfers under this MOU.
5. Letter carriers granted a transfer under this MOU will enter their new installation **as full-time regulars and will begin a new period of craft seniority**. In other words, the seniority date in the new installation—for purposes of bidding, vacation selection, excessing, etc.—will be the date the carrier enters the new installation.

This MOU is set to expire on April 10 unless the parties agree to mutually extend the timeframe. Look for more information about the available vacancies on the City Delivery page at nalc.org. NALC will post available vacancies in a special *NALC Bulletin* provided the union receives a list from the Postal Service in a timely fashion.

Obama signs CR with 6-day language intact

On March 26, President Barack Obama signed into law a continuing resolution (CR) that will keep the federal government operating through the current fiscal year, which ends on Sept. 30. Thanks largely to thousands of NALC activists’ phone calls, letters and e-mail messages, the CR retains the text that mandates the Postal Service to deliver the mail six days a week.

Keeping the six-day mandate in the law was by no means a done deal, as several senators advocated an amendment to remove it. But following an intensive lobbying effort by NALC members, the Senate wound up approving the CR, with six-day mail included, on March 20. The House followed suit the next day and sent it to Obama for his signature.

“While this bit of good news gives us a little room to breathe for now,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said, “the CR preserves Saturday mail in the law only through September 30, while Postmaster General Donahoe still threatens to end Saturday mail delivery on his own in August.

“So until six-day delivery is protected beyond September 30, our battle to keep it continues,” he said.

Watson appointed Dir. of Retired Members



As NALC’s expert on workers’ compensation issues, Ron Watson was called to testify before a Senate hearing in July 2011.

With the retirement of NALC Director of Retired Members Ernie Kirkland at the end of March, NALC President Fredric Rolando has appointed former Assistant to the President for Compensation Ron Watson as the NALC Director of Retired Members effective April 1.

Kirkland, a member of Central Kentucky Bluegrass Branch 361, was first elected president of that branch in 1978. He was appointed part-time regional administrative assistant for Region 6 in 1996, and was appointed as a full-time RAA for the region in 2000. He held that post until his election by acclamation as head of the union’s Retired Members Department at the 2006 national convention in Las Vegas and was re-elected in 2010.

“I know I speak for the entire Executive Council and the many members Ernie has assisted throughout his career in wishing him health and happiness in his well-deserved retirement,” Rolando said.

Watson was president of Corvallis, OR Branch 1274 for more than 10 years, as well as a part-time RAA and a local business agent until 1999, when he became a full-time RAA in Region 2. In April 2004, NALC President William Young named Watson as assistant to the president for compensation, where he served until his retirement in December 2006. He is an acknowledged expert on federal workers’ compensation issues, and has continued to work on these issues for NALC as the need has arisen, including in testimony before congressional committees.

With the appointment of Watson, the Retired Members Department will have oversight over the Compensation Department.

“Ron has a long history of tirelessly assisting NALC members throughout his career, and will be a welcome addition to our headquarters team,” Rolando said.

Legal opinion refutes USPS claim on cutting 6-day mail

Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe’s claim that the Postal Service has the right to cut its mail delivery schedule from six days to five days “rests upon a faulty USPS premise,” the Government Accountability Office (GAO) said in a legal opinion released on March 21, adding that there is no legislative authority from Congress allowing the change.

“The GAO agrees with an ever-growing chorus of voices that the postmaster general doesn’t have the law on his side in this matter,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “He should obey the law as a matter of principle. To cut a day of mail delivery would disrupt the nation’s only universal delivery network, place disproportionate harm on rural communities, senior citizens, and small-business owners who rely on six-day mail service, and it would serve only to accelerate a financial ‘death spiral’ for the Postal Service.”

The GAO wrote that USPS is bound by current law and the current continuing resolution to fund the federal government, which requires “USPS to continue 6-day delivery and rural delivery of mail at not less than the 1983 level”—that is, full mail delivery six days a week.

The March 21 legal opinion was requested by Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA) shortly after Donahoe announced on Feb. 6 that he would unilaterally end Saturday mail delivery beginning in August.

Visit “Latest News” on nalc.org to find links to the GAO opinion and a news release from Rep. Connolly about it.

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Rolando testifies before House committee

NALC President Fredric Rolando was among those asked to testify on Capitol Hill on April 17 before a House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing on the Postal Service’s financial situation.

The hearing began with several representatives accusing Postal Service Board of Governors Chairman Mickey Barnett of backing away from USPS’ announced plan to reduce the number of delivery days each week from six to five beginning in August because of intense pressure, including from postal unions.

But under closer questioning from lawmakers, Barnett and Government Accountability Office Comptroller General Gene Dodaro made it clear that the decision not to unilaterally reduce the delivery schedule resulted from the need to follow the law, which calls for a six-day delivery schedule.

During his testimony, Rolando said that on the merits, eliminating Saturday delivery would be a costly mistake that would not only make it harder for the Postal Service to grow the business but also would cost money by driving away customers.

Testifying alongside Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe on the second panel, President Rolando addressed an April 10 Board of Governors’ statement that called for reopening and renegotiating postal labor contracts in search of cost savings.

Rolando told the committee that renegotiating the contracts is unnecessary, because the NALC’s recently arbitrated agreement allows us to look for ways to work with the Postal Service to find cost reductions in health care



NALC President Fredric Rolando testified on April 17 before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. *(Hearing photos by Marty Katz, washingtonphotographer.com.)*

expenses and in an improved route adjustment process. The 2011-2016 National Agreement was settled by an arbitrator on Feb. 10. The pact reduced starting pay by 25 to 33 percent, allows for health care savings, and provides for several labor-management task forces to work on ways to increase revenues and cut costs.

Rolando added that committee members should focus on finding ways to strengthen the Postal Service for the future, not on slashing services and dismantling the universal network. “I don’t see where this is a partisan issue,” he told the committee. “This is America’s Postal Service.”

Visit “Latest News” on nalc.org to read President Rolando’s full submitted written testimony.



Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA) spoke briefly with President Rolando before the hearing.

Food Drive prep in final stages



As you read this, the 21st annual NALC Food Drive is less than two weeks away.

“All of the hard work, the planning, the meetings, the check-lists—all of that is about to pay off,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “And our customers who need this food will be the true beneficiaries of this massive, nationwide effort.”

The 21st annual drive is Saturday, May 11, and more than 1,400 NALC branches in just about every city, state and territory will have letter carriers, family members and thousands of volunteers out and about to help collect, sort and distribute the cans, boxes and jars of non-perishable food items left in bags next to customers’ mailboxes.

The NALC’s effort is the nation’s largest one-day food-collection drive.

“Since food pantries and other service organizations are pretty much tapped out by the time our drive rolls around,” Rolando said, “this infusion of food comes at just the right time.”

In fact, the second Saturday in May was specifically chosen for the annual event. Pantry shelves filled up through winter-holiday generosity are often bare or nearly so by late spring—a sad reflection of the reality that widespread hunger in America is a tough problem to solve. Also, school meal programs typically do not continue operation during summer months.

Last year, the food drive gathered more than 70 million pounds of food, bringing our grand total to 1.2 billion pounds.

“It’s fun to set goals, to strive for better collection numbers and to break records,” the president said, “but all any of us ask is that you try your best to collect as much food as you can. Helping our customers feed their hungry families is our real goal.”

Branch food drive coordinators are reminded to mail in collection results, along with branch number, city and state, the name and position of the NALC official certifying results, and the names of food banks receiving the donations to: NALC Food Drive Final Results, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

Results must be received no later than May 24.

BJ’s apologizes for flyer that ‘missed the mark’



The CEO of BJ’s Wholesale has sent a letter apologizing for a mailing that has begun reaching post offices across the country.

The mailing was apparently meant to acquire new customers and contained some intended humor directed at letter carriers, asking carriers not to stick the mailing in their pockets.

“While the message was supposed to be humorous, we may have missed the mark,” BJ’s President and CEO Laura Sen wrote. “We apologize to the U.S. Postal Service and mail carriers for any offense or misunderstanding caused by our mailer message.”

The 15 states targeted by the mailer are Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Virginia.

Visit “Latest News” on nalc.org to see the flyer and read the apology letter.

Ullico Casualty in receivership

Ullico Casualty Company has consented to an order of rehabilitation filed by the Delaware Department of Insurance and granted by the Delaware Chancery Court.

NALC branches that have a policy from Ullico Casualty Company should be contacted by a statutory receiver appointed by the court. Branches may also obtain information at http://delawareinsurance.gov/departments/berg/rehab_bureau.shtml or by calling 800-218-1044.

Only business lines under Ullico Casualty Company are affected. Professional liability policies through State National Company or Hudson Insurance Company are not affected.

Branches with affected policies should obtain insurance through another company and cancel any policy with Ullico Casualty that is negatively affected. Should you need assistance in obtaining a policy with another company, please contact NALC Secretary-Treasurer Jane E. Broendel. More information is posted under the Secretary-Treasurer tab at nalc.org.

Board of Governors backs away from 5-day plan



NALC President Fredric Rolando

Nine weeks after Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe said at a press conference that the Postal Service planned to unilaterally eliminate Saturday mail delivery beginning in August, the USPS Board of Governors announced that it was backing away from that plan.

In an April 10 press release following its spring meeting in Washington, DC, the board said the Postal Service would “follow the law” and would halt “implementation of its new delivery schedule”—for now.

“NALC is gratified that the Board of Governors has seen the light on the law,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said, “especially after Congress endorsed six-day mail and the Government Accountability Office affirmed that the continuing resolution mandating six-day mail is the law.”

The continuing resolution (CR), passed by Congress on March 21 and signed into law by President Barack Obama on March 26, funds the federal government through Sept. 30, the end of Fiscal Year 2013. The CR renewed the language that calls for six-day delivery.

Meanwhile, the GAO stated unequivocally that Donahoe—despite his claims to the contrary—does not have the legal authority to reduce mail delivery service from the current six-day schedule.

Although the governors effectively conceded that the postmaster general was wrong to initiate such a plan, their statement reiterated support for an eventual change to five-day delivery—meaning that letter carriers still have plenty of work left to do to make sure six-day mail service receives the legal protection it needs.

“I must credit the hard work of letter carriers, whose efforts to get the message out about Saturday delivery were critical to this positive development,” Rolando said. “But I cannot stress enough that this victory is only the most recent in our ongoing battle. Saturday mail is still far from being permanently protected—the Board of Governors stated that it expects legislation allowing elimination of Saturday mail delivery to be included in legislation later this year. So all of us must remain diligent and continue to fight to retain this competitive advantage of ours that’s so critical to the future of the Postal Service.

“We understand better than anyone how losing Saturday delivery would reduce mail volume and revenue—sending the USPS on a death spiral,” he added. “It would disproportionately affect small businesses, the elderly, rural communities, the one-half of the public that pays bills by mail and the many millions who lack access to reliable Internet service. And it would cost tens of thousands of good middle-class postal jobs.”

It is past time for the Board of Governors to reconsider its entire “shrink to survive” strategy, Rolando said. “Degrading the Postal Service’s last-mile network is a losing strategy. More than a third of all business mailers have told us that they want to keep Saturday mail service, and eliminating it would drive millions of customers away.

“What the Postal Service needs now is a growth strategy,” he said, “and Congress must enact comprehensive reform that overhauls the USPS governance structure and provides greater pricing and product flexibility.”

Above all, Rolando said, Congress needs to reduce or eliminate the crushing burden it placed on USPS in 2006 to pre-fund decades’ worth of future retiree health benefits—a mandate that is shared by no other government agency or private enterprise and that has caused more than 90 percent of this year’s financial loss so far. In fact, figures from the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2013, which covers September, October and November of 2012, show that, absent pre-funding, the Postal Service would have realized a \$100 million profit.

NALC monitoring as ricin threat taints mail stream

On April 17, the NALC was notified that a letter routed through the Government Mail Facility in Washington, DC, and opened at a private facility that processes the mail for the U.S. Senate, had tested positive for ricin.

NALC Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr. reported that Region 13 National Business Agent Tim Dowdy and Washington, DC Branch 142 President Robert Williams attended a briefing that day conducted by the USPS and were advised that two letters had tested positive for ricin in what were called preliminary tests, with confirmation test results pending. Dowdy and Williams visited the Government Mail Facility to speak with carriers there.

Later that evening, a Mississippi man was arrested and charged with mailing the suspected ricin letters.

Ricin is a poison found naturally in castor beans. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s website, cdc.gov, has detailed information about ricin and its effects.

NALC will continue to keep you informed as the situation develops and more is learned. Check out nalc.org to review the standup talk that the Postal Service will be giving. The website also will contain the very latest news.

Memorandum on filling vacancies extended

On March 19, NALC President Fredric Rolando signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU), Re: Part-time Flexible Opportunities (M-01808), that established a national-level workgroup to develop and implement a process for filling residual letter carrier vacancies by converting part-time flexibles (PTFs) and/or allowing letter carriers to transfer into vacancies in installations where there are no PTFs to convert.

This MOU was set to expire on April 10 but was extended until May 10 by a new memorandum of understanding, M-01809, available for review on the Contract Administration Unit’s page at nalc.org.

“The Postal Service is still in the process of compiling the list of vacancies available for transfer opportunities,” NALC Director of City Delivery Lew Drass said. “We expect the first list to be provided soon.”

Once the Postal Service provides the list of vacancies available for transfer opportunities to NALC, it will be posted on nalc.org.

The Postal Service plans to provide NALC with an updated list daily, and the list on the NALC website will be updated as it is provided by the Postal Service.

Cost-of-living adjustments

The projected accumulation toward the next cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for letter carriers under the 2011-2016 National Agreement is \$416, based on the April 16 release of the March Consumer Price Index (CPI).

This COLA will be based on the increase in the CPI between January 2013 and July 2013.

Note that under the terms of the 2011-2016 agreement, payment of this COLA will be deferred for one year and will take effect in the second full pay period after the release of the July 2014 CPI.

Earlier this year, following the Feb. 21 release of the January 2013 CPI, the first COLA for letter carriers under the 2011-2016 National Agreement was set at \$146 annually.

This first COLA was based on the increase in the CPI between July 2012 and January 2013. It amounts to 7 cents per hour, the equivalent of \$5.60 per pay period or \$146 annually.

Note that under the terms of the 2011-2016 agreement, payment of this COLA will be deferred for one year and will take effect in the second full pay period after the release of the January 2014 CPI.

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Rolando shares NALC’s ‘vision’ at PostalVision conference

Speaking at this year’s PostalVision 2020 conference in Washington, DC, NALC President Fredric Rolando explained in persuasive terms why the Postal Service’s plan to eliminate a day of mail delivery service is neither warranted nor wise, and would in fact be destructive.

PostalVision 2020 is an annual forum that began in 2010. It’s designed to ignite imaginative thinking and to stimulate provocative, candid conversation about what Americans should have in the way of postal services in 2020 and beyond.

The forum encourages the expression of diverse points of view about the type of postal services that will best serve current and future generations. At the heart of it is the USPS, an agency described as the “lifblood” of a \$1.3 trillion industry accounting for 7.5 million private-sector postal-related jobs.

President Rolando has been a contributing PostalVision panelist from the beginning. On the second day of the April 23-24 gathering, he told audience members at a panel titled “The Road Ahead” that the congressional mandate to pre-fund future retiree health benefits decades in advance—a requirement faced by no other agency or company in America—is the key factor that accounts for almost all of the Postal Service’s red ink.

“It’s important to face up to where the losses are coming from,” he said, as he made a case against eliminating Saturday delivery, a move promoted by the postmaster general and anti-worker elements in Congress.

Outlining how well situated the USPS is in terms of its future pension and health benefit obligations, Rolando quipped that the Postal Service “is the richest ‘broke’ company I’ve ever heard of.” Further, he said, it’s illogical to try to “right-size” USPS’ unique universal network without first defining its mission in an evolving society.

“It’s clear that people have changed the way they communicate and that the Postal Service needs to adapt,” the president said, “but slashing services and the network before developing a plan of how to adapt makes no sense and is self-defeating.

“It’s time to be honest with the American people,” he said. “This isn’t just about Saturday delivery. It’s about ideology.”

Rolando said that one reason the Postal Service is so well trusted—and that letter carriers do so much in terms of community safety and well-being—is that there is a stable workforce of letter carriers who work in the same neighborhoods for years and develop knowledge of, and ties to, our customers.

“There are ways to save money that don’t involve degrading the network,” he said, noting how labor costs have decreased in recent years, even as worker productivity has reached record highs.

The Postal Service has a great future, he said, but the USPS needs improved leadership. He cited the current Postal Service Board of Governors, which suffers from too many vacancies and possesses too little business expertise.

“We’ve got to get a governance structure in there with the vision and skills to run a \$65 billion company,” Rolando said, a structure that will advance the concepts of growth and profits.

For more coverage of PostalVision 2020, see the June issue of *The Postal Record*.



NALC President Fredric Rolando was again a panelist at the annual PostalVision 2020 conference in Washington.

21st annual NALC Food Drive

Delivering for America’s hungry



On Food Drive Day, St. Augustine, FL Br. 689 letter carrier Andre Jones off-loads his LLV.

The 21st annual drive was held as usual on the second Saturday in May, with letter carriers from more than 1,400 branches taking part in nearly every municipality, state, district and territory.

Although official branch collection results were still coming in to Headquarters as this *NALC Bulletin* was being prepared, initial reports showed that some areas were showing increases in donations over last year’s drive, while others saw slight drop-offs.

Even so, the sentiment echoed by many, such as Food for Lane County, OR’s Dawn Marie Woodward, is that all amounts are welcome, large or small.

“While this is *our* national drive,” President Rolando said, “we really do get by with a little help—make that *a lot* of help—from our friends and national sponsors.”

Providing crucial backing to branches, volunteers and the entire food drive effort this year were the National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association, Valpak, United Way Worldwide, Campbell Soup, AFL-CIO, U.S. Postal Service, Feeding America, Uncle Bob’s Self Storage, AARP and its “Drive to End Hunger” campaign, GLS Companies, Source Direct Plastics, Publix and Valassis/Red Plum.



A satchel full of food makes Lincoln, NE Br. 8’s Donna Stajner smile.



Scout volunteers in San Diego were nearly overwhelmed by Br. 70’s haul.

Last year, letter carriers picked up and distributed more than 70 million pounds of food, bringing the 20-year total to more than 1.2 billion pounds.

And with generally good weather across the country on May 11 (save for some occasionally heavy showers across the Eastern and Gulf coasts), hopes were high that customer generosity, coupled with a slowly recovering economy, might translate into another good performance this year.

“Finding out how much we collected this year certainly is an important way to measure our success,” President Rolando said. “But doing our best to feed as many of our hungry customers as possible, to sustain them through the summer months and hopefully beyond—that’s our true goal.”

Branch food drive results are due at NALC by May 24.

No! NALC rejects reopening new contract

NALC President Fredric Rolando responded to Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe’s April 16 request to reopen the 2011-2016 contract that was issued by the Das arbitration panel earlier this year.

In a letter dated May 8, Rolando rejected the postmaster general’s request, calling it a political stunt, and the president urged the Postal Service to engage with NALC by using the many tools to reduce costs provided by the new contract.

“While we see no purpose in reopening a contract that already provides multiple channels for future cost savings,” Rolando wrote, “we believe that a comprehensive restructuring of the Postal Service is necessary and that we should work together to agree on a common legislative agenda to achieve it. Such a restructuring would allow the USPS to fully utilize its networks and pursue every opportunity to achieve long-term viability.”

Rather than pushing Congress to approve his plan to dismantle our last-mile delivery network, Rolando urged Donahoe to work with us to reform “all aspects of the Postal Service, including its management, corporate governance, and [its] legal and regulatory environment,” and to “address the key issues of pricing and products as well the financing of pensions and retiree health benefits.”

The letter concluded: “It’s time to get to work with the tools provided by the Das Award. At the same time, we can and should work with Congress and other stakeholders to create a new business model for the Postal Service that will help us thrive in the 21st century.”

Latest financial report shows uptick for USPS

On May 10, the Postal Service released its financial report for the second quarter of fiscal year 2013, which covers the first three months of the calendar year. The report included the first revenue increase in five years, reflecting an improving financial picture as the economy gradually improves. Operating revenue in the second quarter was \$121 million higher than the same period a year ago, while expenses fell by \$1.2 billion.

“This positive trend undermines the doom-and-gloom scenarios postal critics cite—and it shows the folly of reducing services to Americans, as the postmaster general seeks to do,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

USPS Chief Financial Officer Jim Corbett stated that increases of 2.4 percent in advertising revenue from mail and a striking 9.3 percent jump in revenue from package deliveries—an increase of \$267 million—largely offset a 2.7 percent decline in first-class mail revenue. Corbett also noted that the sharp rise in Postal Service package deliveries, which reflects the opportunities offered by the Internet, outpaced the two major private competitors.

“The financial report shows the absurdity of taking the radical step of degrading the postal network by eliminating Saturday delivery,” Rolando said. “This would cost the USPS its competitive advantage, drive customers away, reduce revenue and make the Postal Service less able to adapt to an evolving society.”

The report also showed the urgency of fixing the pre-funding mandate. Thanks largely to a \$2.8 billion charge to pre-fund future retiree health benefits, the USPS reported a \$3.1 billion net loss.

USPS is moving toward operationally breaking even, despite a still struggling economy.

The Postal Service reported a \$200 million operating loss in the first half of fiscal 2013, a figure that includes a one-time expense of \$300 million for employee buyouts. In the full fiscal year of 2011, USPS had a \$5.1 billion operating loss, and \$4.8 billion in fiscal 2012.

“Instead of the postmaster general’s ‘shrink to survive’ strategy—which will only begin a death spiral for the USPS—what is needed is a dynamic business plan for the future to take advantage of the many opportunities for growth, including in the exploding package delivery market,” Rolando said.

Gridlock threatens NLRB’s effectiveness



Thanks to President Barack Obama’s recent nominations to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), a full package of five board member nominations was pending in the Senate as this *NALC Bulletin* was being prepared.

But as is sadly commonplace in Washington, DC, partisan squabbling could scuttle the nominations and severely threaten the Board’s value.

“It’s imperative that the Senate move on this package of nominations quickly, so that the NLRB can continue its mission to protect workers’ rights,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

If the Senate does not confirm the nominations by the end of August, the NLRB will fall below a legal quorum, preventing it from issuing decisions or taking other actions to enforce workers’ rights.

The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions conducted a hearing on all five nominations on May 16 and voted to send the nominations to the full Senate for a vote. Ordinarily, such a vote would occur rapidly and the NLRB would be fully operational. But with 60-vote supermajority requirements now the norm, and with filibusters the rule rather than the exception, the ordinary business of the Senate now is anything but ordinary.

The way to resolve this uncertainty is to confirm the total package of Board nominees, and President Rolando called on senators to do just that.

“It’s true that two of the nominees hold views on labor relations matters opposite of those held by the NALC,” Rolando said. “But working people need and deserve a functioning NLRB, and confirmation of a full package of nominees will provide that stability.

“The Senate must act promptly to confirm the nominations,” Rolando said, “to remove any doubt about the Board’s authority to act and to restore stability to our system of labor-management relations.”

Vacancies list posted on NALC website

On March 19, NALC President Fredric Rolando signed the memorandum of understanding (MOU) “Re: Part-time Flexible Opportunities” (M-01808) that establishes a national-level workgroup to develop and implement a process for filling residual letter carrier vacancies by converting part-time flexibles (PTFs) and/or allowing letter carriers to transfer into vacancies in installations where there are no PTFs to convert.

This MOU is intended to reduce the number of PTFs around the country; provide an opportunity for PTF and full-time letter carriers to transfer into installations that have no PTFs and have residual vacancies not under a proper Article 12 withholding order; and allow all transitional employees (TEs) who become city carrier assistants (CCAs) to be hired. This will help get the “relative standing” order finalized in each installation, before consideration is given to converting CCAs to full-time career status.

This MOU was set to expire on April 10 but was extended to May 24 by a separate MOU, M-01814.

An updated list of vacancies available for transfer opportunities is available at nalc.org on the City Delivery page. The list will be updated and posted as the Postal Service provides it to NALC.

Only part-time flexible and full-time letter carriers may apply for these vacancies by using eReassign. For assistance, contact your national business agent. Visit nalc.org to find your NBA’s contact information.

DeFazio petition asks White House to save U.S. Postal Service, jobs



Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) announced his “We the People” White House petition to a group of letter carriers at a congressional breakfast on April 24.

While addressing a group of letter carriers in Washington, DC, Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) said that he had taken the rare step as a sitting congressman to create a “We the People” petition on the White House’s website, to urge the Obama administration to support his bill, H.R. 630, the Postal Service Protection Act of 2013, and its companion bill in the Senate, S. 316.

DeFazio said his goal is to get President Obama to act to save the Postal Service and save American jobs by preserving delivery standards and ending the unique, unfair mandate to aggressively pre-fund future retiree health benefits.

Of course, because of recent changes made in how the White House handles its website petitions, it will be very difficult for DeFazio’s effort to totally succeed.

The administration has quadrupled the number of signatures needed to trigger a White House response and has imposed shorter time limits for the collection of signatures.

Indeed, for the administration to respond, the petition must receive 100,000 signatures by May 24. Thanks to letter carrier activists, more than 24,000 Americans have already signed the DeFazio petition, far more than the vast majority of petitions on the We the People site.

NALC President Fredric Rolando sent e-Activist messages on May 9 and May 17, encouraging off-the-clock active letter carriers and retired NALC members to sign the petition and to urge co-workers, family members and friends to do the same.

He also has thanked Rep. DeFazio for all of his efforts to strengthen the Postal Service, noting that the congressman from Oregon is “a great advocate who knows the value of what we do for the country, the economy and the citizens we serve, and is committed to leading the fight to preserve affordable universal service, six days a week.”

You can find out how to create a “We the People” account and sign the petition via the link to it at the top of nalc.org.

National Association of Letter Carriers

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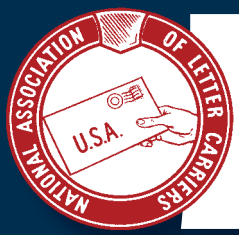
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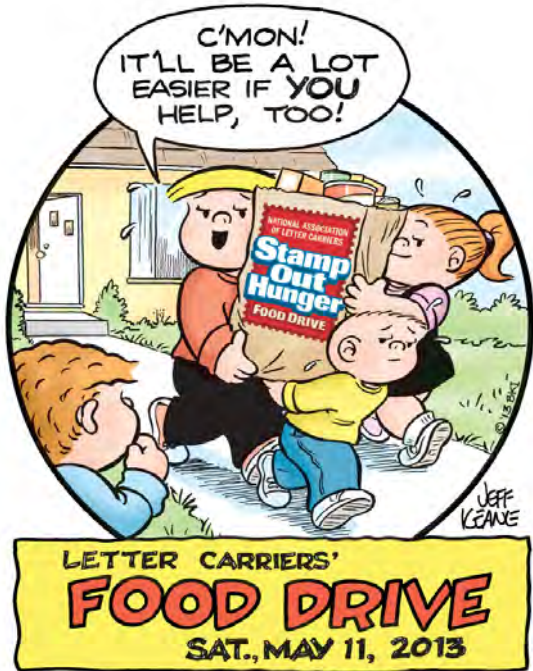
Number 13-08

June 14, 2013

Bulletin

In time of struggling economy, natural disasters

Near-record results for 2013 Food Drive



The 21st annual National Association of Letter Carriers Food Drive on Saturday, May 11, collected more than 74 million pounds of food to help restock food banks, pantries and shelters around the country—an impressive result rendered all the more necessary by the struggling economy and the multiple recent natural disasters.

“This demonstrates in clear fashion the value of the unique postal network, which goes to 151 million addresses six days a week,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “It also shows the remarkable connection between letter carriers and the communities they serve—a bond that serves the nation well.”

In fact, the May 11 effort garnered 74.5 million pounds of food, an increase of about 5 percent over last year’s drive. And the total food collected this year was the second most in the drive’s 21 years, the highest increase in a decade.

In 10,000 cities and towns in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam, residents put out non-perishable food donations on the drive’s traditional second Saturday in May. Letter carriers then collected the food as they delivered mail along their postal routes.

“Letter carriers see firsthand the needs in the communities where we work, and we’re honored to be able to help people in need by leading an effort that brings out the best in so many Americans,” Rolando said.

The effort by 1,400 NALC branches around the country would not have been possible without the contributions of the national partners: Feeding America, Campbell Soup Co., AARP, Valpak Direct Marketing Systems, Valassis/Red Plum, U.S. Postal Service, United Way Worldwide, AFL-CIO, Uncle Bob’s Self-Storage, GLS Companies, Source Direct Plastics and the Publix grocery store chain. Rural letter carriers and other postal employees, plus members of other unions and civic volunteers, also helped, as did Family Circus cartoonist Jeff Keane.

Hunger remains a problem in America, affecting about 50 million people around the country, including 17 million children and 9 million senior citizens. Pantry shelves filled up through winter-holiday generosity often are bare by late spring. And, with most school meal programs suspended during summer months, millions of children must find alternate sources of nutrition.

The natural disasters the country has recently endured—including the tornadoes in Oklahoma and Super Storm Sandy along the East Coast—magnified the needs. “These events show the good will of people, good will that in such times is both more necessary and more impressive,” President Rolando said.

A state-by-state breakdown can be found at nalc.org. Branch totals will be published in the July *Postal Record*.

Ricin threats cause concern

Five letters suspected of containing the poison ricin entered the mail stream in May, prompting the Postal Service to hold a number of stand-up talks on employee safety.

Two letters, postmarked in Spokane and discovered on May 14, were addressed to the Spokane Post Office and to a federal judge in Spokane. Stand-up talks the following day stated that there was no reason to believe postal employees are at risk from handling these letters.

A second set of stand-up talks on May 22 disclosed the discovery of a third letter, also bearing a May 13 Spokane postmark, this one addressed to President Barack Obama.

KREM-TV reported that authorities had arrested Spokane resident Matthew Buquet, 37, on May 22 and charged him with at least one count of mailing a threatening communication. A bail hearing was held on May 28.

The Postal Service held additional stand-up talks on May 28 after it was determined that two more letters suspected of containing ricin and bearing Shreveport, LA, postmarks had been mailed on May 20—one to New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and one to his gun-control group in Washington. On June 7, police arrested 35-year-old Shannon Richardson of Texarkana, TX, in connection with this case.

According to the stand-up talks, the suspected substance was not in a form that could be inhaled or otherwise ingested. Each talk also briefly outlined the symptoms of ricin infection and directed postal workers to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) web page, cdc.gov, for further information.

The three letters in Spokane, which also reportedly contained physical threats, are being investigated by postal inspectors and the Federal Protective Service.

All five letters are undergoing further forensic tests, and inspectors are keeping an eye out for any additional letters.

NALC members who have further questions may call Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr. at NALC Headquarters in Washington, DC.

OSHA launches heat illness prevention campaign

To help prevent thousands of potential heat-related illnesses among workers, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has launched its third annual Heat Illness Prevention Campaign.

**WATER.
REST.
SHADE.****OSHA**
Occupational Safety
and Health Administration
www.osha.gov
1-800-321-OSHA (6742) TTY 1-877-889-5627

The campaign includes educational resources, a heat index guide to help employers develop a prevention plan, a variety of training resources and a smartphone app. This year, outreach also will use Twitter and Facebook, along with worker safety precautions included in

National Weather Service heat watches and warnings.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 4,420 workers suffered a heat-related illness in 2011, with 61 workers dying as a result. The most recent year for which figures are available is 2011.

“In the summer months, letter carriers are especially at risk of heat illness,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “You can help prevent heat illness by remembering three simple words: water, rest and shade.”

OSHA encourages employers to educate workers on how drinking water often, taking breaks, and limiting time in the heat can help prevent heat illness, and to include these prevention steps in worksite training and plans.

Numerous resources that can be used to prevent heat illnesses are available at osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness, such as links to information about heat illnesses and how to prevent them.

Two national disputes involving FMLA settled

The NALC and the USPS have agreed on two national-level settlements regarding the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the use of NALC FMLA forms.

The Postal Service had proposed changes to the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)* that would oblige employees to use Department of Labor (DOL) forms to certify FMLA protection.

The NALC took the position that there was no requirement under FMLA to use DOL forms and initiated two disputes. The first was over the proposed *ELM* changes; the second was over the Postal Service’s refusal to allow employees to use NALC FMLA forms.

In the first dispute, the Postal Service has agreed to change the language in Section 515 of the *ELM* to allow employees to use a format other than the DOL forms to certify FMLA protection. (See M-01812, available for download and review at nalc.org/cau/step4mrs.html)

The change in Section 515 of the *ELM* resolves the NALC’s second issue and employees may now use the NALC FMLA forms for FMLA protection. (See M-01817)

NALC resolves four national contract disputes

The NALC has resolved four national-level disputes with the Postal Service.

The first involved the hiring of transitional employees (TEs) for a period of less than 360 days. The parties agreed that the TE classification had phased out on April 13 for a new employee classification, city carrier assistants (CCAs). (See M-01813, available for download and review at nalc.org/cau/step4mrs.html.) In accordance with Article 7.1.C.3 of the 2011-2016 National Agreement, CCAs are hired for terms of 360 calendar days.

The next dispute concerned suspension of posting and bidding during data migration from the Complement Management System to the Human Capital Enterprise System. The parties agreed that the subject suspension of bidding did not modify or alter the posting and bidding provisions of Article 41.1 of the National Agreement. (See M-01815.)

The parties further agreed that any case held pending resolution of this national case should be processed pursuant to the provisions of the National Agreement.

The third issue dealt with the electronic PS Form 1769/301. The Postal Service created an electronic form that combined information from the PS Form 1769 and OSHA Form 301. The electronic form required supervisors to obtain information shielded by the Privacy Act. The Postal Service agreed to modify the system through a Service Change Request so that it no longer solicits information the NALC believed violated the Privacy Act. (See M-01816.)

The last case involved changes to questions used in the automated Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. The NALC had concerns over the fact that, when an employee called the Employee Service Line to request unscheduled leave, the IVR system allowed only for limited responses (yes or no) that an employee could not always answer.

The parties agreed to resolve the issue in such a manner that, when an employee calls the IVR system for unscheduled leave and is unable to successfully negotiate the prompts, the IVR system will direct the employee to contact his or her supervisor. (See M-01818.)

Letter carrier struck, injured while unloading LLV



Garden Grove, CA Br. 1100 member Joel Cabrera is recovering after a crash broke his legs.

On May 14, Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100 member Joel Cabrera was struck while working the mail from the rear of his LLV. He survived the accident but suffered compound fractures in both legs.

“On behalf of the entire membership of the NALC, I extend our most heartfelt best wishes to Brother Cabrera and his family,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “We pray for his speedy recovery.”

In February 2012, a similar incident killed Los Angeles Branch 24 letter carrier Anthony Dunn. Then, last July, Seattle Branch 79’s Keith Wagner survived a comparable crash that crushed his legs.

Following Dunn’s tragic accident, President Rolando gained agreement from the Postal Service to prepare safety stand-up talks, which were put together by the Joint NALC-USPS National Safety Task Force.

If you have not yet received this stand-up talk, speak with your shop steward or other branch leaders and request it. Note that Article 14, Section 1 of the National Agreement between the NALC and USPS states:

“It is the responsibility of management to provide safe working conditions in all present and future installations and to develop a safe working force. The Union will cooperate with and assist management to live up to this responsibility...”

See NALC Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr.’s column in the July *Postal Record* for a more in-depth discussion about this serious problem.

Those who wish to send well wishes or contributions to Cabrera may do so care of Garden Grove Branch 1100, 13252 Garden Grove Blvd., Garden Grove, CA 92843.

Applications accepted for 2014 Leadership Academy

The application period for the 2014 Leadership Academy has begun.

Application forms are available for download from nalc.org, and also can be obtained from your national business agent’s office.

Any active NALC member may apply.

Applications must be received by Aug. 31. Those who have applied previously and now wish to be considered for one of the 2014 spots must reapply by completing a new application form. Applicants will receive a confirmation letter upon receipt of the application form at NALC Headquarters.

The application form has two main parts, one for the applicant and one for the mentor. A good mentor is someone who displays leadership skills and is willing—and able—to spend a significant amount of time interacting regularly with the student while providing guidance and encouragement.

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

Branch presidents or other branch officers often are good choices for mentors.

A leadership class consists of three separate weeks of instruction on a variety of subjects. The schedule for 2014 will be announced at a later time.

Classes will be held at the Conference Center at the Maritime Institute in Linthicum, MD, near BWI-Marshall Airport, between Washington, DC, and Baltimore.

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

Upon selection, students will be advised of the exact dates they will need to be available.

Transportation, room, meals, lost wages and other costs involved with attending the Academy and working in the national business agent’s office are paid by the NALC.

Two applicants from each of the 15 NALC regions will be chosen for the 2014 class. Those selected will be notified in early October 2013.

Postal employees recovering from late-spring storms



The devastating tornado that struck outside Oklahoma City on May 20 killed at least 24 people, including one member of the American Postal Workers Union.

Oklahoma City Branch 458 reported that the Moore station took an indirect hit, with many carriers’ personal vehicles in the Moore Post Office parking lot destroyed and several carriers suffering damage to, or total loss of, their homes.

Fortunately, there were no reports of injury or loss of life involving carriers in this storm or the ones that followed a week later.

“When storms like these hit, we must match their ferocity with our own generosity,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “Please contribute to the Postal Employees’ Relief Fund, to help our brothers, sisters and co-workers rebuild after this tragedy.”

Visit postalrelief.com to find out how you can contribute to PERF, including immediately via text message.

Also, Oklahoma City Branch 458 has created a relief fund for the immediate help of NALC members affected by the Moore tornado. You can send donations to: Branch 458 Relief Fund, Branch 458, 221 S. Eagle Lane, Oklahoma City, OK 73128.

Note: Contributions or gifts to the Branch 458 Relief Fund are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

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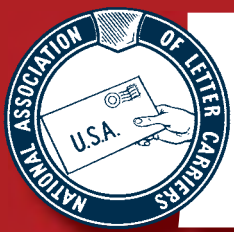
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NALC

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Bulletin

Before introducing his bill,

Issa holds postal reform hearing



Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA), at a postal reform hearing held April 17.

On July 17, Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA), chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, held a full committee hearing to discuss his discussion draft of a possible postal reform bill. This was the second House hearing on postal reform held this year.

Invited to testify were American Postal Workers Union President Cliff Guffey, Postmaster General Patrick Donahue and Quadgraphics President and CEO Joel Quadracci. Rep. Adrian Smith (R-NE) also was called to be on the panel as a representative of rural postal customers. NALC President Fredric Rolando testified at the first hearing in April.

Issa announced a number of modest improvements to his proposed bill—including his intention to incorporate into it Rep. Stephen Lynch’s (D-MA) H.R. 961 (more on that below)—but the chairman’s proposed legislation would cripple the Postal Service by eliminating door-to-door service and Saturday mail delivery, while leaving in place the onerous mandate to pre-fund the health benefits of future retirees. In fact, the cost of pre-funding would rise, not fall.

“The Issa bill still falls far short of what the Postal Service desperately needs—and in fact, this bill could be destructive,” Rolando said. “That’s because it proceeds from a false premise—that the Postal Service is irreversibly failing.”

To refute that notion somewhat, Donahoe testified that although the Postal Service had projected an operating loss of \$2 billion loss for fiscal year 2013 (a total loss of \$7.6 billion with the scheduled \$5.6 billion pre-funding payment factored in), “We’re going to finish our finances approximately about a billion dollars better than we said at the beginning of year, because we’ve had revenue increases—especially in the package business.

“We’ve also been able to work and take advantage of negotiated contracts with our union leaders,” he added, “so that’s helped.”

There is little else in the Issa draft that distinguishes it from the bill he proposed in 2011. That measure, H.R. 2309, also called for massive cuts that, if implemented, would drastically diminish the quality and value of the mail by eliminating Saturday mail delivery service and phasing out door-to-door delivery to nearly 40 million American households. The bill managed to gain only one other co-sponsor besides Issa, and it never advanced beyond his committee to a House of Representatives vote.

One positive note was sounded when the California Republican also announced at the hearing that he plans to include in his bill the proposals found in Rep. Lynch’s H.R. 961. That measure calls for using postal-specific assumptions when evaluating USPS’ Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)-account surpluses. The USPS Office of the Inspector General estimated that an approach like this would result in a \$12.5 billion postal surplus.

“Those surpluses should be measured properly,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said in his written response to the discussion draft, “and the released funds should be used to pay down the Postal Service’s debt to the Treasury and to allow the Service to invest in new ways to help it build on its growing success in package delivery.”

H.R. 961 had 132 co-sponsors, both Democrats and Republicans, at press time. In the last Congress, a similar bill introduced by Lynch, H.R. 1351, attracted 230 co-sponsors from both parties.

Downsizing USPS?

Following the hearing, Issa formally introduced his draft as H.R. 2748, The Postal Reform Act of 2013. The bill targets the elimination of more than 100,000 postal jobs and would dramatically cut service.

“Cuts such as the ones the chairman has proposed would drive more mail out of the postal system and could send the Postal Service into a death spiral,” Rolando said, “and they would diminish USPS’ ability to take advantage of the obviously booming e-commerce market.”

The president stressed that more than 80 percent of the Postal Service’s losses in recent years have nothing to do with mail delivery. They result from the 2006 congressional mandate to massively pre-fund future retiree health benefits. Though Issa’s bill alters the pre-funding formula, it does not alter the burden of a mandate shared by no other private company or public agency in America. In fact, were proposals in Issa’s draft to be implemented, the USPS could wind up on the hook for an extra \$5.8 billion over the next 11 years, under a revised pre-funding schedule.

There was word that Issa would formally introduce and mark up his measure on July 24, shortly before Congress begins its six-week summer recess.

Already before the House is Rep. Peter DeFazio’s (D-OR) H.R. 630, which contains a call to implement the results of a 2010 private-sector audit of the postal account in the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). That audit found a surplus of \$50 billion to \$55 billion, using modern accounting methods that could easily be mandated by Congress.

H.R. 630 had 165 co-sponsors at press time. Its Senate counterpart, Sen. Bernie Sanders’ (I-VT) S. 316, had 28 co-sponsors. So far, it is the only reform measure before the Senate, although there are indications that a bill might be introduced by Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) later this year.

Meanwhile, Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD), the ranking member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, has introduced a postal reform measure of his own: H.R. 2690, The Innovate to Deliver Act of 2013.

“Cummings’ draft does address many of our legislative priorities,” Rolando said, “but it ultimately falls short of what is needed as well.”

The Maryland Democrat’s measure doesn’t go far enough to solve the pre-funding problem, the president said. “Instead, it too accepts the idea that downsizing somehow provides a path toward prosperity.”

USPS’ expedited product lineup changes

The Postal Service’s package volume is booming right now, as shippers discover that they can get an excellent service from USPS at lower rates.

To build on this success, USPS has launched a plan to simplify and improve Priority Mail service:

Express Mail is now Priority Mail Express: All characteristics of the current Express Mail service remain unchanged under the new name of Priority Mail Express. In addition, Express Mail International is now Priority Mail Express International and the Express Mail Corporate Account is called USPS Corporate Account.

Insurance: Pending approval by the Postal Regulatory Commission, the Postal Service will include insurance with most Priority Mail pieces at no additional charge. Retail and commercial customers will receive \$50 and \$100 insurance coverage, respectively.

Shipping labels and retail receipts: Depending on the origin and destination ZIP Codes for the Priority Mail Express or Priority Mail shipments, customers now get day-specific delivery information, such as 1-Day, 2-Day, 3-Day, Military or DPO. The information is prominently located on customer shipping labels, retail receipts and Track & Confirm at usps.com.

Packaging: Boxes and envelopes now highlight USPS Tracking, insurance and Package Pickup.

Four letter carriers die in separate incidents

Daniel Rogers

On June 10, Boston Branch 34 member Daniel Rogers, 61, became ill while delivering mail on his route. The 17-year letter carrier returned to his LLV, where he was later found unconscious. Rogers was then taken to a hospital, where he died a short time later. Rogers was an Army veteran who served in Vietnam from 1969 to 1972. He is survived by his wife, Sara, five children and six grandchildren.

On June 17, Long Island Merged, NY Branch 6000 member Alan Nobile, 53, died after his LLV was rear-ended and crashed into a tree. The *Oyster Bay Guardian* reported that the 29-year letter carrier survived the crash and was taken to a local hospital, but that he suffered a fatal heart attack there. Nobile, who was deaf, played softball and basketball in his spare time on teams for deaf people. He is survived by his wife, Merry, and three children.

On June 18, Minneapolis Branch 9 member Leo Brandt, 58, was struck by a vehicle and killed as he arrived for work in Brooklyn Center. A letter carrier since 1987, Brandt was known for his deep faith, which inspired him to spend much of his free time ministering to inmates at area correctional facilities. He is survived by his wife, Loreese, four children and two grandchildren.

On July 6, letter carrier James Baldassarre, 45, died after collapsing the day before while making a delivery on his route. Baldassarre had served as a letter carrier for 19 years and was working out of the Medford, MA, post office when he died. Although an investigation into his death is ongoing, weather was believed to be a factor in his death, since temperatures in the low 90s and high humidity were recorded throughout the Boston area that day.

“The thoughts and prayers of the entire NALC membership are with the families of these dedicated letter carriers at this extremely difficult time,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

Leo Brandt

Alan Nobile

James Baldassarre

</

Quarterly report:

USPS finances rebounding strongly as economy improves

The Postal Service is on track to nearly break even delivering the mail this year.

That's quite the opposite of the doom-and-gloom spin put on the third quarter numbers released by the Postal Service on Aug. 9.

But NALC drilled down into the USPS financial report for the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2013 and discovered that postal finances have significantly *improved* and that USPS has made a profit.

Credit for this small but important revenue uptick goes to an improving economy as well as to the rise of package-delivery volume, powered largely by goods ordered over the Internet.

"The real news in the third quarter report is that the Postal Service is in much better financial shape than advocates of a slash-and-shrink approach to postal 'reform' care to admit," NALC President Fredric Rolando said following the financial report's release.

What continues to hurt the Postal Service's bottom line, of course, is pre-funding—the part of the 2006 postal reform law that requires USPS to set aside billions each year to pre-fund the health benefits of future retirees. This mandate—borne by no other federal agency or private enterprise—accounts for all of the so-called losses reported for this year.

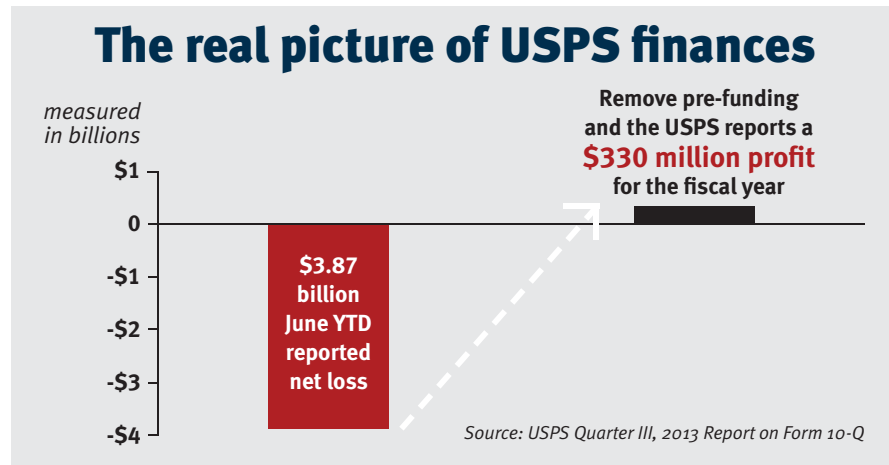
"Pre-funding—and not the diversion of first-class mail to the Internet—is by far the main cause of the Postal Service's financial challenges," Rolando said.

Focusing just on revenues, one finds that USPS operating revenue in the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2013 (covering April, May and June) was \$16.2 billion, an increase of 3.6 percent over the same period last year.

Revenue for the first nine months of the 2013 fiscal year—a period ending June 30—was \$50.2 billion, up 1.3 percent over the same period in Fiscal Year 2012.

"These increases were driven by continued growth in shipping and package services, as well as by modest increases in Standard Mail revenue," Rolando said. He added that the explosive growth of e-commerce continues to bolster USPS' shipping business: Shipping and package-delivery revenue was up 8.8 percent in the third quarter over the same period last year, fueled by a 22.6 percent increase in revenue for parcels and a 16.4 percent rise in Express and Priority Express revenue.

"The solution is obvious," Rolando said. "Congress needs to eliminate the pre-funding requirement and free the Postal Service to take full of advantage of the opportunities offered by the digital era."



2nd Contract COLA: \$541

The second cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for most letter carriers under the 2011-2016 National Agreement is \$541 annually.

This COLA is based on the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) between January 2013 and July 2013.

That translates into 26 cents per hour, \$20.80 per pay period and \$541 annually for City Carriers paid under Table 1 of the Pay Schedule, in both Grades 1 and 2.

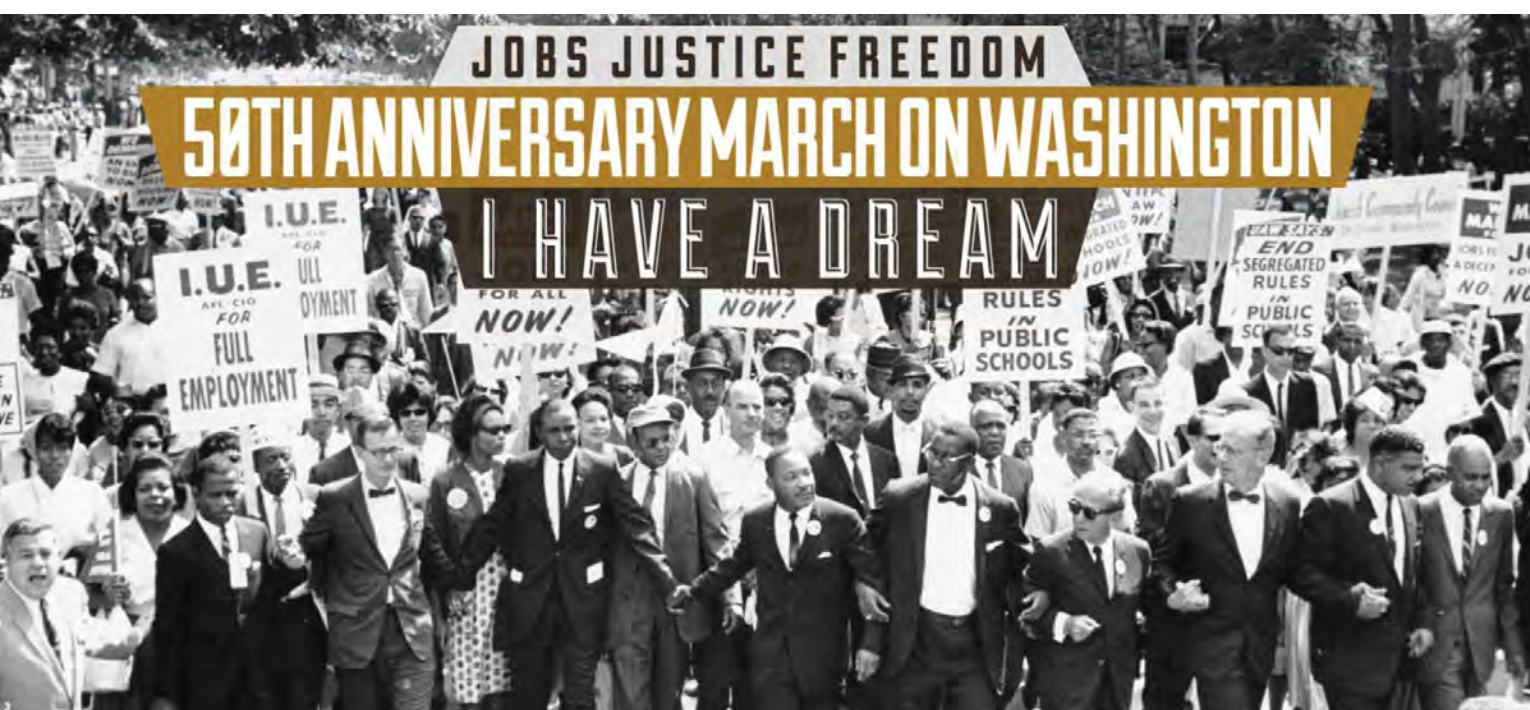
Under the terms of the 2011-2016 contract, payment of this second COLA will be deferred for one year and will take effect in the second full pay period after the release of the July 2014 CPI.

The first COLA, \$146 annually, was announced previously. Under the terms of our agreement, payment of this first COLA will be deferred for one year and will take effect in the second full pay period after the release of the January 2014 CPI.

Note that next year, both of the deferred 2013 COLAs, \$146 annually and \$541 annually, will be added to the Step O pay rates in Table 2 of the Pay Schedule, which applies to city carriers hired in career positions on or after January 13, 2013.

The pay rates of Steps A through N of Table 2 will be adjusted proportionally, as provided by the contract.

For example, Step A is set at 61.5 percent of Step O, so the first COLA for Step A in Table 2 is \$90 annually, and the second COLA is \$333 annually.



Visit NALC HQ during March on Washington commemoration

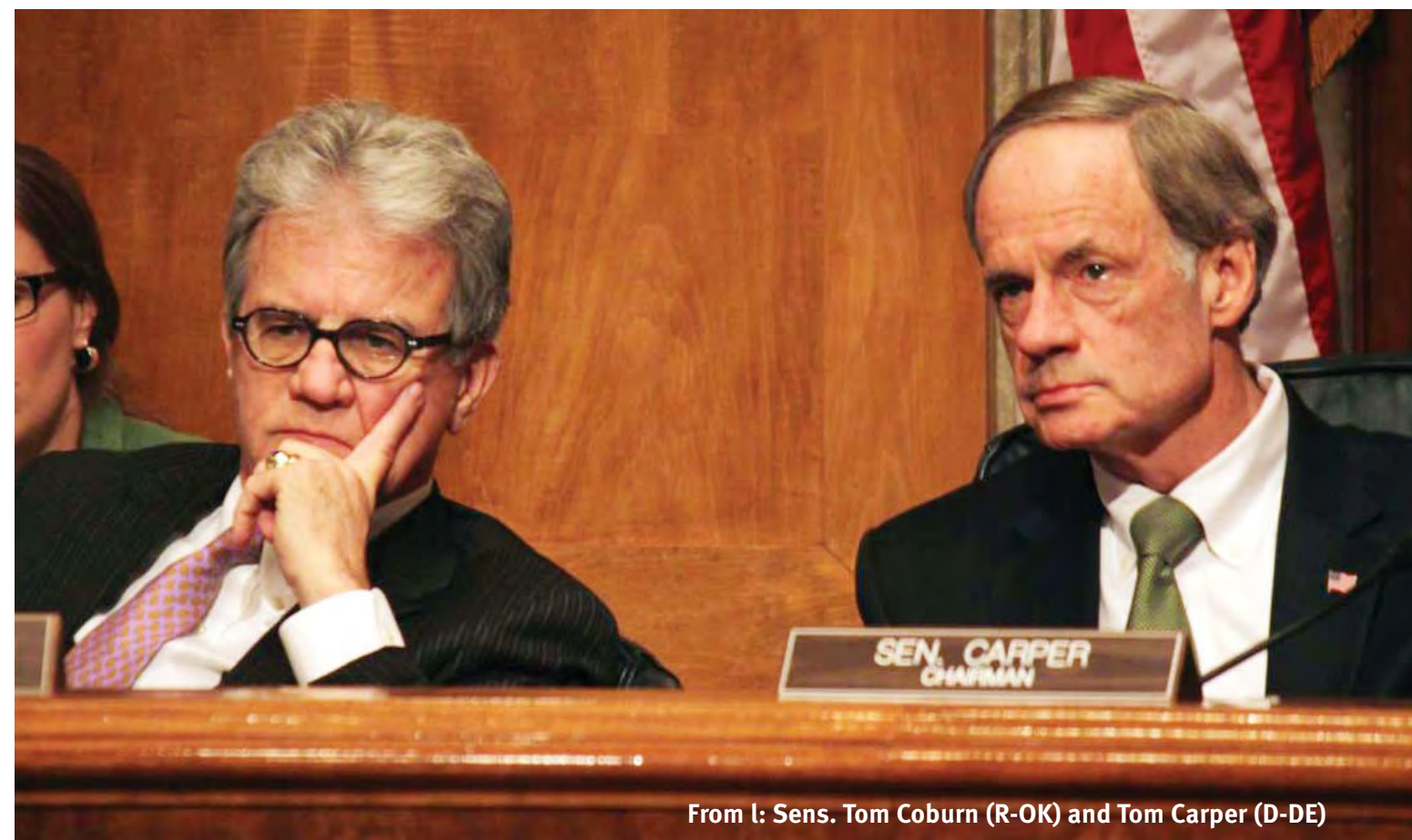
A commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the historic 1963 March on Washington and Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech will take place on Saturday, Aug. 24, in Washington at the Lincoln Memorial.

NALC members from branches all over the country are finalizing their plans to attend this event, and the Vincent R. Sombrotto NALC Headquarters building will be open that day from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. to provide refreshments to active and retired members who are visiting the nation's capital for this momentous occasion. NALC members can also pick up a free T-shirt and customizable sign.

Visit nalc.org for a list of bus trips to Washington for the commemoration.

Planning to stop by NALC Headquarters that day? Then please visit nalc.org to RSVP. All NALC members are welcome.

If any NALC branches are planning to pay for a bus to this event, please call NALC Special Assistant to the President Brian Renfroe at 202-393-4695.



From l: Sens. Tom Coburn (R-OK) and Tom Carper (D-DE)

Harmful bills introduced in the Senate, House

On Aug. 1, just before Congress broke for its five-week summer recess, Sens. Tom Carper (D-DE) and Tom Coburn (R-OK) introduced a postal bill that not only continues pre-funding, but seeks to implement major downsizing measures to pay for it.

"The Postal Service already has pre-funded decades of retiree health premiums, more than any other enterprise in America," President Rolando said. "Indeed, it has already set aside nearly \$50 billion for such premiums, about half of the total expected costs over the next 90-plus years."

The bill, S. 1486, calls for a three-year moratorium on these unaffordable pre-funding payments rather than an outright repeal, and could actually increase the overall costs.

Pre-funding, of course, refers to the 2006 congressional mandate that requires USPS to place billions each year into the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund to cover costs for decades to come. No other public agency or private company is required to pre-fund such benefits for even one year.

"The Carper-Coburn bill ignores this fact, and proceeds to add insult to injury by proposing to let the Postal Service have tools to slash our pension and health benefits by making these federal employee benefits subject to interest arbitration," Rolando said. "We were not even consulted about this planned change to our rights as federal employees or to our collective-bargaining process."

Carper is chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, which has oversight of USPS. Coburn is the committee's ranking member.

As proposed, S. 1486 would eliminate Saturday mail delivery after a one-year delay, plus give the postmaster general authority to eliminate additional days of delivery going forward. It also would mandate elimination of door-to-door delivery of mail for all business and new households, and call for the phase-out of door delivery to millions of established addresses.

"The massive downsizing and assault on postal employee benefits contained in the Carper-Coburn bill are completely unnecessary," Rolando said. "They are being driven by this irrational retiree health financing policy that no other business or agency in its right mind would adopt."

No further action was set on S. 1486 as this *NALC Bulletin* was being prepared.

Already introduced in the Senate is a much more sensible reform bill that NALC fully supports: Sen. Bernie Sanders' (I-VT) S. 316. This bill would strengthen the Postal Service, promote innovation and, most importantly, resolve the retiree health and pension policies that have crippled the Postal Service in recent years.

S. 316 also contains, among other things, a call to shore up USPS finances by implementing the results of a 2010 private-sector audit of the postal account in the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). That audit found a surplus of \$50 billion to \$55 billion, using modern accounting methods that could easily be mandated by Congress.

The Sanders bill had 30 co-sponsors going into Congress' recess. Its House of Representatives counterpart, Rep. Peter DeFazio's (D-OR) H.R. 630, had 167 co-sponsors.

Meanwhile, Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA), chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, has introduced his own postal bill, H.R. 2748.

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"There is little in this new bill that distinguishes it from the one Issa proposed in 2011," President Rolando said, "and there is very little difference between it and the Carper-Coburn bill in the Senate."

H.R. 2748 repeats Issa's previous calls for massive service cuts that, if implemented, would drastically diminish the quality and value of the mail by eliminating Saturday mail delivery service and phasing out door-to-door delivery to 30 million American households.

It also leaves in place the onerous mandate to pre-fund the health benefits of future retirees—and in fact, under H.R. 2748, the USPS could wind up on the hook for an extra \$5.8 billion over the

next 11 years, under a revised pre-funding schedule.

"Chairman Issa's proposed legislation would still cripple the Postal Service through needless service cuts," Rolando said. "It falls far short of what the Postal Service desperately needs, and it could be destructive because it proceeds from a false premise—that the Postal Service is irreversibly failing—and indeed could spur failure by driving mail and revenue out of the system."

H.R. 2748 has only two co-sponsors so far. As of this *Bulletin's* deadline, no consideration by the full House had been scheduled.

Hotels for 2014 NALC convention

The NALC has made special arrangements with 23 hotels to accommodate letter carrier delegates attending the 69th Biennial NALC convention in Philadelphia, July 21-25, 2014. The list of hotels is available in the September issue of *The Postal Record*. Most NALC-block hotels are union hotels, and all are within one mile of the Pennsylvania Convention Center. The room rates have been set so branches can begin budgeting for the convention. **Please do not contact the hotels.** All room reservations will be made through the NALC official housing company.

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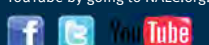
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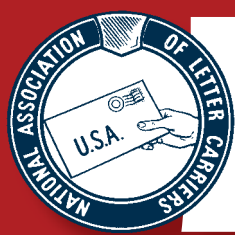
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NALC responds to PMG's workroom floor video

Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe issued a video message on Aug. 14 that was played on the workroom floor. The video provided an assessment of developments in Washington on the legislative front and addressed the subject of a separate Postal Service health plan.

"In both cases, what the PMG did *not* say was more important than what he *did* say," NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

On postal legislation, Donahoe said in the video that he was encouraged by the introduction of S. 1486 by Sens. Tom Carper (D-DE) and Tom Coburn (R-OK), which followed the Oversight and Government Reform Committee's passage of Chairman Darrell Issa's (R-CA) postal bill in the House.

But what the PMG failed to note was that neither bill provides a real solution to the postal financial crisis. In fact, both bills would continue the mandate to massively pre-fund retiree health benefits (after a brief moratorium), and both would pay for that mandate by slashing service and jobs.

Both bills also call for elimination of Saturday and door delivery, at the cost of nearly 100,000 postal jobs, and for slower mail service, which would drive even more business away and deepen the USPS' financial crisis.

"The PMG's comment that there are some positive aspects in both bills is bizarrely beside the point," Rolando remarked. "Sure, there are a number of individual provisions in the bills that are good in isolation—but both bills would hasten the destructive downsizing and service cuts we've faced for years, and both would attack the collective-bargaining rights of postal employees.

National Agreement finalized, available

NALC and the Postal Service have finalized the 2011-2016 National Agreement set by the Das interest arbitration award.

The PDF version of the contract is now available for download from the Contract Administration Unit page of nalc.org. This PDF includes bookmarks and hyperlinks to make navigating the document easier.

The document is in the process of being printed and will be sent to NALC branches shortly.

"Mr. Donahoe should be demanding much, much better from Congress," the president said.

The postmaster general also talked about the issue of health benefits and his plan to create a separate Postal Service health plan, either inside or outside of the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP).

He mentioned that he is working with the unions on this issue—but he failed to make clear that neither the NALC, nor the other postal unions, will support any plan that involves leaving FEHBP.

And although Donahoe rightly focused on the importance of taking full advantage of Medicare benefits as a way to reduce the Postal Service's costs for retiree health benefits—indeed, it is crucial for reducing the crushing cost of pre-funding—he did not mention that fully integrating those benefits into Medicare can be easily achieved within FEHBP.

"NALC is committed to working with the Postal Service on reducing health care costs for both employees and the agency," Rolando said. "But we are insisting that any legislative changes in this area be proposed as part of a broader reform package to be offered as an alternative to the destructive bills now before the House and Senate."

Such a package, the president said, would reject service cuts and measures aimed at undermining the collective-bargaining rights and living standards of city carriers and other postal employees, and would focus instead on mutually acceptable reforms on health care, pension valuations, pre-funding, new products, pricing and governance provisions.

Visit the Legislation and Politics section of the NALC website for fact sheets and talking points on the bills.

Letter carriers & 'The Green Book'

As part of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, NALC hosted a reception on Aug. 26 with author and playwright Calvin A. Ramsey on the history and importance of the Green Book.

The Green Book was the creation of Victor H. Green, a native of New York who, in 1913 at age 21, was living in Hackensack, NJ, and went to work at the local post office as a letter carrier. Green joined NALC's Hackensack Branch 425, now known as Bergen County Merged. By 1933, he continued his route in New Jersey but had moved to Harlem, just over the George Washington Bridge.

As a union member and a civic leader, Green heard many stories of African-Americans having difficulty locating places that allowed them to stay or eat while they were traveling. These tales inspired the letter carrier to create the Green Book as a tool to help members of his community find businesses open to them.

Green set up extensive contacts to gather information for the Green Book, including using his NALC connections, and its first edition was printed in 1936, covering only New York City. Demand grew for the book so much, however, that the following year's edition expanded to become a national guide.



Calvin Ramsey discusses with NALC President Fredric Rolando how researching the Green Book inspired him to write a play and a children's book about it.

To this day, people who used the guide speak about its importance for providing information and reassurance to African-Americans far from home. But in the almost 50 years since the passage of the Civil Rights Act, the Green Book has largely been forgotten except by older generations whose families may have used the guide.

That's where Calvin Ramsey comes in. The author and playwright had never heard of the guide until he attended a funeral for a young man in Atlanta almost a decade ago. There, the youth's grandfather, who was from New York and had never been down South before, asked Ramsey where he could get a Green Book, as he thought he still needed one.

Fascinated, Ramsey researched the history of the Green Book, which inspired him to write a play, *The Green Book*, and a children's book, *Ruth and the Green Book*, to help preserve its legacy.

Ramsey recently brought the story of the Green Book to the attention of NALC Region 15 Regional Administrative Assistant Orlando Gonzalez, who did his own research and forwarded his findings to NALC Headquarters.

Read more about Victor Green and the Green Book in the cover story of the September *Postal Record* and on nalc.org. Coverage of the NALC's participation in events surrounding the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington will appear in the October *Postal Record*.



Letter carriers from all over the country came to Washington, DC, on Aug. 24 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington. Pictured, Chicago Br. 11 President Mack Julion (center) leads a group of carriers in sharing the NALC's message with visitors at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial.

MOU on filling residual vacancies

NALC and the Postal Service have entered into the Memorandum of Understanding Re: Residual Vacancies - City Letter Carrier Craft (M-01824), which establishes a process for filling residual vacancies not under a proper Article 12 withholding order. Vacancies will be filled by a number of steps including assignment of unassigned regulars, part-time flexible conversions to full-time status, acceptance of transfers and conversions of city carrier assistants to full-time career status.

Under this memorandum, part-time flexibles will have the opportunity to transfer as full-time regulars into residual vacancies on a first-come, first-served basis without regard to normal transfer considerations and will be afforded eventual retreat rights. The memorandum should also result in the conversions of many city carrier assistants to full-time career status.

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NALC

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Bulletin

In second Senate hearing on the bill

Rolando explains why S. 1486 would damage Postal Service



NALC President Fredric Rolando testified at a Senate committee hearing on Sept. 26. (Kaveh Sardari/Page One)

On Sept. 26, NALC President Fredric Rolando testified before the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, which has Postal Service oversight. This was the second of two hearings to focus on S. 1486, a postal bill introduced this summer by Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE), the committee chairman, and Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK), the ranking member.

“We appreciate very much your hard work in putting together S. 1486,” Rolando told the committee, “but we feel that the bill fails to permanently address the primary cause of the Postal Service’s current financial crisis—the unaffordable 2006 mandate to pre-fund future retiree health costs.”

This unique mandate, required of no other federal agency or private enterprise, is responsible not just for 80 percent of USPS’ losses incurred since 2007, but for 100 percent of the agency’s recorded loss so far this year. In fact, according to the Postal Service’s own financial reports, USPS would have reported a \$660 million profit for the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2013 if it weren’t for the pre-funding payments.

But there are many other problems with the bill besides its so-called pre-funding reforms, Rolando said. “That inadequate pre-funding proposal, combined with the elimination of Saturday mail delivery and business door delivery, the phase-out of household door delivery and the promotion of a morale-killing two-tier postal workforce would drive the Postal Service into a death spiral,” he said.

While Internet diversion has indeed caused a decline in first-class mail volume, thanks to increased reliance on e-mail and online bill payments, Rolando said that “the Internet is also creating new business opportunities for the Postal Service”—such as online ordering and, with that, surging package revenues.

President Rolando was on the hearing’s second panel, along with National Postal Mail Handlers Union President John Hegarty, National Association of Postmasters President Robert Rapoza, and economists Douglas Holtz-Eakin and Dean Baker.

“The rate at which the Postal Service is required to pre-fund retiree health benefits has no economic logic,” Baker told the committee. “Treatment of the Postal Service has been asymmetric with other private firms.”

Baker also noted that pre-funding accounts for about 8 percent of the Postal Service’s revenue. “If you were to take any thriving business—an Apple or an Amazon—and say, ‘OK, we made an accounting mistake; you have to pay 8 percent of your revenue into “X” fund,’ that would be a huge burden that would jeopardize even their viability. So I think we have to recognize that.”

Much of the focus of the second panel, in fact, was on how the Postal Service’s financial picture is gradually improving—that the benefits of Internet commerce and package delivery are not just offsetting the declines in First Class Mail, they’re generating an operating profit. Most of those who testified alongside President Rolando agreed with him that S. 1486 represents a destructive approach to postal reform that, if passed, would degrade the network—and that meaningful reform requires either the repeal or the massive reduction of the pre-funding mandate.

Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe was a witness on the first panel, along with representatives from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

At one point during the hearing, Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT) asked Donahoe to clarify something the postmaster general had said in his testimony during the hearing a week earlier.

“You stated that it was your belief that under the current [law], an arbitrator cannot consider the financial health of the United States Postal Service,” Tester said.

“I misspoke,” Donahoe replied. “What I should’ve said was, they can consider it but they’re not required by law... to consider it. I think that’s where I misspoke.”

“Because I think the last three arbitrations there was a lot of financial information brought forth by the Postal Service,” Tester said.

In fact, arbitrators are required to consider every exhibit and piece of evidence presented during proceedings before rendering a decision, and the financial situation of the USPS always is presented during hearings.

Sen. Carper admitted that S. 1486 is not perfect. “It’s not the finish line,” he said, “but it can be improved.”

Carper did leave the door open for finding a way to preserve six-day mail delivery. “If there’s a true interest on the part of our friends in organized labor to be able to preserve six-day-a-week service,” he said, “I don’t know if there’s some way you can negotiate a compensation package maybe for the folks that are delivering on that sixth day that makes this competitive, that makes the Postal Service able to do it and not do it at a loss.

“I know that you all have tried to do that before,” the senator said. “I would just ask that you look at that again as you go forward. I know there’s good spirit involved in those negotiations; I’d just urge you to keep at it.”

And keep at it we will, Rolando said later. “This is an opportunity for NALC’s activists to get in the game now, while the committee is still working on the measure,” he said. “All of us have a stake in what will happen with this bill over the next few months.”

Few surprises in the first hearing

The Senate committee held its first hearing on S. 1486 a week earlier, in a session that focused mainly on rates and revenue. Among those called to testify on Sept. 19 were Donahoe, Postal Regulatory Commission Chairman Ruth Goldway, USPS Inspector General David Williams, American Postal Workers Union President Cliff Guffey and National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association President Jeanette Dwyer.

During that hearing, the postmaster general told the committee that the Postal Service’s package business continues to grow dramatically and substantially, even as first-class mail revenue has declined.

But it’s probably no surprise that even armed with this information, Donahoe said he still fully supports S. 1486.

On the question of whether the Postal Service should be allowed to reduce the number of days of delivery as called for by S. 1486, Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-MO), a staunch supporter of the Postal Service, strongly disagreed with such a notion, saying that she believes six-day delivery is USPS’ competitive advantage.

PRC Chairman Goldway noted that the Postal Service is the address-master for America, with a database relied upon by first-responders as well as online markets.

“It’s a vital network,” she said, one committed to providing universal service to all Americans, especially the one-third of postal customers who lack access to broadband Internet.

Toward the end of the hearing, Sen. Coburn, who hasn’t exactly been seen as the biggest fan of the Postal Service’s employee unions, said: “We can make USPS viable, but we can’t do it on the backs of the people who work for USPS.

“The Postal Service can’t shrink to survive,” he added.

A fact sheet and talking points that outline the provisions of S. 1486, and why they are so damaging, are available on the Legislation and Politics page at nalc.org.

Mark-up? A mark-up session on S. 1486 was scheduled to take place the week of Oct. 7, but might be moved as a result of the government shut-down. Check nalc.org and our Facebook and Twitter accounts for the latest updates.

At the 2013 AFL-CIO convention

Pro-USPS resolution passed; Rolando re-elected vice president

Speaking to the delegates of the quadrennial AFL-CIO convention, NALC President Fredric Rolando informed those gathered inside the Los Angeles Convention Center about the truth behind the Postal Service’s recent financial reports.

“Don’t believe what you read in the papers,” Rolando said on Sept. 11. “The Postal Service is not losing \$15 billion a year delivering the mail. In fact, it’s earning a profit delivering the mail, bringing in \$330 million so far this fiscal year.”

The president also warned the delegates about congressional proposals to eliminate Saturday mail and door delivery of the mail.

“Every day, our members are out delivering the mail in rain, snow and sleet,” Rolando said. “But if Congress has its way, your grandmother will be forced to go out in all kinds of weather to get the mail herself.”

Rolando was speaking in support of a convention resolution calling for the AFL-CIO and its affiliated unions to help the postal unions win reform legislation from Congress that will help the Postal Service innovate and grow, and to help defeat measures that call for slashing jobs and service.

“Any reform bill that fails to fix the pre-funding burden will pave the way for a continued attack on the 500,000 postal employee members of the AFL-CIO and the vital services they provide for the country,” he said.

The convention resolution was drafted by NALC along with the National Postal Mail Handlers Union and the American Postal Workers Union.

Growing the labor movement

The role that the NALC and the larger labor movement will play in reversing high unemployment, wage stagnation and income inequality was the main theme of this year’s AFL-CIO convention, held Sept. 8-11.

“It’s not enough to push for the reform of our terrible laws on organizing,” Rolando said later. “We also have to focus on issues that affect every one of us, organized and non-organized alike, and we have to support new forms of representation for workers even before we organize them into traditional unions.”

While the AFL-CIO still represents more than 12 million workers and has 57 member unions, it must do more to stem the loss of middle-class jobs and benefits, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka told the convention.

“We cannot win economic justice only for ourselves, for union members alone,” Trumka said. “It would not be right, and it’s not possible. All working people will rise together, or we will keep falling together.”

To that end, the convention adopted resolutions to boost AFL-CIO membership by allowing millions of non-union workers to join the labor federation, and by forming permanent partnerships with environmental, immigrant and other progressive advocacy groups.

By virtue of their offices, Rolando and Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel represented NALC at this year’s convention. Seven other NALC branch leaders, who were elected by the Minneapolis convention in 2012, also were on hand in L.A.: Ingrid Armada, Providence, RI Branch 15; Denise Brooks, Medford, OR Branch 1433; Lloyd Doucet Jr., New Orleans Branch 124; Elise M. Foster, Chicago Branch 11; Anita Guzik, Los Angeles Branch 24; Stephen Hanna, York, PA Branch 509; and Charles Heege, New York Branch 36.

The convention re-elected Rolando as a vice president of the federation. Trumka was re-elected to another four-year term as AFL-CIO president, Liz Shuler was re-elected as secretary-treasurer, and Tefere Gebre was elected executive vice president to replace Arlene Holt Baker, who retired.

Broendel re-elected to AFL-CIO post

NALC Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel was recently re-elected as a vice president of the AFL-CIO’s Union Label Services and Trades Department.

“When you buy union-made products and services,” she said, “you are protecting working people in our country by helping them earn a livable wage in safe conditions, provide health care for their families, and pursue the American promise of creating a better life for every future generation.”

TSP death benefit changes under Windsor

The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (FRTIB), the body that administers the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), has issued a rule change to bring its death benefit policies in line with the Supreme Court decision in June that found a portion of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) to be unconstitutional.

Section 3 of DOMA had provided that, under federal law, the term “marriage” would mean only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and that the term “spouse” referred only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife.

The Supreme Court’s *United States v. Windsor* decision ruled that Section 3 is unconstitutional, meaning that the FRTIB must now defer to state law in determining the marital status of TSP participants.

The new regulation provides that the FRTIB will look to the “jurisdiction of celebration”—that is, the state where the couple was married—to determine a participant’s marital status for purposes of paying TSP death benefits.

Recovering from Colorado floods

NALC members who live in affected areas by the recent flooding, storms and landslides in Colorado and who participate in Union Plus programs may be eligible for financial assistance from Union Plus.

Union Plus disaster relief grants are available to help eligible participants in the Union Plus credit card, insurance or mortgage programs who are facing financial hardship due to this disaster. Note that because these are grants, the money does not have to be repaid.

Visit UnionPlus.org to learn more about the eligibility requirements and how to apply.

NALC members may also be eligible for special help from other resources.

Residents of Colorado’s Jefferson, Adams, Boulder, Larimer, Weld, Clear Creek, or El Paso counties can apply for federal assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

And the Postal Employees’ Relief Fund (PERF) can provide grants to any postal worker affected by the Colorado floods or by other disasters.

Visit nalc.org/perf to find out how you can help out your brother and sister letter carriers by giving badly needed funds to PERF.

Arbitration DVD update available

The third quarterly update to the 2012 NALC Arbitration Program DVD is now available for download.

The NALC Arbitration Program enables contract researchers to search quickly through a database of thousands of NALC arbitration awards, complete with full-text searching through all of the latest released decisions.

Branch contract advocates who bought the DVD can get the latest update by launching the program and clicking the “Download updates” button.

This latest update takes about 20 minutes to download over a broadband Internet connection. It’s a comprehensive download that will bring the database of arbitration decisions fully up to date.

Branches can buy the program DVD for \$10 from the NALC’s Supply Department. For Visa or MasterCard orders, call 202-662-2873. To order by mail, send a check or money order, along with your mailing information, to NALC Supply Department; 100 Indiana Ave. NW; Washington, DC 20001-2144.

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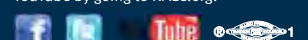
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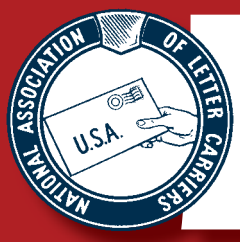
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NALC

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Bulletin

Add it up!

NALC Health Benefit Plan: Best care for best value

Open Season for letter carriers to enroll in or switch health care plans is Nov. 11 through Dec. 9.

“Take a look at the numbers, and we think you’ll agree—the NALC Health Benefit Plan offers the best care for the best value for you and your family’s health care needs,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

The NALC Plan offers comprehensive benefits and a broad choice of in-network health care providers at reasonable rates. Best of all, it’s a non-profit plan run by letter carriers, for letter carriers.

This year is special because the Plan has two new options to offer.

As the only health plan run by letter carriers, the NALC Health Benefit Plan makes improvements based on your suggestions and requests. And as a not-for-profit plan, all of the Plan’s focus is on serving its members.

If you aren’t yet a member of the NALC Health Benefit Plan, now is the time to look at your needs and consider joining.

“We’re confident that if you look at your budget and your health care situation, the NALC Health Benefit Plan will ‘add up’ as the right one for you,” Rolando said. “The NALC Health Benefit Plan is unique. Letter carriers created it and letter carriers run it. There’s no better health plan to take care of letter carriers and their families.”

Health Benefit Plan Director Brian Hellman encourages carriers to compare the NALC Plan with the others available to you during Open Season. “Our benefits stack up well, and our rates are reasonable, because we never stop trying to improve,” Hellman said.

Check out a summary of what is covered, and how the plan works, in the insert in the November issue of *The Postal Record*. To compare plans and get other information about enrollment during Open Season, go to opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare/plan-information.

Health plan highlights

For 2014, the NALC Health Benefit Plan will again offer the comprehensive High Option health insurance package, a fee-for-service plan with a preferred provider (PPO) network that offers the most benefits with the least amount of out-of-pocket costs. It’s the perfect choice for more than 220,000 active and retired letter carriers and family members who rely on it to meet their health care needs.

The High Option plan pays for a wide range of preventive care for adults and children at 100 percent when you use a PPO provider. In addition, you will pay only a \$20 copayment for each primary care or specialist office visit when the services are rendered by a PPO provider. The deductible for the High Option plan is \$300 for Self Only coverage and \$600 for Self and Family coverage.

The High Option plan provides reasonable prescription drug benefits, too, and offers benefits if you have Medicare as the primary payer. It also gives Medicare recipients access to lower out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs. Having the NALC Health Benefit Plan in addition to your Medicare coverage is a great way to assure that you won’t be taken by surprise by unexpected costs.

To give letter carriers a broader range of affordable health care coverage, the plan will offer two new choices for 2014—the Value Option and the Consumer-Driven Health Plan (CDHP).

Like the High Option plan, these choices include a range of benefits for you and your family, including 100 percent coverage of preventive care. But unlike the High Option, both the Value Option and CDHP offer a personal care account (PCA) for each enrollee, a great way to control your personal medical costs while enjoying the protection of an affordable health plan that will cover major medical costs if they arise.

The Health Benefit Plan adds money to each enrollee’s PCA each calendar year to pay for medical costs, including medication. For example, if you are ill and go to an in-network doctor who charges \$60 for the visit, the doctor will submit your claim to the plan and \$60 will be deducted from your PCA. You pay nothing. If there is money left over in your PCA, it carries over to the next year (subject to certain limits).

In the CDHP, the annual amount added to the PCA is \$1,200 for Self Only enrollment or \$2,400 for Self and Family enrollment. In the Value Option, the amounts are \$100 for Self Only and \$200 for Self and Family.

If you use all of the money in the PCA for the year, further medical expenses for that year are covered as under a traditional insurance plan. First, a deductible applies. For both the CDHP and the Value Plan, the deductible is \$2,000 for Self Only enrollment

and \$4,000 for Self and Family enrollment for in-network providers; \$4,000 for Self Only and \$8,000 for Self and Family for out-of-network providers.

The CDHP and Value Plans limit the total amount you pay in out-of-pocket costs for a year. The in-network out-of-pocket maximum for a Self Only enrollment is \$6,000 and \$12,000 for Self and Family enrollment. For out-of-network, the out-of-pocket limit is \$12,000 for Self Only and \$24,000 for Self and Family. There are some costs that members are responsible for that cannot be counted toward these maximum amounts, so please read the brochure carefully.

All three choices—High Option, Value Option and CDHP—have partnered with Cigna HealthCare to give members access to the Cigna Open Access Plus PPO network, which offers more than 2 million participating family doctors and specialists and more than 22,000 general acute care hospitals and facilities nationwide. All also come with access to more than 67,800 in-network pharmacies through prescription benefit manager CVS/Caremark.

Note: These benefits are summarized; see the 2014 official brochure, RI-71-009, for full details and exclusions for these and other benefits.

These great benefits come at reasonable rates. In 2014, the letter carrier’s share of the High Option premium for career carriers (hired before Jan. 12, 2013) will be \$58.02 biweekly for Self Only and \$114.59 biweekly for Self and Family. For carriers on Medicare, the rates are \$161.22 per month for Self Only and \$327.27 for Self and Family. Different rates and benefits apply to the Value Option and CDHP; see the plan’s official brochure for details.

“Add it up,” President Rolando said. “Quality plus affordability plus more than 60 years of service equals the NALC Health Benefit Plan.”

MOU for filling residual vacancies

On Aug. 30, NALC President Fredric Rolando signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Re: Residual Vacancies—City Letter Carrier Craft, M-01824. The MOU puts in place a procedure for filling residual vacancies that includes assignment of unassigned regulars, conversion to regular of part-time flexibles (PTFs), transfers, and city carrier assistant (CCA) conversions to full-time regular career status. To read more about the procedure, see the October City Delivery article in *The Postal Record*.

An updated list of vacancies available for transfer opportunities was posted in eReassign Oct. 7 and is available at nalc.org. The list will be updated and posted as the Postal Service provides it to NALC.

Transfer requests from career employees will be accepted through eReassign following the procedure in the MOU. For assistance with eReassign, contact your shop steward, branch president or national business agent’s office.

2013 NALC Heroes of the Year:

Looking out for the community ‘comes with the uniform’

The annual NALC Heroes of the Year Awards ceremony was held on Oct. 10 in Washington, DC, with attendees including the union’s resident national officers, the postmaster general and other top Postal Service executives and members of Congress. The event highlighted the special acts of courage and compassion by six individual NALC members and five branches representing an entire district of carriers.

“We are gathered here today to honor some of the men and women who have gone above and beyond while delivering the nation’s mail—stepping in and stepping up, helping someone in crisis and perhaps saving a life. Perhaps saving more than one life,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “It is, in short, about recognizing what is exceptional about our nation’s letter carriers in terms of the public service they render, day in and day out.”

Rolando recognized a number of special guests, including President Jeanette Dwyer of the National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association; Postal Regulatory Commission Chairman Ruth Goldway and PRC Commissioners Nanci Langley and Mark Acton; and newly elected AFL-CIO Vice President Tefere Gebre.

The president also called on Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe, who congratulated the honorees. “I want to thank you for your actions, whether they were heroically saving someone, humanitarian deeds, community activity,” Donahoe said. “That says so much about postal employees, and you represent the Postal Service on a daily basis.”



NALC President Fredric Rolando

The honorees were selected from among 200 nominees, whose stories of heroism and community service were published over the course of a year in *The Postal Record*.

National Hero of the Year: David Tozzolino, Freehold, NJ Branch 924—When Tozzolino, a Marine veteran, saw a car veer out of control on a busy residential highway, hitting a parked vehicle before rupturing a house’s natural gas line, he instinctively took charge, saving the driver and preventing a potential catastrophe.

Humanitarian of the Year: John Dick, Royal Oak, MI Branch 3126—Dick delivered mail and good cheer to the hospital bed of a very sick man who lived on his route and whom Dick had befriended over their shared love of motorcycles. When his friend chose to end life support, Dick helped fulfill the man’s wish for one last motorcycle ride.

Eastern Region Hero: Pam Pontius, Northeast Florida Branch 53—Pontius saw a man and a woman in a van casing houses on her route and trying to take advantage of elderly customers, so Pontius used her letter carrier knowledge to cleverly intervene. She reported the couple to authorities, and as a result, two criminals with warrants out for their arrest were apprehended.

Central Region Hero: James Barton, Hopkinsville, KY Branch 836—While on his route, Barton saw a police officer struggling to subdue a suspect in a heated roadside scuffle. The former military police officer helped wrestle the man to the ground so the officer could take him into custody.

Western Region Hero: Danny Thompson, Houston, TX Branch 283—When Thompson saw dense smoke billowing from the air-conditioning unit of a house on his route, the former soldier jumped into action, helping two children inside escape to safety before the house burned to the ground.

Branch Service Award: Albany, NY district branches—To help New York City-area residents recover from Hurricane Sandy, letter carriers in upstate New York worked with the Postal Service to organize a special one-day food drive, and in just two weeks, collected enough food from their customers to fill 13 tractor-trailers.

Special Carrier Alert: Jason Jones, Cleveland, OH Branch 40—Thanks to his persistence, Jones rescued an elderly man who had collapsed in his home on Jones’ route. After calling authorities but still seeing no sign of the man, Jones called again and convinced the authorities to follow through and investigate, ultimately saving the man’s life.

Reps. Paul Tonko (D-NY) and Chris Gibson (R-NY) congratulated and thanked the Albany postal district branches whose food drive after Hurricane Sandy struck helped the relief effort for hard-hit New York City.

“You’re a great connection for your communities,” Tonko said of all carriers. “This connectedness is on grand display today. Letter carriers were the first neighborhood watch for this country, something of which we can be tremendously proud.”

“Our letter carriers represent all of the greatness in our country,” Gibson added. “You are your brother’s or sister’s keeper.”

A panel of independent judges reviewed the stories about heroic and humanitarian acts published in *The Postal Record* between July 2012 and June 2013. They were: Bud Biscardo, AFL-CIO Community Services liaison at the United Way of America; Richard Bowers, chief of the Fairfax County, VA, Department of Fire and Rescue; and Richard Daschbach, chairman and chief judge of the Employees’ Compensation Appeals Board at the U.S. Department of Labor.

You can read all of the coverage, as well as watch videos of the heroes telling their stories, on the NALC website at nalc.org/commun/heroes/2013.html.



The 2013 NALC Heroes of the Year (from l): Northeast FL Br. 53 member Pam Pontius; Syracuse, NY Branch 134 President Jim Lostumbo; Cleveland Br. 40 member Jason Jones; Binghamton, NY Br. 333 President Jeff Potter; Royal Oak, MI Br. 3126 member John Dick; Utica, NY Br. 375 President Mark Fahey; Albany, NY Br. 29 President Jay Jackson; Freehold, NJ Br. 924 member David Tozzolino; Hopkinsville, KY Br. 836 member James Barton; Northeastern NY Br. 358 President Bill Cook; Houston Br. 283 member Danny Thompson

Rolando went on to explain why the Postal Service, and especially carriers as the face of the USPS, are so trusted by the public. “While our primary mission is to deliver the mail—indeed, we deliver 40 percent of the world’s mail—we are closely connected to the communities we serve,” he said. “We watch as families grow, as customers age and as neighborhoods evolve. We see every corner of this country’s daily life.”

He highlighted all we do, from carrying out the country’s largest one-day food drive and leading the fight against muscular dystrophy to preparing and training to deliver medicines and vaccines quickly in case of biological attack.

“Occasionally, when circumstances demand, we do a whole lot more than that,” President Rolando said. “We do so not because we are supermen or superwomen, but rather because we are in neighborhoods six days a week. We know when something doesn’t seem right—and we are often the first on the scene.”

“And when asked about it, the carrier typically says that he or she did nothing noteworthy; that any carrier would have done the same; and that it’s just part of the job,” he said. “For so many letter carriers, looking out for the families and the community simply comes with the uniform.”



USPS Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe



Rep. Chris Gibson (R-NY)



Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY)

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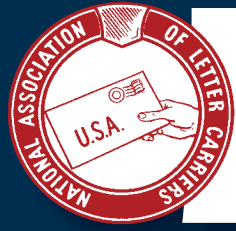
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NALC

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Nov. 21, 2013

Bulletin

USPS made \$600M delivering mail in 2013

On Nov. 15, the Postal Service Board of Governors announced that USPS reported an operating profit of \$600 million for Fiscal Year 2013.

But the 2006 congressional mandate to massively pre-fund future retiree health benefits—a political requirement placed on no other agency or company in the country—cost USPS \$5.6 billion, leaving an operating profit of \$600 million but a net loss of \$5 billion.

“The dramatic improvement in postal finances announced today by the U.S. Postal Service is great news for the 300 million Americans and millions of businesses relying on USPS for the world’s most affordable delivery service,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “As the economy recovers from the Great Recession, the trends underlying this performance bode well for the future.”

The Board of Governors reported that mail revenue largely stabilized over the past year, down just 2 percent, while revenue from package deliveries skyrocketed by 8 percent as online shopping increased.

“This shows that the Postal Service is adapting to the Internet age,” Rolando said, adding that exciting developments, such as the recently announced USPS-Amazon Sunday package delivery program, reinforce these positive trends.

“Now it’s time for Congress to set aside bills that focus on cutting service and attacking the pay and benefits of postal workers instead of addressing the real cause of the crisis: the 2006 pre-funding mandate,” he said.

“The Postal Service is positioned for a strong comeback if lawmakers act sensibly—by addressing the pre-funding fiasco that created an artificial financial crisis, and by freeing the Postal Service to use its universal retail and delivery networks to innovate and grow,” Rolando said.

Salary increase effective Nov. 16

According to the terms of the 2011-2016 National Agreement between the NALC and the U.S. Postal Service (Art. 9, Sec. 2), all active letter carriers will receive a 1 percent pay increase effective Nov. 16. For regular career city carriers earning top step pay (Step O-RSC Q), the increase will be worth \$565 annually. Letter carriers will first see this increase applied to paychecks covering Pay Period 25, with a pay date of Dec. 6.

City carrier assistants (CCAs) will receive an additional 1 percent pay hike effective Nov. 16 (for a total increase of 2 percent), as called for by the National Agreement (Art. 9, Sec. 7). For CCA Grade 1 carriers (Step BB), the increase will be 30 cents per hour.

The National Agreement was settled on Jan. 10 through binding interest arbitration under the terms of the Postal Reorganization Act’s dispute resolution process.

Letter carriers deliver, even on Sunday

As you might have seen in the news—and as some of you may have experienced firsthand—letter carriers have begun delivering Parcel Select packages in more than 900 ZIP codes nationwide. The service expansion follows a successful test involving Sunday delivery of packages for Amazon.com.

“There is unlimited potential for growth in Sunday and also for same-day package delivery,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “Both increase revenue for the Postal Service while providing more services to the American people.

“NALC has been involved in and fully supports this effort, and we will continue to work with the Postal Service to grow this business in the future,” he said.

CCAs converted to full-time career status

Pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding Re: Residual Vacancies—City Letter Carrier Craft (M-01824), the first wave of city carrier assistant (CCA) conversions to full-time career status took place on Nov. 2.

While the exact number of conversions has not yet been finalized, NALC estimates that around 1,500 CCAs, most of whom had served multiple years as transitional employees (TEs) prior to becoming CCAs, were converted to full-time career status to fill vacant full-time letter carrier jobs.

As vacancies continue to be filled through the steps in M-01824, more CCA conversions should take place in the coming weeks and months.

In a memorandum of understanding (M-01826) dated Oct. 22 regarding city carrier assistant (CCA) staffing, the NALC and the U.S. Postal Service agreed that CCAs who served as city carrier transitional employees (TEs) directly before their initial CCA appointment will not serve a probationary period when converted to full-time career status during the term of the MOU.

In the MOU effective through March 31, the parties agreed to jointly monitor on a weekly basis at the national level the necessary CCA resources during implementation of the MOU Re: Residual Vacancies—City Letter Carrier Craft (M-01824) and the Sunday parcel delivery test.

Additionally, to assist with the significant increase of parcel volume expected over the coming holiday season, holiday carrier assistants—initially an option beginning a year from now in December 2014, according to the terms of the 2011 National Agreement—will now be available beginning for a four-week period this December.

CCAs: Check your pay stubs!

If you’re a city carrier assistant (CCA) who recently returned from your five-day break between appointments, check your pay stub to be sure you are being paid correctly. There have been instances reported where the CCA hourly rate was incorrectly reduced from \$16.25 to \$15. Pursuant to the Jan. 10 Das arbitration award, CCAs who were on the rolls as transitional employees as of Jan. 10 shall be paid at Step AA of Table 2, which is the higher hourly rate of the two steps for CCAs. Below are both the current hourly rates and the new ones effective Nov. 16:

Initial CCA Grade	BB	AA	CCA Grade as of Nov. 16	BB	AA
1	\$15.00	\$16.25	1	\$15.30	\$16.58
2	\$15.32	\$16.59	2	\$15.63	\$16.92

Also, check the new re-appointment letter you receive in the mail from Shared Services, PS Form 50, Notice of Personnel Action, item number 62, “Base Salary,” to be sure your hourly rate is correct.

If you are being paid incorrectly, contact USPS Shared Services at 877-477-3273, Option 5, to advise them that you are being paid incorrectly. Also, you may discuss it with your NALC shop steward or local branch officer and local management.

As legislative threats remain

Keep your contact info up-to-date

While this *NALC Bulletin* was being prepared, there were still concerns that the Senate committee with Postal Service oversight might take up for consideration the Carper-Coburn postal bill, S. 1486, before the end of the year.

But with other matters holding senators’ attention, and with many members of the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee publicly pointing out the numerous problems within this so-called “postal reform” measure, it seemed increasingly likely that the committee would once again delay a markup of the bill.

“We believe that there are better solutions to the Postal Service’s financial problems than those proposed by S. 1486, and that’s why we continue to oppose this unfixable measure,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “The Carper-Coburn bill prioritizes the unfair congressional mandate to pre-fund future retiree health benefits decades in advance, and it puts the Postal Service on a path to failure by calling for the dismantling of its unique delivery network to pay for this misguided mandate.”

Because letter carriers and the Postal Service continue to face so much legislative uncertainty, it has never been more important for active and retired letter carriers to keep their contact information at NALC Headquarters up-to-date, in case President Rolando needs to call on members at a moment’s notice.

To help make it more convenient for members to update their information, NALC Executive Vice President Timothy O’Malley has announced that two new forms have been added to nalc.org to help facilitate that.

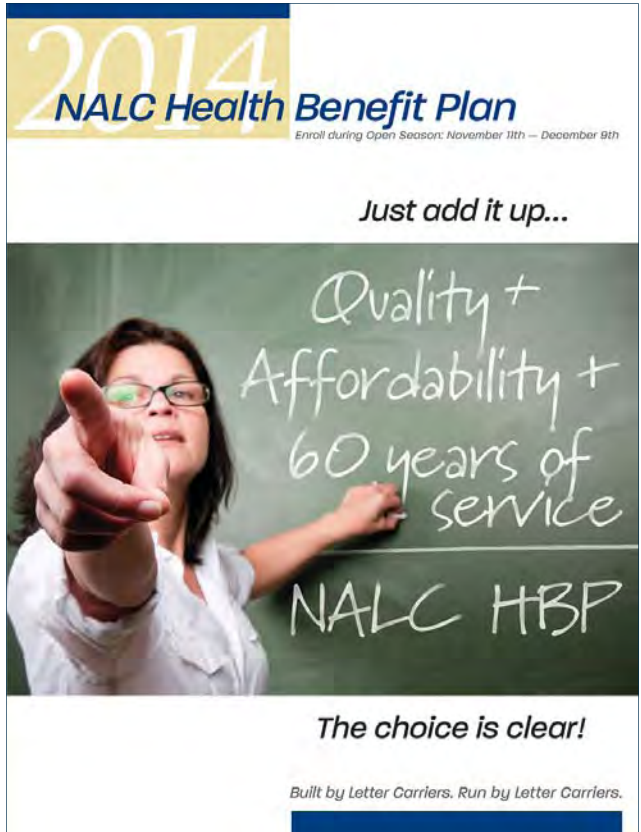
Both web forms allow members to submit to the NALC Membership Department changes of address, phone numbers, e-mail addresses and other contact information. And both forms take full advantage of the latest web security and encryption software.

“This latest upgrade should help simplify the process for everyone,” O’Malley said.

Are you an e-Activist?

Stay informed and get the very latest alerts from the NALC via the e-Activist Network. Go to nalc.org today to sign up or to update your e-mail address.

Join the NALC’s Health Benefit Plan during FEHBP Open Season



Open Season for letter carriers to enroll in or switch health care plans is Nov. 11 through Dec. 9, and NALC President Fredric Rolando urges active and retired letter carriers to take a good look at what the NALC Health Benefit Plan (HBP) has to offer for 2014.

“Our HBP offers the best care for the best value for you and your family’s health care needs,” Rolando said.

The NALC Plan offers comprehensive benefits and a broad choice of PPO health care providers at reasonable rates. Even better, the HBP is not for profit—run by letter carriers, for letter carriers. All of the Plan’s focus is on serving its members, and it makes improvements based on your suggestions and requests.

If you aren’t yet a member of the NALC Health Benefit Plan, now is the time to look at your needs and consider joining—especially this year, because the Plan has two new options to offer.

“We’re confident that if you look at your budget and your health care situation, the NALC Health Benefit Plan will ‘add up’ as the right one for you,” Rolando said. “There’s no better health plan to take care of letter carriers and their families.”

Health Benefit Plan Director Brian Hellman encourages carriers to compare the NALC Plan with the others available to you during Open Season. “Our benefits stack up well, and our rates are reasonable, because we never stop trying to improve,” Hellman said.

Check out a summary of what is covered, and how the plan works, in the insert in the November issue of *The Postal Record*. To compare plans and get other information about enrollment during Open Season, go to opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare/plan-information.

The NALC Plan’s great benefits come at reasonable rates. In 2014, the letter carrier’s share of the High Option premium for career carriers (hired before Jan. 12, 2013) will be \$58.02 biweekly for Self Only and \$114.59 biweekly for Self and Family. For annuitants, the rates are \$161.22 per month for Self Only and \$327.27 for Self and Family. Lower rates and different benefits apply to the Value Option and CDHP; see the plan’s official brochure, RI 71-009, for details.

Note: The 2014 benefit year postal premiums are divided into three categories. Postal Category 1 rates apply to career bargaining-unit employees covered by the Postal Police contract. Postal Category 2 rates apply to career non-bargaining unit, non-executive, non-law enforcement employees, and non-law enforcement Inspection Service and Forensics employees. Rates for the third category, career NALC employees hired before Jan. 12, 2013, can be found in the “NALC Your Share” column on the back of the Plan’s official brochure, RI 71-009. For all questions concerning eligibility or your category, please contact the Human Resources Shared Services Center at 877-477-3273, Option 5. City carrier assistants (CCAs): Contact your employing office for premium information.

Correct dates for Open Season
The NALC Health Benefit Plan Open Season poster lists incorrect dates for FEHBP Open Season.
The correct dates are Nov. 11 through Dec. 9.

CCAs: Understanding your health insurance options

NALC Health Benefit Plan Director Brian Hellman has written a letter to all city carrier assistants (CCAs) to help clarify some complicated issues surrounding health insurance for CCAs and to ensure that all CCAs understand their options and rights under the NALC’s National Agreement with the Postal Service.

To help CCAs understand the available health care options, Hellman’s letter explains the language in the Das award and summarizes the choices and options CCAs face.

The letter is in the mail now, and you can also find a copy of it posted on the home page at nalc.org. Anyone with questions can call the NALC Health Benefit Plan at 888-636-6252 for assistance.

2014 retiree COLA: 1.5%

The cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for CSRS and FERS benefits will be 1.5 percent in 2014, as triggered by the annual release in September of the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The release of the September CPI was delayed by the 16-day partial federal government shutdown, but the COLA will take effect on time and will be included in the January 2014 annuity checks.

The 2014 COLA is based on the increase in the average CPI between the third quarter of 2012 and the third quarter of 2013. Since the CPI did not increase by more than 2 percent, COLAs for both CSRS and FERS benefits will be the same in 2014.

Thinking Thanksgiving? Think union!

As you start making plans for Thanksgiving, make sure to include union-made products and services on your list.

As NALC Secretary-Treasurer Jane E. Broendel noted in her column in the November *Postal Record*, when you buy union, you’re protecting working people in our country by helping them earn a livable wage in safe conditions, provide health care for their families and pursue the American promise of creating a better life for every generation.

Boar’s Head, Butterball, Eckrich Deli and Foster Farms are union brands for whole and deli-style turkey. Potato products produced by union members include Ore Ida, Betty Crocker and McCain. Manischewitz, Stroehmann Bakery Products and Kraft provide union-made stuffing, and you can count on Ocean Spray brand for cranberry products.

Union-made vegetable products include Birdseye, Andy Boy, Del Monte and Eurofresh. And don’t forget to shop in union grocery stores: Albertson’s, Cub Foods, Dominick’s Finer Foods, Giant Eagle, Jewel, Kroger, Lucky, Meijer, Pak n’ Save, Ralph’s and Schnucks, to name a few. (And remember: Walmart still is not a union shop.)

This list is not all-inclusive. For more information, check out unionlabel.org and labor411.org. Those websites will keep you informed of union products and services, and they will also let you know about companies that should be boycotted because of bargaining or other issues. The sites also will have ideas for how you can buy union for your holiday gift-giving.

Dues change for 2014

NALC Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel announced in her November *Postal Record* column that there will be a biweekly dues increase for year 2014 due to the November 2013 wage increase. The dues change will take place in Pay Period 1 of 2014 (Dec. 14-27, 2013). This change will be reflected in the dues that will be deducted beginning with the Jan. 3, 2014 paycheck. As a result, the dues increase will be incorporated into the branch reimbursements of Jan. 24, 2014.

The minimum dues structure set forth in Article 7, Section 2 (a) of the *NALC Constitution* is the equivalent of two hours of base pay for an NALC Grade 1, Step D letter carrier per month. Since dues are deducted biweekly, this amount will be \$23.44 for 2014. National retains one-third of this amount, \$7.81, and remits the other two-thirds to the local branches (with some withheld for state associations and remitted by National Headquarters to the state associations monthly).

Some branches may have set dues higher than the minimum dues structure and may increase local dues during the year, as do some state associations. Any increase in a branch’s local dues cannot be processed before Pay Period 4 (Jan. 28, 2014).

Note: No dues changes can be made until 2014, as the 2013 deadline has passed.

Penalty overtime exclusion

As referenced in Article 8, Sections 4 and 5, of the USPS-NALC and USPS-APWU national agreements, the December period during which penalty overtime regulations are not applicable consists of four consecutive service weeks. This year, the December period begins Pay Period 26-13—Week 1 (Nov. 30) and ends Pay Period 01-14—Week 2 (Dec. 27).



NALC

Number 13-15

Dec. 26, 2013

Bulletin

While unfairly targeting future federal employees

Congress rejects cutting Saturday mail delivery

NALC grassroots activists and the American public scored a huge victory on Dec. 10 when efforts to include elimination of Saturday mail delivery in the emerging budget agreement for 2014 failed.

NALC President Fredric Rolando reacted with gratitude and relief. “Thanks to the thousands of dedicated letter carriers, citizens and small-business owners who raised their voices in opposition to this misguided proposal to slash delivery service,” Rolando said, “Congress will not unwisely weaken the Postal Service or undermine our last-mile delivery network. Together, we have not only helped save tens of thousands of good jobs, but we have preserved a path for recovery and growth for the USPS in the future. This is a win for tens of millions of Americans and countless businesses throughout the country that rely on the Postal Service for the world’s most affordable delivery service.”

“Congress must continue to reject any legislation that would lead to the elimination of Saturday mail delivery,” he added.

Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) and Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) announced on Dec. 10 that they had reached a deal to partially replace the across-the-board spending cuts (known as sequestration) that were called for by the Budget Control Act of 2011 with a package of alternative spending cuts and revenue raisers. Ryan had proposed the Saturday delivery cut as a measure that would save \$20 billion over 10 years, a figure NALC and others strongly contest. Murray stood firm with the nation’s letter carriers and the American public and rejected the proposal.

But there was some bad news as well. Under the budget deal, federal and postal employees hired after Dec. 31, 2013, will be required to contribute 4.4 percent of their basic pay for Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) pension benefits, 1.3 percent above the 3.1 percent contribution rate for federal employees hired after 2011 and 3.6 percent above those hired before 2012. Despite the higher contributions, pension benefits will not be raised in return for the higher contributions, since agency contributions will be reduced by the same 1.3 percent.

Although totally unjustified and unfair, the increase in pension contributions for new hires was adopted after weeks of negotiations in which Ryan pushed for a proposal included in the House-passed budget: an increase of 5.5 percent in pension contributions for all federal and postal employees (present and future).

“Once again, Congress has singled out federal and postal employees for deficit reduction, even though our community has been repeatedly targeted in the past and we have contributed more than our fair share,” Rolando said. “There is now an irrational three-tier pension system for FERS employees, where different groups of employees will pay different amounts in payroll contributions, yet receive the same level of benefits. That’s totally unacceptable.”

NALC led an all-out push to save Saturday delivery for the American people and worked to prevent a massive 5.5 percent pay cut for letter carriers. We spearheaded a coalition to inform Congress, set up a toll-free phone line to connect letter carriers with their representatives in the House, and used our e-Activist Network to deliver thousands of messages to senators and representatives. The union also worked with our allies, organized by Delivering for America and the Federal-Postal Coalition of unions. These allies included the other postal unions—APWU, NRLCA and NPMHU—and thousands of small-business owners, veterans, rural residents and senior citizens.

“I thank all of our allies and all of the NALC members who helped,” Rolando said. “I urge members who didn’t do their part this time to do so next time—and believe me, with the fight over postal reform just starting, there will be a next time.”

“We will vigorously oppose any legislation that will lead to the elimination of Saturday mail delivery,” he said.

The House approved the budget deal on Dec. 12, while the Senate approved it on Dec. 18. President Barack Obama has said he will sign the budget bill, but hadn’t yet as of when this *Bulletin* went to press.

Are you an e-Activist?

Stay informed and get the very latest alerts from the NALC via the e-Activist Network. Go to nalc.org today to sign up or to update your e-mail address.



S. 1486 mark-up postponed

The Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, which has Postal Service oversight, has postponed until sometime in 2014 the mark-up of S. 1486. “On behalf of all NALC members, I thank the committee’s leaders—Senators Tom Carper and Tom Coburn—for continuing a dialog with postal stakeholders as we press forward toward sensible postal reform,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. The NALC and the other postal employee unions will continue to engage the committee’s members on constructive ways to solve the Postal Service’s financial problems and to preserve USPS for decades to come.

Letter carrier catches twins tossed from a burning Bronx building



Jermaine Shirley (Screen grab from WPIX-TV)

us back inside.

“I wanted to get my babies out and I ran to the fire escape,” he said, referring to his 11-month-old twin boys Israel and Ishmael.

Spotting Codner with one of the boys, Shirley quickly climbed on top of a single-story shed located below the building’s fire escape. “I told him, ‘Drop the baby,’” Shirley said.

Codner complied, dropping them one by one into Shirley’s waiting arms below. Once the twins were safely on the ground, “I had to jump from the third-floor fire escape,” Codner told the paper. “My wife had to jump from like halfway down the ladder.”

Fortunately, everyone managed to escape the building without serious injury, including the twins.

“They’re fine, thank God!” their mother, Nikalia Codner, told the *Daily News*. “It really is a miracle.”

“We’re here today because of our neighbor’s quick response,” Everdean Codner said. “It’s the best holiday gift you could ever ask for.”

Shirley downplayed his actions, however. “It was just instincts. They just kicked in right away,” he said. “I have a family, too. I would want somebody to do the same for me.”

A New York letter carrier is being called a hero who saved the lives of two young boys.

Jermaine Shirley, a newly hired city carrier assistant, was on his way to work around 7 a.m. on Dec. 19 when he smelled smoke coming from his own apartment building in the Williamsbridge neighborhood of the Bronx borough of New York City.

Shirley, who works in Greenwich, CT, and is a member of Greenwich Branch 759, told New York’s *Daily News* that he followed the scent to a second-floor apartment. He then ran through the building, knocking on doors to alert residents to the danger.

While the letter carrier was outside helping his own wife and baby to safety, he heard his neighbor, Everdean Codner, calling for help from a third-floor apartment.

“I tried to make it through the front door but there was nothing but smoke,” Codner told the *Daily News*. “I couldn’t get through. The smoke was heavy. It pushed

MD letter carrier killed while delivering the mail



Tyson Barnette

On Saturday, Nov. 23, Tyson Barnette, a 26-year-old city carrier assistant from Upper Marlboro, MD, was shot and killed while delivering mail in Cheverly, MD, a suburb of Washington, DC.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with Tyson’s family during this very difficult time,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “The nation’s letter carriers deliver the mail in every community throughout the country. This tragic incident highlights the need in all operational decisions about how and when mail is delivered to give priority consideration to the safety of these dedicated public servants.”

George T. Maffett Jr., a spokesman for the U.S. Postal Service, said that Barnette had been a letter carrier for six years and had been on this particular route three times in the last month.

Police said that at about 7:20 p.m., officers responded to reports of a shooting. When they arrived, they found Barnette suffering from apparent gunshot wounds. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

Detectives are continuing their work to identify the shooter or shooters and determine a motive, and postal officials and police are offering a combined \$125,000 reward for information leading to an arrest in the case.

NALC announces creation of joint safety and service program

NALC President Fredric Rolando announced earlier this month a new joint effort to identify and address safety issues for America’s letter carriers and issues with service to postal customers.

After productive discussions with high-level USPS management, the parties agreed to establish a joint program to look at offices with safety issues, whether during the daylight hours or after dark, as well as to address issues that affect service to customers, such as routine delivery after traditional delivery hours.

Joint teams will go into areas experiencing these safety and service issues to evaluate every factor possibly causing the issues. While there are common causes of some problems, the causes often differ from office to office, so the solutions will differ as well. The teams will work hard to develop lasting solutions that improve the safety of letter carriers and service to our customers.

More information will be available in the near future.

Customer, employee rights when USPS solicits customers to change to centralized delivery

NALC has become aware of an effort by the Postal Service in various parts of the country to convince customers to agree to change their mode of delivery to cluster box or centralized delivery. As many carriers are receiving questions about this from their patrons and aren’t well versed on what to say or don’t have the time to give a complex answer, NALC has created a web page detailing what customers’ rights are. You can find the information at nalc.org/deliveryrights.

Sections 631.6 and 631.7 of the *Postal Operations Manual (POM)* govern conversion of mode of mail delivery. A conversion is changing from one mode of delivery to another. The most common example of this occurs when USPS solicits customers to change from receiving mail at their door to a centralized location where a number of deliveries are made into a cluster box. In such cases, the customers have to go to the cluster box to retrieve their mail.

As letter carriers know, these changes are often pushed without regard for the safety of the customers or the security of the mail. The relevant language from the *POM* makes clear that property owners must sign indicating their agreement with the conversion. If property owners do not sign, they retain their current mode of delivery. Owners’ associations and managers in rental areas may also control the mode of delivery. The *POM* also states that the Postal Service may not arbitrarily change the mode of delivery when a residence is sold.

Section 667.12 of the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)* provides guidance in regard to employees engaging in campaigns for or against changes in mail service.

Visit nalc.org/deliveryrights to review the relevant text and an explanation that highlights a few key points.

MOUs cover overtime lists, temporary CCA assignments

On Dec. 4, NALC and the Postal Service signed a new memorandum of understanding (MOU), Re: Signing Overtime Lists (M-01828). The MOU gives the local parties the right to develop a process to allow part-time flexibles (PTFs) and city carrier assistants (CCAs) converted to full-time status, as well as career employees who transfer, to sign the overtime desired list rather than waiting until the beginning of the following quarter.

The following day, the parties signed an MOU, Re: City Carrier Assistants—Temporary Assignments to Other Post Offices (M-01827), that defines the process for temporarily assigning city carrier assistants to other post offices.

Both MOUs are available for review on the Contract Administration page at nalc.org.

Sombrotto memorial events planned



NALC will honor the first anniversary of President Emeritus Vincent R. Sombrotto’s death with an event in New York City on Saturday, Jan. 11, starting with an ecumenical memorial service at 2 p.m. at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, located at 135 W. 31st St., near Penn Station.

No tickets are required for this event but seating is limited.

There also will be a reception/dinner to celebrate Sombrotto’s life that evening from 6 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. in the Hammerstein Ballroom at the Manhattan Center, located at 311 W. 34th St.

Tickets for the reception/dinner cost \$75 each and are required. Tickets are limited, and no tickets will be sold at the door.

This is your last chance! If you wish to attend the reception/dinner, please order your tickets as soon as possible—and absolutely no later than Jan. 2.

Visit nalc.org to download the ticket order form.

OSHA cites USPS after heat-related death

On July 6, Medford, MA letter carrier James Baldassarre, 45, died after collapsing the day before while making a delivery on his route. The U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) investigated the matter and has cited the U.S. Postal Service for a serious safety violation in connection with the heat-related death.

“Heat stress illnesses and fatalities can be prevented with knowledge. Knowing how to recognize and respond to symptoms can save a life,” said Jeffrey Erskine, OSHA’s area director for Middlesex and Essex counties in Massachusetts. “In this case, the Postal Service had such information, but failed to communicate it to letter carriers so they could protect themselves. Had this been done, this tragedy could have been prevented.”

OSHA’s investigation found that the Postal Service exposed workers to the recognized hazard of working in excessive heat by failing to implement an adequate heat stress management program that would have addressed and informed letter carriers of how to identify, prevent and report symptoms of heat-related illnesses.

The citation includes suggested feasible means to address the hazard including adequately implementing a heat stress management program tailored to the particulars of the work performed by letter carriers. An effective program would contain measures to address the recognized hazard of exposure to excessive heat and it would train workers to recognize, prevent, respond to and report heat-related illnesses.



Baseball night at the convention

The 69th Biennial NALC Convention will take place in Philadelphia July 21-24, and the union is planning a night out at Citizens Bank Park to watch the Phillies take on the San Francisco Giants on July 22. Stay tuned for further details... .

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