

## NALC helping those hit hardest by **Hurricane Sandy**

**O**n Oct. 29, against the northeastern United States, Hurricane Sandy released her fury, destroying towns, ripping through bridges, flooding tunnels and leaving many Americans in stunned shock. Even as the storm raged, many homebound residents took to social networks to report their respect for letter carriers delivering mail through the storm. But as the wind subsided it became clear that New York, New Jersey and residents of other states had taken a pounding and would need help, as recovery would not be quick or easy.

In the face of so much need, NALC vowed to do all it could to help its brothers and sisters laid low.

"The NALC understands that a harm to one of us is a harm to all of us," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "I know that everyone reading this will find it in their hearts to give when it's needed most."

### **'Frankenstorm'**

Sandy developed in the western Caribbean Sea in late October, where she quickly strengthened and was upgraded to a tropical storm. Sandy moved slowly northward toward the Greater Antilles and gradually intensified, becoming a hurricane before slamming into Jamaica. She re-emerged into the Caribbean Sea and strengthened into a Category 2 hurricane

before hitting Cuba and moving on to the Bahamas.

Reports indicate that the storm was the largest Atlantic hurricane on record (as measured by diameter, with winds spanning 1,100 miles), and many meteorologists used terms like "a perfect storm," "frankenstorm" and "superstorm" to describe what they saw.

Preparations were made all along the eastern United States, with evacuations, school and work closings and power companies calling in crews from throughout the country.

Early on Oct. 29, Sandy curved north-northwest and then moved ashore near Atlantic City, NJ as a "post-tropical cyclone" with hurricane-force winds. The storm whipped torrents of water over the streets of Atlantic City, even ripping up part of the well-known boardwalk. Further north, Sandy swamped lower Manhattan, where flooded streets and tunnels caused the electric infrastructure to give way, causing power outages that weren't fully fixed even as this issue of *The Postal Record* went to press. Sandy delivered hurricane-force winds from Virginia to Cape Cod as it came ashore, flooding many seaside towns, and even cut off firefighters from being able to put out raging fires in one New Jersey town.

### **NALC responds**

Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New

A carrier in Atlantic City, NJ delivers her route after Hurricane Sandy.



Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia and West Virginia were hit hard not only by the effects of the hurricane but also by the massive flooding and tragic fires it left in its wake.

"The daily media reports on this disaster can be difficult to fully comprehend," President Rolando said. "More than 100 dead and many more injured, tens of thousands homeless or still without power, and losses in the billions of dollars. And several thousand letter carriers and other members of our postal family are among those hardest hit."

Region 15 National Business Agent Larry Cirelli reported that in the aftermath, hundreds of carriers could not report to work, and the Postal Service was struggling to locate them. One carrier, Robert Gold, died in the basement of his home after his wife had evacuated. Dozens of other carriers saw their houses destroyed.

"New Jersey and New York have never seen such damage," Cirelli said. "We are going to need a lot of help to rebuild."

By the nature of the Postal Service's universal delivery network, "whenever disaster strikes, some of us are always in the path of danger," President Rolando

said. But the fact that we are embedded in every community is also one of our greatest strengths.

"When some of us need help, there are NALC members a hundredfold across the country, standing ready, willing and able to give them a lift up," the president said. "We always have and we always will take care of our own."

For those impacted by Sandy, the NALC has put together information and resource materials to help members deal with the recovery process, which can be found at [nalc.org/sandy](http://nalc.org/sandy).

A letter mailed to branch presidents contained a list of benefits members might be eligible for, from the American Red Cross, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Postal Service's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), the Postal Employees' Relief Fund (PERF), the AFL-CIO, Union Plus and United Way. Links to these and other new benefits and programs also can be found on NALC's website at [nalc.org/sandy](http://nalc.org/sandy).

Any member who needs assistance in getting help can contact NALC Community and Membership Outreach Coordinator Pam Donato at 202-662-2489. If anyone is being worked in unsafe or unsanitary conditions caused by the

**A harm to one  
is a harm to all**

#### Donations to PERF can be made:

- Online at [postalrelief.com](http://postalrelief.com)
- On your phone by texting "PERF" to 50555 (\$10 donation)\*
- By sending a check made payable to "Postal Employees' Relief Fund" in the envelope in this magazine
- By contributing to PERF through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) by designating #10268

*Your donations are tax-deductible.*

\*See details on text donations on the back cover

Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA) tweeted this picture to thank the region's letter carriers for their delivery through the storm.



hurricane, please contact your branch officers, your national business agent or NALC's director of safety and health.

### Give to PERF

"If your branch was not directly affected by Hurricane Sandy," President Rolando said, "I am asking members to make a personal donation to PERF, the special charitable organization operated by the various union and management organizations of the Postal Service to solely benefit postal employees."

The back cover of this magazine outlines the ways members can donate to PERF. Further, Rolando said that the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has given special permission for agencies to solicit for Hurricane Sandy disaster relief funds such as PERF. "This is separate from our work to obtain PERF donations from members through the Combined Federal Campaign," he said, asking members and branch leaders to be creative in their fundraising efforts for PERF "because every dollar counts."

"For more than 20 years, PERF has been NALC's means to provide financial support directly to letter carriers in need," Rolando said. "We need to make sure that harm to those hit by Hurricane Sandy is met by the strength and solidarity of all of the NALC."

### A local food drive

Noting the special need, Northeastern New York Branch 358 and the USPS' Albany District conducted a food drive on Saturday, Nov. 10, in upstate New York to help New York City residents devastated by the storm. Like the summer food drive, letter carriers collected canned goods and non-perishable

food donations left in mailboxes along their routes.

The very short notice food drive was a tremendous success, with nine tractor trailers filled with food collected. Branch 358 coordinated with the local Shop Rite grocery store to set up collections right outside the store. The grocery's personnel handed out fliers to customers and held a "jump rope contest" indoors to help raise funds for our efforts. In about eight hours at the store, the branch collected four postal containers of food.

"This was an amazing accomplishment," Rolando said, congratulating the branch. "I hope many more branches follow Northeastern New York spirit of charity, especially in finding innovative ways to raise money for PERF."

### The value of USPS

Finally, many residents took notice of the letter carriers out delivering through the storm. Despite school and work closings across the region, carriers delivered their mail to grateful patrons. Many tweeted their thanks:

**DonnaJablonski**

@NALC\_National Thank you for delivering my mail during #HurricaneSandy!

**larryc777**

@NALC\_National Never been prouder of my carriers here in New York, New Jersey and the tip of Connecticut. They are out there doing the job!

**dominique\_e\_**

Hurricane #Sandy: @NALC\_National workers are amazing! #USPS was open and mail was delivered in #NYC as the hurricane approached. #gratitude

You can find information about the storm, the response and how to donate to PERF on [nalc.org](http://nalc.org). ☒



Members of Northeastern New York Branch 358 collect food during a special drive in the Albany District.

