



Making our voices heard

As stated in the Convention Call, which was mailed in October to each branch and state association secretary, the NALC will once again use an online hotel room reservation process for the 68th Biennial Convention in Minneapolis July 21-25. The process was used for the first time in 2010 for the national convention held in Anaheim, and proved to be easy to use and more beneficial than the paper version.

Although a paper method will once again be available for those who do not have Internet access, the online method is faster and better. You will receive up-to-date availability, information on the cancellation policy, and an instant reservation acknowledgment from the hotel. As was done in 2010, more information will be forthcoming on how to reserve a large number of rooms. Meanwhile, all branch secretaries should note the following:

- The usual process of mailing to each branch secretary a delegate eligibility list (DEL), either on paper or electronic disk, remains the same. However, no housing information will accompany the DEL mailing.
- When NALC Headquarters registers your delegates and mails the credentials to you, the credentials packet will include all the necessary information pertinent to booking rooms online.
- When you register online, you will have immediate access to the NALC block. Should your preferred hotel not be available, you should book your next choice and then contact the Minneapolis Housing Bureau, via e-mail or fax, indicating your confirmation number at the reserved hotel and your preferred choice. The Bureau will wait-list you and put you in your preferred choice should a room become available.
- Branch secretaries may prefer to copy the instructions to give to each delegate to make his or her own reservations.
- For branch secretaries or delegates without Internet access, NALC will include with all credential mailings a room reservation form with the fax and phone numbers of the Minneapolis Housing Bureau. Secretaries may make all reservations in this manner or copy the form to give to the delegates to reserve their own rooms.

Again, branch secretaries are reminded that no housing information will be included in the mailing of the DELs in late January or early February. That information will be provided when headquarters mails the credentials.

I wish I could say that President Obama, and those activists who started the Occupy Wall Street movement

many weeks ago, read my September *Postal Record* column. After all, I said we had to change the national conversation from an almost 24/7 preoccupation with deficit reduction and spending cuts to one that focused on jobs, jobs, jobs. “We need,” I wrote, “a Congress willing and able to jump-start the American economy, rebuild the middle class, restore the American dream, and create a future of opportunity and equality for all Americans.”

OK, *they* didn’t read the column, but the conversation *has* changed. At least to some extent. President Obama proposed a \$450 billion American Jobs Act combining infrastructure spending, aid to state and local governments to keep teachers and first responders on the job, extension of the payroll tax cut for another year as well as long-term unemployment benefits—all of this paid for by tax reform so that upper echelons of our society pay their fair share.

And, of course, there’s Occupy Wall Street, bringing together people of all walks of life to protest the growing economic disparities in this society, and the corporate greed and corruption that brought the economy down.

I’m proud that, in New York and elsewhere, the labor movement has expressed its support for the demonstrators and in some cases has lent material support.

Of course, not everybody wants to change the conversation. Right-wing zealots in Congress have rejected President Obama’s jobs bill, in part because they reject *any* efforts to raise revenue by closing corporate tax loopholes and raising taxes on the wealthiest Americans.

Equally outrageous has been the behavior of those members of the Flat Earth (oops, I meant Flat Tax) Society competing for the Republican presidential nomination. Remember, our society has been growing increasingly unequal for decades. In fact, in 2007, the nation’s top 1 percent took home more income *after* taxes than America’s entire bottom 40 percent. But the Republican flat-taxers want to make our society even *more* unequal by lowering the taxes the wealthiest Americans pay and, in general, raising taxes on America’s middle class.

Fortunately, President Obama and the Occupy Wall Street folks may have the larger megaphone now, based on polls showing support for the OWS movement as well as a recognition that our society has become increasingly unequal and that taxes on the wealthy should be increased. But the forces of greed and repression won’t give up easily. And this union and the entire labor movement must continue to make sure *our* voices are heard. ☒