

USPS soliciting customers to change to centralized delivery

NALC has recently become aware of an effort by the Postal Service in various parts of the country to convince customers to agree to change their mode of delivery from their door to cluster box or centralized delivery. As letter carriers know, these changes are often pushed without regard for the safety of the customers or the security of the mail.

For information on letter carriers' rights and customers' rights, please visit the information page that NALC has created on nalc.org. A full report will follow in the January 2014 *Postal Record*. **PR**

Plans for Sombrotto memorial events being finalized

As announced in the November issue of *The Postal Record*, NALC is planning to honor the first anniversary of President Emeritus Vincent R. Sombrotto's death with an event to be held in New York on Jan. 11. There will be an ecumenical memorial service at 2 p.m. at the St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Manhattan located near New York's Penn Station at:

135 W. 31st St.
New York, NY 10001

There also will be a reception/dinner to celebrate Sombrotto's life that evening from 6:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. in the Hammerstein Ballroom at the Manhattan Center located at:

311 W. 34th St.
New York, NY 10001

Ticket purchase will be required to attend the reception/dinner (limited tickets are available). Tickets will cost \$75 and more information on these tickets will be forthcoming.

Penalty overtime exclusion

As referenced in Article 8, Sections 4 and 5, of the USPS-NALC and USPS-APWU national agreements, the December period (during which penalty overtime regulations are not applicable) consists of four consecutive service weeks. This year, the December period begins Pay Period 26-13—Week 1 (Nov. 30, 2013)—and ends Pay Period 01-14—Week 2 (Dec. 27, 2013). **PR**

TSP and FSA clarifications

Eligible postal employees may enroll in or make changes to a Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) account at any time of the year. Based on information from a Postal Service document, an article in last month's issue of *The Postal Record* reported that changes to TSP accounts could be made only during an open season period.

Additionally, the FSA open season ends on Dec. 22, not Dec. 9, as OPM has reported and as was printed in the November *Postal Record*. **PR**



Members who returned the post cards that were provided in the November issue of *The Postal Record* will be contacted before Dec. 1 with a chance to purchase tickets. If you want event or ticket information, please visit the NALC website at nalc.org/nalc/members/sombrotto.html to register your interest in attending. **PR**

CCAs converted to full-time career status

Pursuant to the memorandum of understanding Re: Residual Vacancies—City Letter Carrier Craft (M-01824), the first wave of city carrier assistant (CCA) conversions to full-time career status took place on Nov. 2.

While the exact number of conversions that took place on that date had not yet been finalized as of press time, NALC estimates about 1,500 CCAs, most of whom had served multiple years as transitional employees prior to becoming CCAs, were converted to full-time career status to fill vacant full-time letter carrier jobs.

By virtue of the memorandum of understanding Re: Sunday Delivery—City Carrier Assistant Staffing (M-01826), those CCAs who served as city carrier transitional employees directly before their CCA appointments will not serve a probationary period as full-time career letter carriers.

M-01824 lays out a series of steps to fill residual vacancies in the city letter carrier craft. Vacancies are first filled by assignment of unassigned regulars and conversions of part-time flexibles to full-time status in the same installation as the vacancy.

Next, the vacancies are posted for a 21-day period in eReassign. Only career letter carriers may apply for such vacancies. Requests are considered in the order they

are received and include those reassignment requests pending in eReassign. Requests from PTF letter carriers are acted on without regard to normal transfer considerations. Additionally, PTF letter carriers who transfer under M-01824 have retreat rights back to the first residual vacancy that occurs in their original installation when there are no PTF city letter carriers on the rolls in that installation.

If the vacancies remain, they are filled by CCA conversions to full-time career status and a limited number of reassignments from employees in other crafts (if employees from another craft request reassignment). As vacancies continue to be filled through these steps in M-01824, more CCA conversions should take place in the coming weeks and months.

Those CCAs newly converted to full-time career status have access to the full slate of benefits provided to career letter carriers. This includes health benefits, vision and dental benefit programs, group life insurance and long-term care insurance, just to name a few. Additionally, they are part of the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) and are automatically enrolled in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), including receiving matching TSP contributions from the Postal Service.

New full-time career letter carriers also earn annual and sick leave in accordance with Article 10 of the National Agreement and may participate in the local leave program. Local leave provisions are covered in the local memorandum of understanding (LMOU). For information, please contact your shop steward or a branch officer. **PR**

CCA relative standing

City carrier assistants (CCAs) are credited with something similar to seniority called relative standing. Relative standing is determined by the original CCA hire date in an installation. For those CCAs who were transitional employees (TEs) before being hired as CCAs, all time served as a TE after Sept. 29, 2007, is added.

In the event that a CCA stops working in one installation and begins work in another, relative standing credit earned in one installation as a CCA does not transfer over to another. However, relative standing credit earned as a TE always transfers with the CCA, no matter where he or she worked.

Relative standing is important for several reasons. When CCAs are converted to full-time career status within an installation, the CCA with the most relative standing in that installation is the first one to be converted to full-time career status.

Relative standing also comes into play if the Postal Service needs to separate a CCA due to lack of work or if the Postal Service decides to not reappoint a CCA for operational reasons. In both of these circumstances, the CCA with the least relative standing in that installation is separated first.

CCAs separated for lack of work or due to operational circumstance will be given preference for reappointment ahead of other CCAs with less relative standing in the installation if the need for hiring arises within 18 months of their separation.

These are just a few examples of why relative standing is important. If you have questions about the way relative standing is calculated or other related issues, contact your national business agent. **PR**

Inspection Service offers tips for dealing with mail robberies

Every year, the United States Postal Inspection Service investigates about 100 robberies of postal employees or facilities. Its No. 1 message to carriers who face this threat every time they take up their satchels: “You are your most important delivery.”



The Postal Inspection Service is empowered by Congress “to investigate postal offenses and civil matters relating to the Postal Service.” Inspectors carry firearms, make arrests, execute federal search warrants and serve subpoenas.

To help carriers prepare for the possibility of being robbed, the Inspection Service created a brochure and video on what they should do if confronted or threatened on their routes.

“If you notice a suspicious person, treat it seriously, even if you don’t see a weapon or feel like you’re in danger,” the brochure states. “The most important delivery of the day is always at the end of your route. Deliver yourself home to those who are dear to you, by playing it safe.”

The brochure gives six useful tips for things letter carriers can do to protect themselves.

You can find the brochure, *You Are Your Most Important Delivery*, on the NALC website at nalc.org/depart/safety, and you can watch the video, “Just Another Tuesday,” on NALC’s YouTube page at youtube.com/ThePostalRecord.

For more on recent robberies, see NALC Director of Safety and Health Manuel Peralta Jr.’s column on page 36. **PR**

Carrier notables

Here are a few items about NALC members that made the news recently.

Front page news

The Capital in Annapolis, MD, ran an article on Oct. 15 about Branch 651 member Morris Warner Hall Sr. Hall worked as a letter carrier for more than 50 years, never calling in sick. At age 82, he died. He was so well-known and liked that the paper ran the news about his death on the front page.



Something blue...

Armando Casillas, a member of Tri-Valley, CA, Branch 2902, has been employed with the USPS since 1985, the same year his daughter Veronica was born. This October, Veronica got married and decided that the “something blue” she would wear at her wedding was a piece of her father’s uniform shirt.

CA carrier critically injured in hit and run

L Lydia Ray, a member of Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100, was struck and critically injured while delivering mail on Saturday, Oct. 19, in the city of Compton.



According to KABC-TV, the hit-and-run driver slammed into a parked car before ramming his vehicle into the back of Ray’s LLV, throwing her from her vehicle. She was taken to St.

Francis hospital, where she remained in the ICU for several days before being transferred to a regular room.

A police spokesman said Ray, a 20-year postal veteran, sustained broken legs, cuts to her arms and internal injuries. Authorities are searching for the driver, who witnesses say fled the scene.

Members can write to Ray at:

Lydia Ray
c/o Branch 1100
13252 Garden Grove Blvd. #100
Garden Grove, CA 92843

“Our thoughts go out to Lydia and her family,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said, “and we continue to pray for her recovery.” **PR**