

## November 2012: A split-screen big picture



**W**hen this issue of *The Postal Record* lands in your mailbox, the long, messy national political campaign will be reaching a crescendo in the days leading up to Election Day on Nov. 6. Months of intense debate and partisan warfare will thankfully come to an end.

No group of workers has more at stake in this election than America's postal employees. The future of the Postal Service is literally on the line—and with it, so too are our jobs and our standard of living. Retired federal employees (including NALC retirees) also have a huge stake in this election, since which politicians control Congress and the White House will determine whether their pensions, cost-of-living adjustments, Medicare benefits and retiree health benefits from FEHBP will be targeted during the coming battle over the federal budget deficit.

For these reasons, our union has focused tremendous resources and attention on this year's elections. We have endorsed 290 federal candidates from both parties and have used our COLCPE funds to support their campaigns and to turn out the vote on Nov. 6 (and in early voting across the country). We have released more than 150 activists to work with our allies in the labor movement and using every possible channel to communicate with our members (mail, phone, text message and our website and social media).

If we have not yet convinced you that President Obama is the best choice for letter carriers and other working people when it comes to letter carrier issues, it will not be because we have not tried. And if we have not convinced you that Gov. Romney and Rep. Ryan would be horribly dangerous choices for letter carriers and working people in America, it will not be for lack of effort.

The only thing left to say is: Please vote to keep the Postal Service and your union strong and please urge your co-workers, family and friends to do the same.

**When it's over, we will have no time to rest.** Congress will convene a lame-duck session and may return to the fatally flawed postal reform legislation that we have been

fighting over the past two years—S. 1789 and H.R. 2309. In fact, our work on the legislative and media fronts has never ended. Neither has our work in other areas of importance, including efforts to win a new collective-bargaining agreement through interest arbitration and to improve working conditions for letter carriers in every delivery unit in the country.

Indeed, in November 2012, the big picture for NALC and its members is best thought of as a split-screen endeavor.

While thousands of activists at the local level are working tirelessly to elect NALC-endorsed candidates, we have been working hard in Washington to present the best possible case for our contract proposals before the Das interest arbitration panel. At the same time, we have continued our efforts to address various issues involving Article 12, understaffing, residual vacancies and PTF conversions.

Those efforts have resulted in the signing of a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Postal Service on transitional employees and part-time flexible conversions. The MOU will relieve certain staffing issues in many delivery units by providing for: (a) the conversion of up to 6,000 PTF carriers to full-time regular status; (b) the filling of vacant residual CC-01 and CC-02 positions that are not withheld for Article 12 excessing; and (c) the limited authorization to hire an additional 3,400 bargaining-unit transitional employees. These steps, along with the creation of a work group to validate the continued need to withhold positions, should help alleviate some of the staffing issues.

The NALC will continue to use the interest arbitration proceedings to strategically position the city carrier craft to grow in the future as the economy strengthens and the e-commerce boom creates new opportunities for the Postal Service to utilize its unique first- and last-mile networks.

**I sincerely hope our nation chooses wisely this month, but no matter what happens on Election Day, NALC is determined to fight for a bright future for America's city letter carriers.** That's a big picture you can count on, no matter how many screens it takes. ☒