

# Fighting for a stronger Postal Service



**Nicole  
Rhine**

**L**etter carriers know that the health and future viability of the Postal Service depend on ending the mindless downsizing and disastrous business strategy that the Postal Service has adopted. Slashing the quality of service and slowing the mail is not only idiotic, it's insane. But that's exactly what the postmaster general is trying to do.

The Postal Service has foolishly adopted a doomed strategy in response to the crisis created by politicians in Congress who decided to cripple the Postal Service financially in 2006. Those politicians passed a law that has siphoned \$48 billion from the Postal Service to pre-fund future retiree health benefits.

But rather than work with the postal unions to reverse the pre-funding policy, postal management has plowed forward with a strategy that has unnecessarily sacrificed service and failed to address the cause of the Postal Service's manufactured financial crisis.

All of this despite the fact that in the first three quarters of 2014 the Postal Service—without pre-funding—boasted a profit of \$1.3 billion through August.

You would think that the profits and the boom in parcel business would have the PMG shouting from the rooftops that it's not 2009 anymore and we should be focusing on the future, including scrapping his shrink-to-survive strategy and working with us on meaningful postal reform.

Instead, the postmaster general is trying to make devastating cuts in service to the American people by methodically dismantling the Postal Service. In January, the USPS is slated to lower service standards that would virtually eliminate overnight delivery—including first-class mail from one address to another within the same city. All mail across the country would be delayed. In addition, 82 mail processing centers are scheduled to be closed down.

These proposed cuts would cause hardships for customers, drive away business and cause irreparable harm to the Postal Service. Endless downsizing, even though the Postal Service is finally recovering from the Great Recession and operating profitably before counting the crushing pre-funding payments, is a doomed strategy. Building and strengthening our retail, processing and delivery networks to service the emerging needs of our economy is what we need to do.

The four postal unions are joining forces to protect service, fight for our livelihoods, and defend our great national treasure. On Nov. 14, the four unions participated in a national day of action to send a message to both the PMG and

the Board of Governors: "Stop delaying America's mail!" I hope that you participated in this important event—I rallied here in Washington, DC. I also recently attended and spoke at a rally in Duluth, MN, in protest of the plan to shut down the plant there.

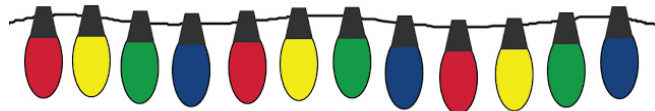
Brothers and sisters, we are all in this together. The solidarity of our sister unions has been vital to our success in thwarting a PMG who is determined to end Saturday delivery and phase out door-delivery service to 40 million American households and businesses. Please join in our fight to save America's Postal Service.

## A belated thanks and fond farewells

**I am so honored that the membership elected me as the next secretary-treasurer of this great union at the national convention in Philadelphia this summer—an office that I will officially assume on Dec. 13 at the installation ceremony. Thank you all for your continued support.**

I also want to wish my friend Jane Broendel a long and happy retirement. It's been 19 years since Sister Broendel first became a trustee and eventually went on to be assistant secretary-treasurer and then secretary-treasurer, a position she has held for the past 12 years. It was 1998 when Sister Broendel became assistant secretary-treasurer and NALC's first female resident national officer. She has been an officer on the NALC Executive Board since I first became involved in the union—it will be strange not having her here. Jane, I wish you only the best. Your dedication and service to this union are very much appreciated.

I would be remiss if I didn't also wish the best for my national business agent, Dan Pittman, on his retirement this month. I had the privilege of serving as a regional administrative assistant with Brother Pittman before he was elected NBA. It was during that time that we became the best of friends. Danny, you have given much to the members of Region 5—for that, we thank you. Enjoy your retirement.



**Happy  
Holidays!**