



With Food Drive imminent, last-minute push is underway

As you receive this edition of *The Postal Record*, the 22nd annual Letter Carriers' Food Drive is only a few days away.

So imagine, if you will, the controlled chaos currently underway at more than 1,500 branches all across the United States, as food drive coordinators, family members and volunteers race to get everything in place for the nation's largest one-day food collection effort on Saturday, May 10.

"A lot of us have been through a pretty wild winter," NALC President Fredric Rolando said, "and springtime has struggled to take hold in many parts of the country, so we've got our fingers crossed that Mother Nature will give us a break on that special Saturday—especially since that happens to be the day before Mother's Day this year."

NALC Community Membership Outreach Coordinator Pam Donato considers weather just another variable that letter carriers will simply overcome as usual. "We've mailed out the food drive reminders, we've renewed our relationships with local food banks, and we've got our volunteers ready for a full day of heavy bags and loaded LLVs," Donato said. "And even if the weather doesn't cooperate, we are confident that our generous patrons will step up and give what they can, no matter what."

With one in six Americans either living at risk of hunger or not knowing where their next meal will come from, the Letter Carriers' Food Drive is just as important today as the first one was back in 1992.

"Participation in the drive couldn't be easier," Rolando said. "All we ask is that postal customers place a bag of non-perishable food by their mailbox before their letter carrier comes by on Saturday, May 10. We'll pick it up and deliver it to a nearby food-distribution charity within that same community."

Helping us pull off this massive annual effort, either financially or by supplying

volunteers on the ground, are our national sponsors: The U.S. Postal Service, the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, Campbell Soup Company, Uncle Bob's Self Storage, AARP Foundation and its Drive to End Hunger campaign, Publix grocery stores, Feeding America, Valpak, the AFL-CIO, United Way, and the Valassis marketing firm.

Media, both traditional and social, have proved crucial for making sure the food drive message blankets the nation. In addition to official presences on Facebook and Twitter, the food drive derived a huge publicity boost from the public service announcements (PSAs) that were made available to radio and television stations in every corner of the country. (To keep their broadcast licenses, stations are required by the Federal Communications Commission to prove they are operating in the public interest, so running free PSAs for charitable, non-profit organizations is one way they can meet that requirement.)

Numerous branch leaders also have been in touch with local political and government officials to obtain signed proclamations and resolutions calling on local area citizens to help out on Saturday, May 10.

Get those numbers in!

A list of branch totals and full coverage of the 2014 drive will appear in future issues of *The Postal Record*. The top 10 NALC branches in 11 membership categories that excel in the drive will be called out for special recognition in the magazine, and top food drive branches will be recognized at the national convention in Philadelphia in July (see page 20).

That's why branch food drive coordinators are urged to gather and verify their collection totals, to complete the pink Official Final Results Form and to send that form to NALC Headquarters as soon as possible.

(Last year's drive brought in 74.4 million pounds and drove our grand total to almost 1.3 billion pounds over the drive's history.)

The pink form must be received at NALC Headquarters no later than Saturday, May 24, for the branch total to be listed in the magazine and to be considered for the NALC Branch Awards. (No results will be taken by telephone or e-mail.) Mail the form to: NALC Food Drive Results, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144. Branches may fax the form to 202-756-1642, but it should also be mailed in as a backup.

Questions about the drive should be directed to Donato at 202-662-2489 or by e-mail at donato@nalc.org.

Show us what you got!

The NALC needs information and materials about local branch food drives for articles in *The Postal Record* and *NALC Bulletin* as well as online on nalc.org, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Photos and media quotes will be used in future food drive videos.

- Color photos should be mailed in quickly, and should include identification of people pictured. High-quality digital photos can be e-mailed to Donato as well, but branches should limit those to the best two or three.
- Videos should be of high quality and especially of carriers actually picking up food from homes. Video of local news coverage of the drive will receive extra consideration.
- Also welcome are materials such as T-shirts, plastics bags and buttons that show the variety of food drive activity; proclamations, letters of thanks from food banks, letters to the editor and other expressions of appreciation; full-page copies of newspaper articles and editorials; and other items, such as flyers. **PR**