



# The scorpion and the frog

“**T**he Scorpion and the Frog” is a fable about a scorpion asking a frog to carry him across a river. The frog is afraid of being stung during the trip, but the scorpion argues that if it stung the frog, the frog would sink and the scorpion would drown. The frog agrees and begins carrying the scorpion, but midway across the river the scorpion does indeed sting the frog, dooming them both. When asked why, the scorpion points out that this is its nature.

On Oct. 22, 2008, the United States Postal Service entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (M-1694) with the NALC and agreed that in offices with both city and rural delivery, all new deliveries were to be assigned to the city letter carrier craft, with a few exceptions:

- Tri-partite boundary agreements, previously established with NALC, USPS and National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association.
- In-growth on an existing route assigned to another form of delivery.
- If USPS determined that assigning the work would result in inefficiencies, the NALC national business agent would be provided notice, and the NBA has the right to refer the matter to a national-level task force for joint review and determination.

Then-NALC President William Young served as signatory for NALC, and good faith and adherence was both implied and expected.

Since then, there have been dozens of meetings, phone calls, promises and missed deadlines, as branches report that new deliveries that meet all of the above criteria for city delivery have been assigned to other modes of delivery. Adding insult to injury, NALC national business agents have not been provided notice of any circumstance where alternate delivery mode was

considered because it would be inefficient to assign the work to our craft.

It’s now summer 2012, and USPS has not lived up to its end of the agreement. The “2011 Annual Report to Congress and Comprehensive Statement on Postal Operations—Delivering the new reality” indicates:

2009	923,595 increase of delivery points
2010	739,580 increase of delivery points
2011	636,530 increase of delivery points
TOTAL	2,299,705 increase of delivery points

**“Why would USPS management negotiate one position, only to impede its own compliance by adding layers of bureaucracy, grievance activity, lost hours and resources to the dispute resolution process?”**

Clearly, not all of the 2.3 million new deliveries are in offices with both city and rural delivery. However, USPS areas have reported that only about 200,000 such deliveries exist—and we have to fight tooth and nail for each one of them.

If USPS had complied with the memorandum, at least hundreds of thousands of additional deliveries would be in the city carrier craft—additional routes would have already been created in the city carrier craft—additional PTFs would be converted to regular carrier and more transitional employees would be in our craft.

Why would USPS management negotiate one position, only to impede its own compliance by adding layers of bureaucracy, grievance activity, lost hours and resources to the dispute resolution process—including arbitration and irregular service to customers at the new delivery points?

It’s the scorpion. That’s its nature.

