Staff Reports

NALC's food drive



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t seems fitting to start the conversation about our 2022 Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive in this "Heroes of the Year" issue of The Postal Record. As you read through these pages, you will find inspiring stories of letter carriers and their union stepping up to make a difference in the lives of their customers. That other season of giving, one close to the hearts of so many of us, is our food drive—the country's largest single-day food collection effort.

Next year marks the 30th anniversary of our national food drive. Over that period, we've delivered hope and sustenance to those in need, with the help of our national partners. One in eight Americans lack sufficient food, including millions of women, elderly and military veterans.

The NALC's coordinated effort to fight hunger began with a 1991 pilot drive in 10 cities, which proved so successful that work began immediately on making it a nationwide effort.

The date was set for the second Saturday in May, because by then food banks and pantries are running out of donations received during the winter holidays, and demand is about to rise because the summertime closing of schools means that their free or reduced-cost meals aren't available.

By 2010, the food drive had surpassed 1 billion pounds in food collected over its history; the figure has risen even faster since then, now standing at 1.8 billion pounds total.

As we all know, the pandemic made it unsafe last year to hold the traditional food drive, so in June 2020 NALC went to a virtual drive—the Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive. This year too, the traditional May drive was cancelled, and the ongoing donor drive again took its place.

The very pandemic that forced the cancellation of the physical food drive also has exacerbated the hunger problem the drive aims to mitigate, because of the pandemic-related economic shutdown.

"We could not simply stand by and do nothing, because as letter carriers deliver in every neighborhood in the country six and seven days a week, we see the need," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "Our goal is to do everything we can to fill the shelves of food pantries."

A decision has not yet made on whether to hold the

2022 food drive on the second Saturday in May, or to continue

