

1,000,000

Food drive partners ready to help carriers make history

There is no question the critical ingredient for the success of the NALC National Food Drive over the past 18 years has been the hard work, dedication and unmatched spirit of volunteerism of hundreds of thousands of city letter carriers, retirees and family members.

But we would not be standing on the brink of a historic benchmark in 2010 without the equally essential support of the U.S. Postal Service, rural letter carriers, the Campbell Soup Co., and grass roots organizations and volunteers that participate in the drive in more than 10,000 cities and towns.

When the branch poundage reports start to come in on May 8 after another tremendous effort in all 50 states and U.S. jurisdictions, it will be clear that this year's drive to deliver much-needed supplies to local food banks, pantries and shelters will push total collections since 1993 beyond the 1 billion-pound level.

When this issue went to press, more than 1,100 branches had registered for the drive—a sign that letter carriers are

pounds, it has many longtime partners on the national level, along with a new one this year, the Rural Letter Carriers.

In the vanguard of top supporters are Postmaster General John E. Potter and Deputy Postmaster General Patrick R. Donahoe, both longtime allies of the drive.

“Working together, I am confident we will exceed the 1 billion-pound benchmark in donations collected by letter carriers from postal customers to help feed families in need,” Potter said in a letter to NALC President Fred Rolando. “The generosity of our customers and the determination of our employees has never been stronger.”

“The need has never been greater,” Potter added.

Separately, Deputy PMG Donahoe sent a letter to all area vice presidents/operations and district managers urging them to support of the drive.

“I encourage you to start planning now—don't wait,” Donahoe said. “Assign the necessary staff and develop your operational and transportation plans to support the food drive.”

“Please give the food drive your full support, including approval for any appropriate local promotions (such as carriers replacing uniform shirts with the Food Drive T-shirt during the campaign),” Donahoe wrote.

Copies of the letters from Potter and Donahoe, as well as leaders of other food drive partners, are in the Coordinator's Manual contained in special Priority Mail packets mailed to all branch food drive coordinators. Also in the packet are forms for ordering the Campbell Soup-Priority Mail postcard reminders, a new video on the drive that includes a message from President Rolando, and other materials important to the success of every local drive.

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—AFL-CIO PRESIDENT RICHARD TRUMKA

continuing their commitment to help those in need. Our success will be especially important this year for millions of American families that are still struggling to survive the recession and must rely on outside food centers to meet their basic nutritional needs.

As NALC seeks to surpass 2009's single-year record collection of 73.4 million

POUNDS

The second Saturday in May is the one day each year when more Americans think about hunger than any other day of the year, thanks to their letter carriers. This year, our patrons may well be pondering the shocking statistics that show the number of men, women and children who are face-to-face with hunger has skyrocketed from 35.5 million to 49.1 million in a single year. Many of these families are worrying about getting enough food for the first time in their lives.

“Food banks, pantries and shelters need our help desperately,” said President Rolando in a letter responding to PMG Potter, thanking him for the Postal Service’s support. “Working together, we have provided important assistance in the fight against hunger during the summer months and look forward to another successful drive this year.”

“The high degree of labor-management cooperation in this food drive—to help people in need all across America—epitomizes the level of teamwork that makes the U.S. Postal Service the best mail delivery system in the world and should be a model for day-to-day cooperation in all aspects of the Service throughout the nation,” Rolando said.

Among those joining in support of the drive is the 12-million-member AFL-CIO and its president, Richard Trumka.

“With double-digit unemployment, the NALC Food Drive comes at a critical time,” Trumka said. “Food banks are seeing an unprecedented crisis as requests have risen 20 to 25 percent for each of the past six months while donations continue to decrease.”

National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association President Don Cantriel, whose union officially joined as a national supporter this year, told President Rolando that the NRLCA “is proud to align ourselves with such a noble and distinguished cause.”

“I thank you and your members personally for championing the fight against hunger in America,” Cantriel added.

Brian Gallagher, president and CEO of United Way Worldwide, said their support of the food drive “is a prime example

of how we work together with organized labor to advance the common good in communities throughout the United States.... We have benefitted greatly from this decades-long partnership.”

Campbell Soup President and CEO Douglas R. Conant assured Rolando that “we share your organization’s passion for ensuring the health and welfare of the rapidly increasing number of Americans who are struggling with hunger in the communities where our products are sold, our employees work and our friends and families live.”

Greg Bicket, president and CEO of Cox Target Media, provider of Valpak Direct Marketing Systems, said, “Supporting this food drive is an undertaking we do not take lightly because we know

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**—DEPUTY PMG PATRICK DONAHOE,
WRITING TO AREA VICE PRESIDENTS/OPERATIONS
AND DISTRICT MANAGERS (BELOW)**

the importance of filling the nation’s food banks, and that (helping organize) this largest food drive of the year will help so many families.”

And Vicki Escarra, president and CEO of Feeding America, said breaking the 1 billion-pound mark this year would be “an extraordinary accomplishment and your membership should be very proud.”

She pointed out that one of four Americans at risk of hunger is a child—some 17 million of the 49 million. “Please know that each participating carrier does more than provide meals to those who require food assistance, they provide *HOPE!*” Escarra wrote to President Rolando. ✉

Questions regarding the food drive should be directed to Drew Von Bergen, national coordinator, at vonbergen@nalc.org.

