

Meeting the challenge



Philip
Dine

These are unpredictable and fraught times, with much attention (including presidential) focused on the U.S. Postal Service, a new task force examining USPS, and congressional elections just a few months away.

As much as ever, we need NALC's message to be out there—clear, concise, consistent—for all to absorb.

Once again, letter carriers are rising to the occasion—getting the facts out about USPS and its value, explaining the needed policy adjustments, correcting misleading media reports. And, in so doing, changing the national conversation about postal issues by reaching our two key audiences: the public and the politicians who represent them.

As has been noted here before, our message resonates partly because it's delivered on so many levels throughout the union. Consider what you've done recently.

President Rolando set the tone with an effort that clicked on all cylinders. He helped shape national coverage of USPS's quarterly financial report with an analysis of what the figures meant that was widely circulated by such outlets as the Associated Press, Federal News Radio and *Government Executive*.

He was quoted about the task force by several news organizations, Bloomberg among them.

And his letters to the editor or commentary pieces ran in newspapers big and little, ranging from the *New York Post* and *Washington Post* (the nation's fourth and fifth largest dailies, respectively) to the *Tecumseh Herald*, a small town weekly in Michigan.

The response to the *New York Post* occurred because folks have our backs, as noted in a different context last month. When I called Daniel Rosenberger of Staten Island, NY, to thank him for alerting us to the unfortunate CVS Pharmacy envelopes, he mentioned having read in that day's *Post* a column containing inaccuracies about the Postal Service. So, another tip of the hat.

Never underestimate the importance of smaller community papers. When the *Tecumseh Herald* wrote movingly about a local letter carrier who'd moved to Florida and was killed after staying late in last year's Clearwater (FL) food drive to make sure all the food was transported to local pantries, President Rolando wrote a letter complimenting the paper's coverage and discussing the broader value of USPS and letter carriers.

Tecumseh may be a small town, but it's strategically located between Detroit and Toledo, OH. And our president's letter not only left the paper's entire staff from reporter to publisher excited, it also drew much attention among Lenawee County's

100,000 residents.

President Rolando also had commentary pieces about USPS's bipartisan support published by two of the nation's leading conservative news sites, the *Washington Examiner* and the *Daily Caller*.

Congressional liaison Clay Smith of Philadelphia had a letter to the editor in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, discussing postal finances. The indefatigable John Paige, Idaho state president, had letters to the editor in more than a half-dozen newspapers, some about the value of voting by mail. Patrick Daniel, president of Athens, GA Branch 588, had a letter in the *Athens Banner-Herald*, encouraging residents to donate to the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive.

Meanwhile, your good deeds led to much good press. The *Osakis Review* (MN) wrote about Jason Mounsdon, who witnessed a car accident and assisted an injured man until EMTs arrived. WCBS-TV in New York City told the story of how Thomas Logue of Long Island Beach, NJ, (NALC's 2012 National Hero of the Year) recently saved the life of an 86-year-old man. The Margate, FL Fox TV affiliate recounted how John Sylvain was injured while trying to put out a resident's house fire. Chicago's CBS TV affiliate reported on Connie Allen's rescue of a man and his dog from a house fire in Portage, IN.

The Peoria (IL) *Journal Star* chronicled separate rescues by Pekin's Ralph Presbrey and Chris Swenson of two elderly women. Yahoo Finance chronicled the creative efforts of letter carriers in Boise, ID, to draw attention to the food drive. A half-dozen media outlets in New York, including an NBC TV affiliate, reported on New City CCA Robert Korba, who performed CPR on a man in distress. And the Rochester, NY *Democrat and Chronicle* (the state's second-largest paper outside New York City) ran an extraordinary report on the numerous acts of heroism in recent years by Rochester Branch 210 letter carriers; the piece occupied two-thirds of the front page and a half page inside, and included three photos.

And your food drive efforts generated numerous radio, TV and newspaper stories all around the country.

When you get out the message or perform good deeds, you protect your jobs, you protect a national treasure all Americans rely on, and you serve the national interest.

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