NALC stepping up as battles heat up

As thousands of letter carrier delegates from across the country streamed into Philadelphia on the Sunday before our 69th Biennial Convention began, they were greeted by an article in the state’s leading news source, the Philadelphia Inquirer, depicting the finances and prospects of the United States Postal Service.

The story said that USPS has navigated the recession, is figuring out how to deal with the Internet, and that the biggest remaining hurdle is “a highly unusual law passed by Congress” requiring the Postal Service to pre-fund future retiree health benefits.

The reporter quoted Region 12 NBA Bill Lucini as saying about the pre-funding mandate, in his typical no-nonsense manner: “That’s the thing that has held us back the most.”

The piece, which fills two-thirds of the Business Section’s front page, includes photos and charts—the latter showing letter revenue stabilizing and package revenue skyrocketing—and jumps to an inside page.

It contains this paragraph from the reporter, who spent a week preparing the story: “These days, with the Postal Service adjusting to the Internet and the economy improving, what remains, management officials and union leaders agree, is an unusual burden imposed on the agency by Congress.”

She noted that in the first six months of fiscal 2014, absent pre-funding USPS “would have turned a billion-dollar profit.” In response, Postal Service CFO Joseph Corbett whines, rather ineffectually: “It’s not truly a profit.”

Why this treatment in one of the nation’s great newspapers, winner of 20 Pulitzer Prizes, with a Sunday circulation of about a half-million in Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Delaware?

It’s because convention host Bill Lucini took the time to talk to the reporter. Because Chuck Goushian, president of Camden, NJ Merged Branch 540, provided some color of about a half-million in Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Delaware?

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But our effort continues, and we need you to keep the momentum up and carry the message into every community—so that when USPS or our political opponents try to counter our facts with their spin, they will be every bit as ineffective as the CFO was in the pages of the Philadelphia Inquirer.