

In a world turned upside down by COVID-19, our immediate goals remain clear



**Fredric V.
Rolando**

The crisis is particularly challenging. As front-line “essential” workers who must remain on the job to deliver prescription drugs, public health information, goods purchased by sheltering families and other vital mail to keep our country going, you’re being asked to risk your health and even your lives—and the health and lives of your loved ones—to do this essential work. Our members have been truly heroic, overcoming fear to serve our country. I have never been prouder to represent letter carriers.

There is tremendous uncertainty about how the future will unfold for us, our families, our employer and our country. But for our great union, the NALC, there are two overriding and immediate goals that will not change, no matter what direction this crisis takes: First, we are dedicated to protecting the health and safety of letter carriers during this pandemic—and therefore the health and safety of our families and patrons. Second, we will fight to ensure that the Postal Service has the resources to continue operations during this crisis.

On the first goal, the national officers, staff and other NALC representatives throughout the country are working around the clock to engage postal management to secure needed personal protection equipment (PPE) and other health-protecting supplies, while we also are in daily contact with the postmaster general and her staff to share information and to negotiate safety-enhancing work rules, policies and protocols to prevent risks of exposure and infections among our members.

Please continue to notify us about offices that are not being sanitized on a regular basis, that do not have suf-

The whiplash of events of the past two months is like nothing we’ve seen in our lifetimes. Most of us were born after the second World War, which is probably the event most similar to what we are facing now—a truly global catastrophe that is transforming American life at warp speed. Some 90 percent of all Americans are under “stay-at-home” orders to combat the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus. The U.S. economy has been purposely shut down to slow the spread of the virus, which at this writing has infected more than 600,000 Americans and killed more than 25,000.

For letter carriers, the cri-

sis is particularly challenging. As front-line “essential” workers who must remain on the job to deliver prescription drugs, public health information, goods purchased by sheltering families and other vital mail to keep our country going, you’re being asked to risk your health and even your lives—and the health and lives of your loved ones—to do this essential work. Our members have been truly heroic, overcoming fear to serve our country. I have never been prouder to represent letter carriers.

We are working tirelessly to keep our members and other postal employees from getting infected in the line of duty, even as we mourn the postal employees (including five city carriers, at the time of this writing) who have lost their lives as a result of this pandemic. This work will continue, day in and day out, until this crisis passes, which will likely be months from now.

“What letter carriers do is vital to the American people. It is life-affirming and essential work. But you must be healthy and safe to do this work—and your employer, the venerable U.S. Postal Service, must offer a healthy workplace and be fully functional to fulfill its public service mission.”

Regarding our second goal, ensuring that the Postal Service maintains the revenues necessary to continue operations through this crisis, we face a daunting task. The impact on Postal Service revenues of the pandemic and the shutdown of the U.S. economy is projected to be both devastating and immediate. Although package volumes are up as we deliver goods for families forced to stay home by the crisis, letter mail volume has plummeted. By the end of the year, the Postal Service expects total volume to fall by 50 to 57 percent—wiping out up to half of its \$70 billion in annual revenues.

Congress must step in to provide financial support to the Postal Service, the way it did in March for private companies damaged by the pandemic-induced recession with a \$2.2 trillion relief package that did not include any appropriations to the Postal Service. Although the Postal Service has not needed taxpayer support for more than 40 years, it needs it now. NALC took the lead in drafting a White Paper (see story on p. 4) on how to provide financial relief to the Postal Service from the pandemic; it is posted on our website. Its core proposal is to secure regular taxpayer appropriations to cover the gap between the Postal Service’s expenses and revenues for the duration of the crisis.

We are building a lobbying plan and a grassroots campaign to advance these legislative goals. With the support of the other postal unions and our industry partners, we must rally the country to pressure Congress and the Trump administration to maintain the operations of the Postal Service until it can recover its pre-pandemic status with respect to volume and revenues.

As the country struggles to overcome this public health crisis and recover from the deep recession we now face, the Postal Service and letter carriers will be more important than ever—delivering not just stimulus checks and online purchases, but eventually PPE for households, virus testing kits and therapeutic drugs for the victims of COVID-19 illness.

What letter carriers do is vital to the American people. It is life-affirming and essential work. But you must be healthy and safe to do this work—and your employer, the venerable U.S. Postal Service, must offer a healthy workplace and be fully functional to fulfill its public service mission. NALC’s focus on these two immediate goals—your safety and the continued operations of the Postal Service—is clear even if the future is uncertain. A lot will have changed by the time you read this, so please regularly check the NALC website, and use the NALC Member App to keep up to date on the latest safety/health and legislative issues. God bless all of you and your families. Please stay safe.



“Please continue to notify us about offices that are not being sanitized on a regular basis, that do not have sufficient supplies (hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, masks, gloves, etc.), that are not following CDC protocols for employees to be quarantined, that have not implemented social distancing practices, that are not providing daily communication regarding stand-up talks and other safety precautions, that expect employees to work without protection or that have any other issues that put our employees at increased risk.”

In addition to contacting your shop steward, branch officer or NBA, NALC has a new resource for members to ask any questions about the COVID-19 pandemic: COVID19@nalc.org. When sending your email, please be sure to include your name and NALC branch number.

Region 1: BRYANT ALMARIO
(California, Hawaii, Nevada, Guam)
909-443-7450

Region 2: NICK VAFIADES
(Alaska, Utah, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington)
360-892-6545

Region 3: MICHAEL B. CAREF
(Illinois)
630-743-5320

Region 4: DAN VERSLUIS
(Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, Wyoming)
720-828-6840

Region 5: MICHAEL BIRKETT
(Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas)
314-985-8040

Region 6: TROY CLARK
(Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan)
586-997-9917

Region 7: TROY FREDENBURG
(Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin)
612-378-3035

Region 8: STEVE LASSAN
(Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee)
256-828-8205

Region 9: LYNNE PENDLETON
(Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina)
678-942-5295

Region 10: JAVIER BERNAL
(New Mexico, Texas)
281-540-5627

Region 11: MARK CAMILLI
(Upstate New York, Ohio)
440-282-4340

Region 12: DAVID J. NAPADANO
(Pennsylvania, South and Central New Jersey)
215-824-4826

Region 13: VADA E. PRESTON
(Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington, DC)
703-840-2010

Region 14: RICHARD J. DICECCA
(Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont)
617-363-9299

Region 15: LARRY CIRELLI
(Northern New Jersey, New York, SW Connecticut, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands)
212-868-0284