



# IT'S OFFICIAL: Rural carriers are partners in Food Drive

**H**undreds of NALC branches already have registered to participate in the May 8 Letter Carriers National Food Drive, and the largest one-day effort to fight hunger in America received a major boost when the rural letter carriers enlisted as an official sponsor.

The annual food drive, heading into its 18th year, is on the verge of breaking the 1 billion-pound mark in total donations and this spring's collection non-perishable food will help fill a critical need in communities across the nation.

The National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, whose members have been instrumental in the drive's success in hundreds of locales, accepted an invitation from NALC President Fred Rolando last month to become a full national partner in the 2010 drive.

With the new role, NRLCA will assist NALC and the other co-sponsors in promoting the drive on the second Saturday in May, and will encourage greater participation by rural carriers in collection and delivery of donations to local food banks, pantries and shelters.

NRLCA's logo will appear on publications and other promotional materials alongside NALC's and those of the other national partners: the U.S. Postal Service, Campbell Soup Company, Valpak, the AFL-CIO, United Way Worldwide and its local United Ways, and Feeding America, the nation's food bank network.



NALC President Fred Rolando (l) listens as NRLCA President Don Cantriel testifies before Congress.

Announcement of the new alliance between city and rural carriers came as famed cartoonists Bil and Jeff Keane delivered special artwork that will be used to promote the May 8 collection.

NRLCA President Don Cantriel said his union is eager to be more involved in the battle against hunger.

"After several years of participating in the NALC food drive in a very limited capacity, the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association is extremely excited by the invitation from President Rolando and the NALC to have a greater role in the campaign to stamp out hunger," he said. "We look forward to becoming a more active partner in the whole process and working closely with our brothers and sisters of the NALC for a very worthy cause."

As this *Postal Record* went to press, hundreds of branches had already registered for the 2010 drive. All branches must re-register for the drive and provide updated information on coordinators and contacts.

President Rolando has asked all branches to redouble their efforts so the union can surpass last year's record collection of 73.4 million pounds, enabling it to soar well beyond the 1 billion-pound mark since the drive went nationwide in 1993. To date, carriers have collected

982.7 million pounds of donations from postal customers.

"The economic collapse has been difficult on everyone, including letter carriers and their families," Rolando said. "But we do have decent-paying jobs with benefits. There are millions of Americans who do not have jobs, or if they do, the wages are low, the benefits meager, and job security non-existent."

"Many families are having to swallow their pride and seek charitable food to provide their children with just minimal nutrition," Rolando said. "The same goes for thousands of the elderly who, for the first time, must rely on helping hands to survive."

"Members of our great union have come to their aid in the past and we must do it again," he concluded.

Letter carriers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands are expected to heed the call.

The NALC drive originated in 1991, patterned after a successful drive by Phoenix, Arizona Branch 576. It went nationwide two years later and 11 million pounds of food was collected—a major success then that now is only a fraction of what is accomplished yearly. ☐

Questions regarding the food drive should be directed to Drew Von Bergen, national coordinator, at 202-662-2489 or [vonbergen@nalc.org](mailto:vonbergen@nalc.org).

