

Volume 139/Number 1 January 2026

# The Postal Record

The monthly journal of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS

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**FIGHT  
LIKE HELL!**



## AFTER A YEAR OF STANDING STRONG



## NALC IS READY TO FIGHT ON

# 2026

**A LOOK AHEAD**

—PAGES 8-13

# ***READY TO JOIN THE FIGHT?***

***Give it a listen wherever you stream your favorite podcasts***

**NALC's "Fight Like Hell!" podcast is available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, and wherever you listen to podcasts.**

During each episode, NALC President Brian Renfroe and guests discuss vital topics affecting the letter carrier craft and the union at this pivotal moment. Our jobs, our service and the entire Postal Service are on the line. We need everyone's help as we fight like hell against these attacks. Together, we will send a loud, clear message: **HELL NO** to dismantling the Postal Service.



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# Looking back and looking forward



**Brian L. Renfroe**

**H**appy New Year, brothers and sisters! The start of 2026 officially ends one of the most challenging and action-packed years in our union's history. The cover story of this magazine (starting on page 8) looks back on all that unfolded in 2025. As you read the article, you'll notice one through line in everything we faced last year: Our solidarity kept us strong and it is how we prevailed.

By staying engaged, on message and united, everything we fought off and accomplished together last year was remarkable. While we reflect on everything that came

our way in 2025, we can't lose focus or let up. While we don't know exactly how the year ahead will unfold, we do know we have some major fights coming. As always, facing them together is how we'll succeed.

**One of our biggest fights yet will officially kick off next month when we open negotiations with the Postal Service for our next collective-bargaining agreement.** We are fortunate to be entering this round of negotiations with more member feedback than ever before. From the first-ever Rank-and-File Bargaining Committees, to the ideas and suggestions from branch and state leaders at the national rap session last November, to an upcoming all-active member survey, the Executive Council and its bargaining subcommittees continue to use members' ideas as they finalize their bargaining proposals.

Having access to this variety of information has been invaluable as we finish up our months- and years-long collective-bargaining preparation. As we enter the next step of the process, with negotiations opening next month, letter carriers will continue to receive updates so that you can stay as engaged as you all have been during the preparation phase.

**While contract negotiations are the nearest fight on the horizon, we must stay vigilant in other areas and cannot ignore lingering threats.** Last year, millions of our fellow federal employees' collective-bargaining rights were decimated. There's no question that unions, especially federal unions, have been under attack. While we're grateful

that we've fought off any real threats thus far, we must be prepared to combat any potential proposals from Capitol Hill, the White House or anywhere else that threaten our very right to exist as a union.

Similarly, while threats to the Postal Service haven't surfaced in recent months, we know there are some in power with an appetite to restructure, privatize or fundamentally change the agency. After last year, we have a playbook in place and are ready to push harder than ever before to fight anyone who tries to threaten our jobs or retirement security.

---

**"We've accomplished a lot together, and there is much to be proud of, but the fights are far from over. I urge every member to join me in committing to keep fighting like hell for letter carriers in 2026."**

---

Fighting for the future of the Postal Service is always central. In our daily (or hourly) struggles with management, it may seem counterintuitive, but without our employer, we have no jobs, no retirements and no union. We know that the agency's long-term sustainability can and should be improved. That's why we must keep fighting for a fair reallocation of the Postal Service's Civil Service Retirement System pension obligations and for the agency's ability to invest its health care retirement funds in a more fiscally responsible manner. These changes require action from Congress or the administration. While they aren't simple or easy fixes, it's important that we keep fighting for a healthier future of the Postal Service.

**I am sincerely grateful to every member for all you do to make our union stronger every day.** An active union is a strong union. The engagement and activism of our membership is unmatched. That's what sets us apart and keeps us strong. We've accomplished a lot together, and there is much to be proud of, but the fights are far from over. I urge every member to join me in committing to keep fighting like hell for letter carriers in 2026.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Brian L. Renfroe".



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# News from Washington

## Letter carriers focus on advancing bipartisan legislation in partisan Congress



**T**he second session of the 119th Congress is scheduled to convene the first week of January, after this issue went to print. Although margins are slim, Republicans still hold the trifecta in Washington, with control of the House, Senate and White House.

Last November, Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) announced she would resign on Jan. 5. After her resignation, barring any other changes, Republicans will control the House with a 219-213 majority. Republicans will continue to control the Senate 53-47 (including two independents who caucus with Democrats). The extremely tight margins continue to solidify that almost nothing can be accomplished without bipartisan support.

While partisan tensions continue to define Washington, NALC remains solely focused on advancing key priorities that will benefit letter carriers. These include:

- **Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (H.R. 1065/S. 463)**—This bipartisan bill would deter the increasing crimes and assaults committed against letter carriers by modernizing and replacing lock-and-key infrastructure, increasing prosecution rates and standardizing sentencing guidelines. At press time, H.R. 1065 had 159 co-sponsors and S. 463 had 10.
- **Federal Retirement Fairness Act (H.R. 1522)**—This bipartisan bill would allow federal employees, including letter carriers, who started their federal service in non-career positions (city carrier assistants, transitional employees, part-time flexibles) to buy back that time and make it creditable toward their retirement. At press time, H.R. 1522 had 122 co-sponsors.

- **Anti-privatization resolution (H.Res. 70/S.Res. 147)**—This bipartisan resolution expresses the sense of Congress that the Postal Service should remain a public, independent institution, not subject to privatization. As this magazine was going to print, H.Res. 70 had 229 co-sponsors and S.Res. 147 had seven co-sponsors.
- **Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act (H.R. 3170/S. 3296)**—This bipartisan bill would expand access to providers by amending the Federal Employees' Compensation Act to allow federal workers injured on the job to receive treatment from physician associates/physician assistants (PAs) and nurse practitioners (NPs). H.R. 3170 had 17 co-sponsors and S. 3296 had one co-sponsor at press time.

Page 4 features the 2026 congressional calendar. Letter carriers are encouraged to review the schedule and plan meetings with their lawmakers when they will be home in their districts and states. Maintaining local relationships is critical to amplifying letter carriers' voices on Capitol Hill. Reach out to your representatives, meet with them or their staff in the district, and educate them about our priorities and how they can support letter carriers and a strong Postal Service.

### Victories, setbacks for federal employees' bargaining rights

On Dec. 11, in a 231-195 vote, the House passed the Protect America's Workforce Act (H.R. 2550). The bill would undo a March 2025 executive order that stripped collective-bargaining rights at some federal agencies by directing the removal of several government agencies from federal labor-man-

agement programs. Last August, several agencies announced the termination of their collective-bargaining agreements with federal employee unions. H.R. 2550 restores the collective-bargaining rights removed by the executive order.

Rep. Jared Golden (D-ME), the lead sponsor of H.R. 2550, used a House rule called a discharge petition to bypass Republican leadership and ultimately move the bill to the House floor. Once the discharge petition reached the 218-signature threshold, the congressman announced his plan to force a vote on Dec. 9. Two days later, the House voted on the bill. H.R. 2550 received bipartisan support from all Democrats present for the vote (211), as well as support from 20 Republicans. The bill faces long odds in the Senate.

Following this victory, union rights for Department of Defense (DOD) employees took a hit at the end of the year. Rep. Donald Norcross (D-NJ) offered an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that would restore collective-bargaining rights for DOD civilian employees. Unfortunately, this amendment was stripped out before the House passed the NDAA on Dec. 10. As this magazine was going to press, this must-pass bill, which sets the budget and funds the DOD, was expected to pass the Senate without an amendment addressing DOD civilian employees' collective-bargaining rights.

While postal employees are not affected by the collective-bargaining implications in H.R. 2550, the NDAA, or any executive order thus far, NALC continues to closely monitor anything that has an impact on our fellow federal employees' collective-bargaining rights, and we stand in solidarity with them in their continued fight. **PR**



# NALC 2026 congressional calendar

When Congress is in session

	House Only
	Senate Only
	House and Senate

January						
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# 2025 *JCAM* is now available

**O**n Dec. 15, NALC and the Postal Service jointly released the December 2025 *USPS-NALC Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM)*. It is available on [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) and the USPS Blue Page. Simply visit the NALC website and choose the *JCAM* quicklink or type [nalc.org/jcam](http://nalc.org/jcam).

The *JCAM* is a comprehensive, understandable and useful guide to the National Agreement published by NALC and USPS. The *JCAM* contains the authoritative, agreed-upon interpretations of the National Agreement, clarifying contract language that has frequently been misunderstood. Postal managers at every level are required to follow the *JCAM*'s interpretations of the contract because USPS has agreed to every word in the *JCAM*.

## What has changed?

The December 2025 *JCAM* includes all of the new National Agreement provisions and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) included in the 2023-2026 National Agreement. In addition, for some of the new or changed contract provisions, in the 2025 *JCAM* there is new language clarifying the parties' understanding of the new or amended provisions.

For example, Article 8 of the *JCAM* has changed considerably, which is in line with all of the changes to the overtime provisions in the 2023-2026 National Agreement. In Article 8 of the *JCAM*, there is new narrative language related to the new overtime desired list options, the new pay rate in Article 8.4.G, the new rights for full-time carriers to refuse to work beyond the 12 hours in a day or 60 hours in a week work-hour limits without fear of discipline or to volunteer to exceed those limits, and added explanations of the guaranteed non-scheduled

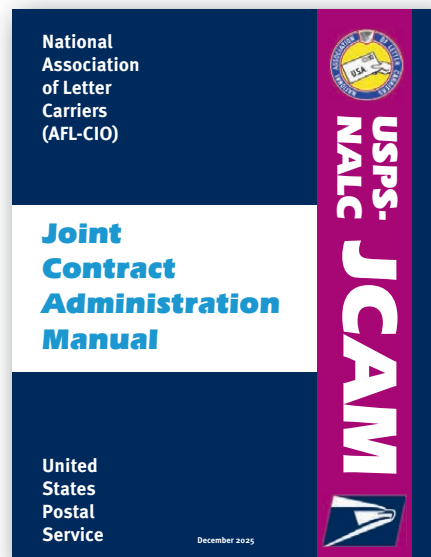
day for part-time flexible (PTF) carriers and city carrier assistants (CCAs). The national parties agreed to most of this narrative language during the negotiations process and it is reflected in the *JCAM*.

The Article 41 section of the *JCAM* has also changed significantly. It features several new MOUs, such as MOU Re: Joint Workplace Improvement Process (JWIP) and the New Employee Experience, Retention and Mentoring Program (NEERMP).

Also, many other previously existing provisions have been amended to reflect the terms of the latest national agreement or to improve the clarifying language. In Article 11, there is an updated example of the pay calculation for PTFs to compensate them for holidays. In Article 17, the "Steward Rights" section has been updated to include that employees have the right to union representation during interrogation by the Office of Inspector General (OIG).

If you are an experienced contract enforcer, you are familiar with the Article 15 Dispute Resolution Process (DRP). In the 2023-2026 National Agreement, two of the previous DRP MOUs have been combined and streamlined, a fact that is reflected in the *JCAM*, which has removed the old MOUs and added the new one. Likewise, you may notice that the explanation of the "Promotion Pay Anomaly" in Article 9 has been removed because with the consolidation of the pay tables in the 2019-2023 National Agreement and the passage of time since, this anomaly is no longer an issue.

This edition of the *JCAM* is the first since the implementation of the Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program in January of 2025. Article 21 of the *JCAM* has been revised to update all the necessary references to PSHB.



These are just a few examples of the changes and updates members can find in the 2025 edition of the *JCAM*. The *JCAM* contains a vast wealth of interpretative material explaining the National Agreement; NALC members can use the *JCAM* to find answers to many of their contractual questions.

## How can I get a printed 2025 *JCAM*?

NALC and USPS are in the process of jointly printing hard copies and hope to have them available to begin distribution by late February or early March. Every post office with city delivery will be mailed a printed copy of the *JCAM*. A letter accompanying the shipment of the *JCAM*, addressed to the NALC shop steward and the delivery unit manager, emphasizes that the *JCAM* is a joint resource and is to be used by both union and management representatives. Also, every NALC branch nationwide will be mailed a copy of the *JCAM* free of charge.

When it is printed, it will be available for purchase in NALC's online store on [nalc.org](http://nalc.org).

And as previously stated, you can access the electronic version of the *JCAM* on the NALC website, [nalc.org](http://nalc.org), and choose the *JCAM* quicklink.

With the new *JCAM*, union representatives will have even greater knowledge and another weapon in their arsenal as they fight to defend letter carriers' rights and enforce our collective-bargaining agreement. For more information on the *JCAM* and why we need one, read the "What's the *JCAM*?" article in the October 2025 edition of *The Postal Record*. **PR**

# Register now for the food drive

**S**tamp Out Hunger®, the largest single-day food drive in the country, is quickly approaching. Hunger exists in every U.S. community, and each year food banks depend on letter carriers to help replenish the shelves of food pantries and other charitable organizations in the communities we serve. With only two months to go, time is running out for branches to register to guarantee they'll receive reminder postcards.

The Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive began in 1993, and this year's event will take place on Saturday, May 9. The event is held annually on the second Saturday in May, and with that day approaching, it is important for branches to register.

Registration requires only a few minutes. Branch presidents simply log into the Members Only portal on [nalc.org](http://nalc.org), select the "Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive" icon, enter the requested information listed under each tab, and click "Complete Registration."

Branch presidents also have the option to designate a local food drive coordinator, who can register the branch. For a step-by-step guide on how to register your branch, watch the video posted at [nalc.org/toolkit](http://nalc.org/toolkit).

The registration deadline to receive postcards is **March 20**. Branches that register after the deadline will not be guaranteed to receive postcards. Branch registration will remain open without the postcard guarantee until **April 17**. If a branch has questions, please visit [nalc.org/toolkit](http://nalc.org/toolkit) to find contact information for your regional or state coordinator, who will be able to assist you.

The use of food drive bags has been proven to significantly increase the total amount of food collected. The

most common sponsors for bags are local grocery stores. If a branch needs assistance, such as with finding bag sponsors, volunteers or locations to distribute the food, the branch should first reach out to its regional or state coordinator.

Branches are also encouraged to visit [unitedway.org/find-your-united-way](http://unitedway.org/find-your-united-way) to find contact information for their local United Way. Oftentimes, United Way can help branches find local food pantries, coordinate distribution of food, and find sponsors for bags.

Other partners who might be able to help include the AFL-CIO and the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW). You can find your local UFCW by visiting [ufcw.org/members/find-your-local](http://ufcw.org/members/find-your-local). Please be mindful of the bag deadlines posted at [nalc.org/toolkit](http://nalc.org/toolkit) under the heading "Important information for coordinators."

There are numerous ways a branch can advertise to help make the food drive successful. Once the branch is registered, the food drive coordinator should visit [nalc.org/toolkit](http://nalc.org/toolkit) to review the *Coordinator's Manual* and order merchandise. Wearing food drive T-shirts; putting out lawn signs; hanging posters and flyers inside banks, apartment complexes, places of worship or grocery stores; working with apartment complexes and homeowners associations to send out community emails and/or posting reminders; and sharing information on social media will help gain community support and improve the outcome of the food drive.

Letter carriers, postal customers and volunteers can order merchandise from the Frank Doolittle Company or



the Stamp Out Hunger Store online by visiting [nalc.org/toolkit](http://nalc.org/toolkit). To ensure timely delivery of merchandise, please order before the deadlines listed in the Food Drive Tool Kit under "Buy your official Stamp Out Hunger® merchandise online."

Food drive posters can be ordered by branch presidents or coordinators via the food drive database located on the Members Only portal. All poster orders with payment must be received at NALC Headquarters by **April 17**. Orders received after the deadline will not be guaranteed delivery prior to the food drive.

NALC's social media team and the Communications and Media Relations Department, both at Headquarters, along with our national partners, will continue spreading the word and raising awareness for the food drive. Remember to follow the food drive's official social media accounts on Facebook at [facebook.com/StampOutHunger](https://facebook.com/StampOutHunger) and on X at @StampOutHunger to stay up to date and learn more about NALC's national partners. To find or send messages about the food drive on either platform, use the hashtag #StampOutHunger.

More information about the Stamp Out Hunger food drive can be found online at [nalc.org/food](http://nalc.org/food).

"Thank you for continuing the fight to stamp out hunger," NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said. **PR**



# Informal Step A Training announced

**F**or the past two years, NALC has been creating a standardized Informal Step A Training program designed for NALC representatives with little to no experience as a shop steward or filing grievances. As a part of this program, NALC is launching a weeklong in-person class with two sessions being held in 2026. The first class will take place March 15-20, and the second will be held Sept. 20-25.

The program focuses on teaching participants their rights as stewards and how to properly assert them through the grievance procedure. In addition to instruction regarding the grievance procedure and the National Agreement, the class will include topics that will assist stewards in their roles as union representatives. These subjects include issues such as time management, the roles a shop steward plays, and how to use the various NALC resources found on the NALC website. The training also gives participants the opportunity to practice investigating a contractual violation and then meeting at the Informal Step A level.

To be considered for this training program, applicants should have little to no experience as shop stewards and/or with filing grievances. Members who have served as a shop steward for a long period of time or those who have extensive experience in the grievance procedure may not gain as much from this class as new shop stewards. Attendees should also be able to bring a laptop that is capable of running Windows-based programs.

The Informal Step A Training is designed for 50 participants per class and will include both large- and small-group instruction. The goal of the program is to give brand-new stewards the

foundation they need to successfully uphold the National Agreement and to file grievances on issues common on the workroom floor.

The training will take the participants with little to no understanding of rights as shop stewards or the grievance procedure through all of the aspects of the Informal Step A level to the point of appealing the grievance to Formal Step A.

Each Informal Step A Training session will begin on Sunday afternoon and end on Friday at noon. The training is conducted at the Maritime Conference Center, a union facility located minutes from the Baltimore-Washington International (BWI) Airport. A free shuttle to and from the airport is available.

The following is a list of some of the topics to be covered during the week-long program:

- Structure of the NALC
- Roles of a shop steward
- NALC resources for shop stewards
- How to fill out PS Form 8190
- Ethical decision-making
- Incident dates
- Effective statements and interviews
- The burden of proof
- Bargaining in good faith
- Remedies and settlements

Hands-on exercises include how to grieve the following issues:

- Attendance-related discipline
- Management's use of an office projection tool to determine a letter carrier's workload
- Overtime-related violations
- Management's denial of light duty

- Management's failure to perform a special route inspection (271.g)

The expenses associated with this training are paid by the branches that decide to send participants or by the participant themselves. The price (subject to change) includes room, tax, meals and refreshments during breaks each day. The cost of the training for the applicable dates is provided on the application form.

If you are interested in applying, scan the QR code below and enter your information. You can also go to [nalc.org/informalstepatraining](https://nalc.org/informalstepatraining) to download a hard-copy form that you can print out and mail in to the address at the bottom of the form. If you scan the QR code, your information is saved automatically once you complete the online form. The next available training dates are listed on the application. Members who are not selected for the March training class will have their applications kept on file for the September 2026 training class.

The deadline to apply for the March class is Feb. 1. Once the applications are received, members who are chosen will be notified of their selection and which class they will attend. **PR**

NALC Informal Step A Training  
Class - Spring 2026





# AFTER A YEAR OF STANDING STRONG



## NALC IS READY TO FIGHT ON

# 2026

### A LOOK AHEAD

**T**he year 2025 went into the history books as a tumultuous year for letter carriers with threats to even the very independent existence of the Postal Service. But while it often seemed that letter carriers were turning from one battle to another, there was also an opportunity to fix a wrong for some of our longtime members and to turn our attention to the next round of contract negotiations. Here is a look back at 2025 and some things on the horizon in 2026.

### Social Security Fairness Act

Last year started with a historic win. Less than a week into 2025, President Joe Biden signed the Social Security Fairness Act into law, delivering a hard-fought victory for letter carriers and public servants across the nation. The legislation, which was overwhelmingly passed by the Senate and the House at the end of 2024, ensured that affected Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) retirees no longer face unfair reductions in their Social Security benefits.



“The passage of the Social Security Fairness Act was a monumental win for retired letter carriers and other public servants, ensuring they receive the full Social Security benefits they’ve earned and deserve,” NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said.

The Social Security Fairness Act repealed the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset provisions in Social Security law that previously unfairly reduced or eliminated Social Security benefits for certain CSRS federal annuitants, including letter carriers.

For nearly 40 years, NALC and our dedicated activists led the fight to finally eliminate these unfair provisions. With this landmark legislation, public servants who have dedicated their careers to serving the country no longer face unjust financial penalties. As of July 2025, the Social Security Administration reported that it had completed more than 3.1 million payments to beneficiaries eligible under the legislation, well ahead of its originally projected timeline.

“While the battles came quickly after this victory, starting the year off by finally righting this decades-long wrong for our CSRS retirees was a major accomplishment,” President Renfroe said.

## ‘Fight Like Hell!’

In early February, NALC officially launched its “Fight Like Hell!” campaign. The first event took place at NALC Headquarters and focused on the fights for a fair contract, letter carrier safety from crime, heat and other threats, fair and secure retirement for all letter carriers, and protecting the Postal Service from privatization.

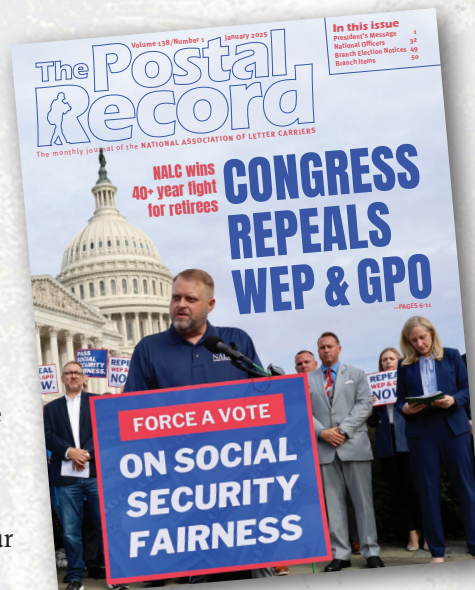
Only two weeks later, the fight came into focus when national media outlets started reporting that the White House was planning to issue an executive order to restructure the Postal Service, ultimately jeopardizing its future as a self-sufficient public agency. Immediately, letter carriers banded together to do what we do best—fight for our jobs and our futures. The reports framed this executive order as imminent, and it was expected to be signed as early as the following day. NALC quickly issued a call to action and, as always, letter carriers delivered.

The very next day, NALC members called House Speaker Mike Johnson’s (R-LA) phone line (which was eventually shut down due to call volume) to urge him to call the White House and put a stop to this executive order. This was followed by a digital day of action and a rally in Washington, DC, near the Capitol.

“The Constitution grants only Congress the power to make such changes, and customers—not taxpayers—fund the Postal Service,” Renfroe told the fired-up crowd. “So, what do we say to attacks on the 300 million-plus people that rely on the Postal Service every single day?”

“Hell no!” the crowd shouted.

The movement culminated on March 23 when NALC held more than 250 rallies nationwide to raise public awareness of the imminent threats to the Postal Service.







“NALC has the most active membership of any union in this country,” President Renfro said. “Nobody else has the influence; nobody else has the resources; certainly nobody else has the activism and the numbers of members that we do.”

In just a few weeks’ time, NALC members unified to shut down a potential executive order and saved letter carriers’ jobs, retirements and the future of the Postal Service. Though letter carriers cannot relax, as the fight continues.

## Reconciliation

In April and May, Republican leaders on Capitol Hill began an aggressive push using budget reconciliation—a legislative shortcut that bypasses the Senate filibuster—to move their tax and spending plans forward with a simple majority vote in both chambers.

Conservative lawmakers on the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform made several proposals aimed at reducing federal employee benefits or increasing what they pay for them, including:

- Raising the FERS contribution rate to 4.4 percent—increasing out-of-pocket costs for workers.
- Eliminating the FERS Special Annuity Supplement—cutting early retirement income.
- Basing the FERS retiree benefit on high-5 instead of high-3 salary—reducing final benefit amounts.
- Enacting the Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) Protection Act (H.R. 7868)—reworking eligibility or cost-sharing.

- Converting new federal workers to at-will employment unless they accept higher FERS contribution rates—weakening job protections unless employees agree to pay more into retirement.
- Charging fees for federal employee Merit Systems Protection Board appeals—potentially pricing out workers from fair due process.

They also considered eliminating official time unless unions compensate the federal government, adjusting the limit of federal employee buyouts, and moving the Federal Employees Health Benefits program from a premium-share model to a voucher model.

With the threats against letter carriers’ retirement benefits mounting, Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Rand Paul (R-KY) added fuel to the fire by proposing to reclaim any unspent funds designated for USPS electric vehicles (EVs) and requiring the agency to sell all its EVs and associated infrastructure.

Over several weeks, NALC members consistently answered calls to action, contacting their lawmakers again and again to guarantee these harmful provisions were removed. At the same time, President Renfro met with House members and senators and participated in a Capitol Hill roundtable discussion with representatives and other labor leaders to emphasize the severity of these attacks.

“This fight was more intense than any fight in the 15 years I’ve been at NALC Headquarters,” President Renfro said.

Working together, letter carriers successfully defeated all these proposals by the time the bill was signed into law



on July 4. Few unions and other groups came out of the process unscathed. NALC's incredible fight and determination saved our retirement benefits and those of millions of other federal employees.

## New postmaster general



On May 9, the USPS Board of Governors announced the selection of David P. Steiner as the 76th postmaster general and CEO of the U.S. Postal Service following the resignation of former Postmaster General Louis DeJoy in March.

DeJoy had been pushed out by the White House in February, the same time the Department of Government Efficiency (better known as DOGE) had entered the Postal Service, and threats of an executive order to restructure the Postal Service were circulating. Steiner was selected at the urging of private shippers.

Steiner took charge in the summer and has been in the position less than a year. Though it is still unclear what, if any, significant changes Steiner will make, President Renfroe said that his selection "illustrates the power of the influence of corporate America, and in our case, corporate America in the shipping industry."

## Arbitration award and ongoing collective-bargaining preparations

On March 21, Arbitrator Dennis R. Nolan issued a final and binding

award that set the terms of a three-year collective-bargaining agreement between NALC and USPS. The award included the largest annual general wage increases since the 2006 National Agreement, six cost-of-living adjustments, and full back pay for all hours worked. The terms awarded also addressed several of NALC's objectives such as increasing starting pay and further increasing top-step pay, where letter carriers spend most of their careers and is the salary on which retirement calculations are based.

Following implementation of the award, preparations for the next round of collective bargaining and potential interest arbitration continued. Collective bargaining is the primary role of the union, and extensive time and resources are dedicated to collective-bargaining prep year-round, regardless of where we are in the current agreement.

Since early September, the Executive Council's bargaining subcommittees have been preparing for the next round of contract negotiations. The committees have been going through their assigned articles, reviewing national convention resolutions, considering other union contracts and forming proposals. This is a process that NALC has used in the last several rounds of contract negotiations.

"But we wanted to provide them with more information," President Renfroe said. Providing these committees with member suggestions is a top priority, and NALC developed some new ways of doing that.

The first comes from the Rank-and-File Bargaining Committees, which were estab-







lished by President Renfroe last fall to provide comprehensive feedback and suggestions from letter carriers on the workroom floor. The first group convened in September, and the second group is scheduled to meet this month. The committees are comprised of branch leaders, contract enforcers and newer members selected by President Renfroe at the recommendations of national business agents.

“They came up with some of their own concepts,” Renfroe said. “On the economic front, we had an excellent discussion with them about priorities.”

The subcommittees have used the first Rank-and-File Bargaining Committee’s ideas and suggestions as they continue to form bargaining proposals related to their articles. The second Rank-and-File Bargaining Committee’s suggestions will be incorporated into the subcommittees’ ongoing work.

In addition to the Rank-and-File Committees, the national rap session in Cleveland, OH, in November was another key opportunity for members to learn about and give their feedback on collective-bargaining preparations. An entire day of programming was devoted to workshops presented by the bargaining subcommittees, and a large portion of these presentations were open discussions for members to ask questions and offer suggestions. The subcommittees answered every question, took detailed notes, and have been working to incorporate this critical feedback into their bargaining proposals.

Additionally, as this issue was going to press, NALC was planning to send a survey to all active NALC members to allow them to share their thoughts and priorities on both the economic and workroom

floor elements of collective bargaining. This will be the first time NALC has conducted such a survey, and it will allow every active member to share their opinions on the next contract.

“All of this information will be used by the end of January as our subcommittees finalize the drafts of their proposals for bargaining,” Renfroe said. “The feedback we have received is invaluable. I appreciate every member who has helped make the preparation process collaborative and productive by offering their thoughts and suggestions.”

## A look at USPS’s future

It’s impossible to predict what will happen this new year, but NALC is preparing for the challenges ahead.

One of the major challenges is the Postal Service’s finances. In November, USPS reported a loss of \$9 billion, which brought the Postal Service’s three-year total losses to \$25 billion. Total mail volume has declined by 49 percent since its peak in 2006, while the network has grown by 24 million delivery points (more than 16 percent).

Another issue exposed in the Postal Service’s financial results is the agency’s lack of cash to invest in modernizing its infrastructure to be able to handle today’s e-commerce business, even as parcel volume declined by almost 6 percent in 2025, likely from competition.

“The path forward is not clear,” Renfroe warned. “The Postal Service must modernize. Our infrastructure is outdated. Our current processing and delivery networks cannot meet the service needs of our customers,” he added.

Additionally, since 2014, the agency has defaulted on more than \$32 billion in amortization payments to its CSRS and FERS accounts, including default-



ing on \$3.9 billion in 2025. While letter carriers' retirement benefits are not in danger, the Postal Service will eventually need to fund these accounts, and the cost to do so will continue to increase each year. By 2032, the Postal Service's annual retirement payments are projected to increase to \$18 billion, absent legislative reform.

The state of USPS's finances has made the need for investment reform and the implementation of the Segal report priorities for 2026 and beyond. "Those two things alone will not solve our problems," Renfroe said, "but they must be done, and they will buy valuable time and money to make investments to modernize our infrastructure."

NALC also will likely need to play defense in 2026. "The more immediate danger," the president said, "is the opportunities that this current financial situation and the things that we can project in the near future create for those that push for action like privatization and slashing benefits legislatively."

The threats of stopping dues collection through payroll deduction and the elimination of official time, or "steward time," are still lingering in Congress.

NALC will continue to advocate for the policy changes we need, keep pushing the Postal Service on service improvements and smart investment in modernization, and—most importantly—the Postal Service's business model must change. NALC will convene a group of members in 2026 to explore what this new business model should be.

"We have to be part of developing what the Postal Service's business looks like in the future," he said. "Of course, for us, a business model that values letter carriers and protects our jobs is of

utmost importance and at the top of the list."

## Opening of negotiations

With bargaining for the next contract set to begin in February, NALC has announced that it will launch a comprehensive campaign related to bargaining. It will include a national day of action, similar to the one organized in March of last year.

"The public supports us in virtually everything we do. We have to be strategic about what's going on and how they can help us," Renfroe said.

Transparency and member feedback will be more critical now than at any point in our union's history. But much will depend on how willing the Postal Service is to engage in what all expect to be a difficult set of negotiations.

NALC's bargaining priorities include an all-career workforce, further improving pay for all letter carriers at every step, defending and improving our cost-of-living adjustment clause, reducing the time it takes to reach top step, defending the ban on contracting out letter carrier work, and defending layoff protections.

"As we continue to prepare for collective bargaining, we must remember that we never take our right to bargain for granted," Renfroe said. "We must be ready to fight like hell to defend our right to bargain at all times. Last year, we saw attacks on our brother and sister federal employees and their unions that were unprecedented in American history.

"Thankfully, our collective action and unified message have been successful at stopping each and every threat to us and the Postal Service thus far. More threats will come, but letter carriers have more fight than whoever tries to attack us next." **PR**





## Leadership Academy founder asks grads to serve other letter carriers back home



NALC Leadership Academy founder Jim Williams reflects on the 20 years since the first session was held in 2005.

**O**n Dec. 12, retired Executive Vice President Jim Williams, the founder of the NALC Leadership Academy, returned to preside over the graduation ceremony of the 31st class and began his remarks by being happily surprised that there had been 30 classes since the first one. “When we started, I didn’t know that we were going to make it to Class 2, honestly,” he said. “One of the big arguments was that eventually the Academy would stop meeting because we’d run out of quality candidates to attend. I sat through the last three days of this class, and I could tell you the quality has never been higher.”

Williams was joined at the luncheon by retired Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Jim Korolowicz, who was Williams’s partner in creating and running the Academy during its early years. The ceremony was held at the Maritime Conference Center in Linthicum Heights, MD, just south of Baltimore, and capped several months of intensive training on the skills necessary for union members to become effective leaders. Under the tutelage of their mentors—established NALC leaders such as branch presidents—the students combined three separate weeks of classroom learning at the Maritime Conference Center with take-home assignments and special projects.

During their classes, students took part in often-lively discussions on such subjects as the National Agreement and the union’s legislative agenda. They also learned more about the Dispute Resolution Process, strategic planning, branch financial responsibilities,

safety and health, retirement issues, route protection, workers’ compensation, effective negotiation techniques and the use of social media for branch communications.

Each week of the Academy also includes an emphasis on fine-tuning written and oral communication skills. Back in their branches, graduates will make use of those skills in such forums as membership meetings, awards ceremonies and dinners.

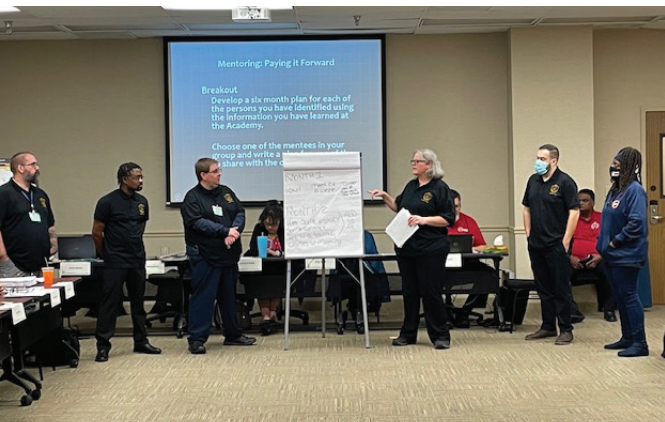
NALC President Brian L. Renfroe, other national officers, and Headquarters letter carrier and professional staff members are tapped to teach classes on a wide variety of topics. The attendees also were guided by daily class instructors: former National Business Agents (NBAs) Troy Clark and Chris Wittenburg, Region 6 Regional Grievance Assistant Anna Mudd, Region 5 Regional Administrative Assistant Larrissa Parde and Assistant to the President Ed Morgan.

After the commencement, the graduates were assigned to work at their respective NBA offices for a week to learn in a different environment.

Williams urged the graduates to understand the importance of completing what you start. “The piece that I would like you to remember as we finish up this class is the importance of finishing well, to be in it for the long haul, to know that it is worthwhile to not just start things, but to finish them and do it with class and dignity,” he said. “Those are the qualities I want you to take home.”

He also called on them to return home with the humility to know what they don’t know. “Most people are not aware of what it is that they need to change,” he said. “They don’t accurately judge themselves. One of the

Leadership Academy attendees present a group project during Week 3.







important things for you to do to finish well is that you are humble enough to see yourself accurately and make changes in your life.”

The key to this is to never stop learning. “I’ve heard people say, ‘I am done learning.’ I say to those people, ‘You’re wrong.’ If that’s the point of view that you live your life, to me, that’s a very dismal way to live. Being a lifelong learner is acknowledging that you’re humble enough to look at yourself accurately and make the changes you need to be successful for the people that we represent,” he said.

But the ultimate goal of leaders and of the NALC Leadership Academy is to

serve others. “I have always felt and believe, and I think it has something to do with my own faith, that the best leaders are those who learn how to serve others well,” he said. “Be a person who causes the people around you to be better than they were when you met them. That’s what true leadership to me is all about.”

Finally, he took a moment to thank the students on the 20th anniversary of the graduation of the first Leadership Academy class. “My heart is full because I come to a place like this, and I see an idea that has grown beyond anything I would have asked or imagined. Thank you all,” he said. **PR**

### Leadership Academy Class 31

**Artegus Felder receives his certificate from retired Executive Vice President Jim Williams (l) and retired Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Jim Korolowicz.**



## NALC Leadership Academy Class 31 graduates

**Kimberly Bertch**  
York, PA Branch 509

**Jamel Borner**  
Mobile, AL Branch 469

**Charles Bundy**  
Chicago, IL Branch 11

**Julianna Burton**  
Wichita, KS Branch 201

**Christopher Cotto-Sanchez**  
San Juan, PR Branch 869

**Shane Davis**  
Jonesboro, AR Branch 1131

**Artegus Felder**  
Montgomery, AL Branch 106

**Angel Garcia**  
Lansing, MI Branch 122

**Robert Gray**  
Kenosha, WI Branch 574

**Michael Hansen**  
Salt Lake City, UT Branch 111

**Carl Jenkins**  
Gretna, LA Branch 2730

**Benjamin Kayser**  
Cedar Rapids, IA Branch 373

**Anthony Kennedy**  
Greensboro, NC Branch 630

**Tonja Koch**  
Laramie, WY Branch 463

**Aaron Le Duc**  
Fond du Lac, WI Branch 125

**April Litty**  
South Jersey, NJ Branch 908

**Jamie Lukens**  
Barberton, OH Branch 897

**Angelo Martinez**  
W. Warwick, RI Branch 2158

**Mark Murphy**  
Erie, PA Branch 284

**Ryan Raeke**  
Wichita Falls, TX Branch 1227

**Esteban Ramirez**  
San Antonio, TX Branch 421

**Edwin Robertson**  
New York, NY Branch 36

**Josh Roe**  
Canton, OH Branch 238

**Corrinna Salas**  
San Bernardino, CA Branch 411

**Diana Sanchez**  
Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100

**Emmitt Saunders**  
Baltimore, MD Branch 176

**Matthew Slivinski**  
Wilkes-Barre, PA Branch 115

**Nora Stamper**  
Seattle, WA Branch 79

**Torra Stewart**  
South Florida Branch 1071

**Colleen Wood**  
S. Macomb, MI Branch 4374

# Important benefits new letter carriers should expect to receive from USPS

**N**ew letter carriers beginning their careers with the Postal Service receive many benefits that have been negotiated for them by NALC throughout the years. This article will highlight some of the important benefits for them and their families. Understanding each will help ensure that all new letter carriers are afforded their benefits in a timely manner after they begin their new careers.

## Pay raises

All letter carriers receive periodic wage increases. Part-time flexible (PTF) letter carriers receive pay-scale step increases every 46 weeks, calculated from their hire date as a PTF or their conversion date to PTF status, beginning with Step B and continuing until they top out at Step P of the pay schedule. PTFs also receive general wage increases, usually on an annual basis, which increases their pay on top of those step increases. Furthermore, PTFs receive increases in their rate of pay through cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), which are calculated twice each calendar year.

City carrier assistants (CCAs) receive one pay-scale step increase, which happens after 52 weeks of service from their hire date. CCAs, like PTFs, also receive general wage increases, which also are usually administered on an annual basis, and additionally increases their pay. CCAs do not receive COLAs, but NALC has negotiated higher percentages in their raises when they receive general wage increases. These higher percentages are in lieu of the COLAs that career employees receive.

## Automatic conversion to career

CCAs only receive one step increase, after 52 weeks, because NALC negotiated an agreement with the Postal Service

that puts a limit on how long letter carriers hired as a non-career employee must wait before being converted to career status. The agreement requires the Postal Service to convert CCAs to a career PTF position after they have been employed in their postal installation for 24 months, if they haven't already been converted to a career position prior to that. Upon conversion to career status, whether to a PTF position or to a full-time position, they will begin to receive step increases every 46 weeks until they reach top step, calculated from their date of conversion, as well as the annual general wage increases and the COLAs.

## Health insurance

CCAs are immediately eligible to participate in the USPS Noncareer Health Care Plan. The cost of the insurance premium is shared by the employee and the Postal Service, with the employee paying 25 percent of the premium cost and the employer paying 75 percent. CCAs must enroll within their first 60 days of employment if they wish to participate in this health insurance plan, otherwise they must wait until after their initial 360-day appointment, until open season, or until they have a qualifying life event that makes them eligible to sign up outside of those other periods.

After an initial appointment for a 360-day term and upon reappointment to another 360-day term, CCAs are also allowed to participate in the Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program. The total cost of this insurance though is the responsibility of the employee, and the employer pays nothing.

Career letter carriers, whether PTF or full time, are covered by the PSHB, which allows employees to choose from among many plans offering different levels and types of coverage.

The premium amounts differ among different PSHB health insurance plans and also by the chosen option (self-only, self plus one or family plan), so the actual amounts of employee and employer contributions vary from one plan option to another. The Postal Service's cost share of these health benefits premiums is 72 percent.

New PTFs, whether they are hired directly or converted to career from being a CCA, must enroll within their first 60 days of employment, or date of conversion, if they wish to participate in this health insurance plan. Otherwise they must wait until open season or until they have a qualifying life event that makes them eligible to sign up outside of those periods.

## New Employee Experience, Retention and Mentoring Program

Newly hired letter carriers, whether CCA or PTF, are enrolled in this program that sets certain guidelines to help them acclimate to their new jobs and provides opportunities to help them succeed. Some of the requirements of the program are:

- An equipment package provided to them on their first day in the office, which includes a new USPS-branded reflective vest, mail satchel and hat.
- An introduction and familiarization to their office, conducted jointly by USPS and NALC representatives.
- The guarantee of a minimum of one non-scheduled day each service week.
- Limited work hours and work locations during their first eight weeks following completion of the Carrier Academy.
- A defined work schedule each week identifying anticipated non-sched-





As part of the New Employee Experience, Retention and Mentoring Program, new carriers are placed in a mentoring program that pairs new employees with a mentor in their office to help employees adapt to the workplace.

uled days, start and end times, and route assignments.

- Training on Sunday/Dynamic delivery procedures with an experienced employee prior to performing Sunday delivery services on their own.
- Progress reviews that will be conducted at 30-, 60- and 80-day intervals.
- Access to updated route books and maps and reasonable time to review them prior to delivering a new route assignment.
- To the extent possible, newly hired letter carriers will be provided with consistent route assignments.
- A mentoring program that pairs new employees with a mentor in their office to help employees adapt to the workplace.

## Annual leave

Annual leave is paid vacation time, generally credited to CCAs and PTFs as it is earned based on the number of hours they work. CCAs can earn one hour of annual leave for each 20 hours in a pay status per pay period and can earn up to 13 days per year.

PTFs also earn annual leave based on the number of hours they work during the pay period. PTFs who have less than three years of creditable service will receive a maximum of four hours per pay period (one hour for each unit of 20 hours in a pay status) totaling 104 hours, or 13 days, of annual leave. When a PTF reaches three years of creditable service, they will begin earning annual leave at the rate of six hours per pay period (one hour for each unit of 13 hours in a pay status) for a maximum of 160 hours or 20 days. PTFs who have 15 years or more of creditable service will earn eight hours of annual leave per pay period (one hour for each unit of 10 hours in a pay status) for a maximum of 208 hours, or 26

days, per calendar year. Prior creditable military service counts toward creditable service for annual leave accrual purposes with the Postal Service.

## Advanced annual leave

Upon completion of an initial 360-day appointment as a CCA, and immediately upon reappointment to any subsequent appointments, CCAs are advanced 40 hours of annual leave. PTFs are also advanced 40 hours of annual leave, prorated to the end of the leave year for their first leave year as a PTF, and annually thereafter, unless and until the employee converts to full-time status.

## Holiday pay

CCAs receive holiday pay for six holidays per calendar year. Those holidays are New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. CCAs receive holiday pay at their base hourly straight time rate. The number of hours of holiday leave pay for a CCA is determined by the size of the office in which they work; for large offices, CCAs receive eight hours per holiday; for smaller offices, CCAs receive six hours per holiday; and for a very small number of offices called "POSTPlan offices," CCAs receive four hours per holiday. A POSTPlan office is any post office with a designation below Level 18, and currently there are only 23 CCAs employed in such offices throughout the entire country.

PTFs do not receive separate holiday pay like CCAs do. Their holiday pay is "built into" their regular hourly pay rate, and therefore their straight-time hourly pay is higher than that of a full-time employee at the same level and step. The straight-time hourly rate for a PTF is computed by dividing the annual

salary of a full-time letter carrier at their level and step by 1,992 hours, rather than the 2,080-figure used to calculate a full-time employee's hourly rate. The difference of 88 hours is equivalent to a full-time employee's pay for the 11 paid federal holidays. This higher rate of pay allows PTFs to earn their holiday pay for each straight-time hour they work throughout the year.

## Uniforms

NALC has negotiated an annual allowance with the Postal Service for all letter carriers to pay for their uniforms. Once a CCA has completed 90 workdays or has been employed for 120 calendar days, whichever comes first, they are provided with an annual uniform allowance. When a CCA becomes eligible for a uniform allowance, a Letter of Authorization form must be completed by local management and provided to the employee within 14 days of the eligibility date. The CCA takes the completed form to a USPS authorized vendor to purchase uniform items.

PTFs are eligible to receive their uniform allowance after completion of their 90-day probationary period. At that time, they are issued a uniform purchase card, like a debit card, with their annual uniform allowance amount loaded on it. They then use that card to purchase uniform items from approved vendors.

The benefits listed and discussed here are just a small sample of the overall benefits NALC has negotiated for letter carriers. For a complete understanding of all the benefits and rights afforded to letter carriers, please see the NALC-USPS National Agreement found on the NALC website at [nalc.org/workplace-issues/resources](http://nalc.org/workplace-issues/resources). **PR**





# Caretakers of the community

**At the close of each year and the** start of a new one, *The Postal Record* shines a light on letter carriers who deliver a special kind of joy to their communities. Whether on their routes, off the clock or after retiring, these are a few of the many carriers who go above and beyond to ensure that their customers and communities are cared for.

In this issue, we bring you stories about a branch that is working with a nonprofit to provide beds and bedding to kids in need; a carrier who raises money and collects donations for those in need who also spoke to youth at a local community center about his journey from poverty; a retired member who volunteered with honor flights to bring aging veterans to see the war

memorials in Washington, DC; a branch that donates money raised from their golf tournament to a different charity each year; a recently retired carrier who assisted the residents on his route by fixing things; and a branch that honored the memory of their recently deceased branch president by holding a blood drive.

These stories only scratch the surface. We know that there are NALC members and branches helping their communities year-round in many ways. If you have a story to share with us, please contact *The Postal Record* by phone at 202-662-2851, by email at [postalrecord@nalc.org](mailto:postalrecord@nalc.org), or by letter at 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001.



# Branch partners with organization that builds, donates beds for children

Every fall, Sioux Falls, SD Branch 491 comes together at a union meeting to pick a charity for which the members would like to contribute. In past years, they've voted to help the Ronald McDonald House, which pays for rooms and food for families that have children in the hospital, as well as adopting families for the holidays.

In July 2024, an organization called Sleep in Heavenly Peace (SHP)—which builds and donates wooden twin-sized beds for local children ages 3 to 17 who do not have one—got up and running in Sioux Falls.

Using its donations, the organization buys the lumber, and then volunteers saw, sand and pre-drill everything so that more volunteers can deliver and assemble the beds in the homes of the kids that need them. Each kid receives a bed, a mattress, a mattress protector, sheets, comforter and a pillow.

"They were really just trying to get their feet ... under them and get started," Branch Vice President **Stacy Douglas** said. But the charity needed help. "They were really running out of bedding. I mean, the organization itself is based 100 percent on donations and volunteers."

The organization immediately received a huge demand from families in the community as well as social services. "They had a goal of delivering 200 beds by the end of the year. With a goal that high comes a lot of need. The community has had some local sponsors step up financially for the materials to build the beds, several bed-building volunteer opportunities, but were running critically low on bedding to complete their goal," Douglas said.

The charity was looking for sheets, pillows, blankets and comforters for the finished beds, which prompted Douglas



Branch 491's donations to Sleep in Heavenly Peace in 2024

to think of the branch doing a drive. "For somebody to do a bedding drive, it really takes a lot of the financial burden off of them, because they can provide the bedding and not have to use some of their donations that they've gotten in some of these other places to go toward bedding," Douglas added.

The 21-year carrier, who also serves as South Dakota State Association president, had gotten involved with the charity individually as a volunteer once it opened. SHP's purpose seemed unique to her, which is why Douglas was drawn to help. "I didn't realize there was such a need in this community for children to have a bed to sleep in," she said.

She soon pitched it to her branch as a holiday service opportunity and was heartened that others wanted to help. "Postal employees in Sioux Falls stepped up and came together to help donate bedding to keep this charity moving forward," she said. That included employees in other crafts,





## Branch 491 increased its donations in 2025.

too, including clerks, rural carriers, maintenance and mail handlers, as well as retired carriers.

The first year, they were able to collectively donate 35 complete twin bedding sets, 13 comforters, 18 sheet sets, four blankets and 17 pillows, along with some cash that was donated for the November drive. “It was so successful,” Douglas said. “And the carriers were really happy to just take part in it.”

Because of that, the branch once again elected in 2025 to help SHP. The other crafts and management are also once again joining in on the fun. “My best friend, Sara Johnson, is the president of the local APWU and is leading the charge at the distribution center,” Douglas said. “We also do bed deliveries together at least once a week.”

“Since last year’s bedding drive, several city carriers have come along on deliveries and have directly seen the impact it makes in these kids’ lives,” she said. “And so, carriers from all over the branch have helped with both of those parts of it.”

SHP has several builds throughout the year and is always looking for volunteers. “Several people from the union have stepped up to come to build, and they’ve stepped up to come to delivery, and they’ve brought their families in there,” Douglas said. “They take their own time to do this. And it’s such a huge thing.”

Douglas remembers her heartwarming experience with the organization early on. “One of my first deliveries was for a 16-year-old boy, and he said that was his first bed ever. And at the time, my son was 16, and that really hit home for me,” she said. “Now my son comes and helps me do deliveries.”

And the families helped couldn’t be

more grateful. “Kids say it’s life-changing—it’s better than Christmas. They really love having a bed,” Douglas said.

Another carrier had just come with her for the first time the previous week to assemble beds. “He said, ‘Everything you say in the office is true,’ ” Douglas said. “They had five kids. They had no bed. And they were just sleeping on the floor. And he was like, ‘I cannot believe people live like that and not have a bed. ... [It’s] something most of us take for granted.’ It’s such a big deal to these children. They were so excited, just jumping, just, like, hugging us, so happy. And he’s like, ‘I want to do more.’ ”

Sometimes reactions from happy SHP recipients come from unexpected places. “I was still wearing my delivery shirt, and I ran into a lady at the grocery store,” Douglas said. “And she said [that she] and her children fled for their lives from a very abusive situation. And she said, ‘You guys are the only reason my children have beds. ... You don’t know the dignity that gave my kids back, to have a bed to sleep on.’ ”

In the year and a half since Sleep in Heavenly Peace has been open in the Sioux Falls community, it has delivered 780 beds so far with the expectation of more than 800 completed by the end of 2025.

Those in need can go to the SHP website to apply for one. They get added to the waitlist, and it generally takes around two to three weeks. “But it’s just constant,” Douglas said. “As soon as we fill some beds, then we get more requests.”

Douglas says she has been deeply affected by this endeavor: “Just seeing the impact it’s made in the community and all the kids that I’ve delivered to,



it's really changed my life."

There are chapters of Sleep in Heavenly Peace all over the United States, Douglas excitedly points out. "There's probably one fairly close to you and you don't even know it," she said.

## Carrier has become role model for his community efforts

**Mike Wallace, a Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 member,** not only has served his community as a letter carrier for 10 years but goes out of his way to help his community outside of work, too.

His Facebook account has been a catalyst for his community giving projects. Several years ago, he saw a post from Cazenovia Manor, a rehabilitation center for men with substance use disorders, which asked for clothing donations. Wallace said many of the men had recently been incarcerated, leaving prison with nothing.

"Once I heard somebody is in need," he said, "it was a no-brainer for me."

Beginning in 2020, he gathered up his old clothing and organized a clothing collection and donation for the center via Facebook. When he drops off the clothes, he notices the looks on the men at the center's faces. "It's priceless," he said.

In the last year, the donations have slowed down, but he still drops off donations whenever he receives them, saying, "People still text me every now and then: 'Hey, you still donate to the place?'" Wallace always says yes. "I'm never going to turn down a bag of clothes."

Another time, his aunt was volunteering with an organization called Upward Design for Life, which furnishes homes for families emerging from homelessness, but she noticed

The carrier added: "The more you do as a union for your community, the closer that your union will be and the stronger you'll be. I mean, it really does bring everybody together. So that's really the best part."

that many of the people had either worn sheets and pillows or none at all. She asked for Wallace's help to collect donations for them. Wallace posted on Facebook again, asking his friends and community for donations. People responded generously, and he said he was able to raise enough money to purchase "a lot of sheets and pillows."

He's gotten such a reputation that the director of a local Buffalo community center reached out to him via his Facebook account and invited Wallace to speak to a group of kids at the Martha Mitchell Community Center.

The carrier talked with a group of 10- to 15-year-olds about accountability, preparedness and life skills. He came from poverty himself. "A lot of my uncles and older family members

**Deborah Wallace Daniel**  
13m · 🌐  
UNBELIEVABLE! My nephew not only donated sheets n pillows but today he reached out to his friends and look what happened. Amazing 🙌



👍 You, Angel Jones and 4 others 1 comment

**A social media post about Mike Wallace's community service**

**Wallace with the kids he spoke to at the Martha Mitchell Community Center**







**Darron Baker (r) with his father and other veterans on an honor flight from Fort Dodge, IA**

are caught up in drugs,” he said, so “it’s very important to me for the youth to see a guy like me... you can do it, too.” He was so well received, he plans to continue participating when the

program restarts in coming months.

Wallace is happy to help anyone in need, saying, “I’m a guy that likes to help and do things for the community.”

## Letter carrier honors veterans with trips to Washington

**For about eight years, Darron Baker** of Fort Dodge, IA Branch 645 was on the board of a nonprofit organization that provided veterans with honor flights.

An honor flight is a special trip that flies U.S. military veterans who served sometime between World War II and the Vietnam War into Washington, DC, to visit those war memorials and other monuments. These trips include round-trip airfare, ground transportation and meals.

“It’s a wonderful volunteer experience. It’s just so much fun to see all those veterans and help them get out to DC to see all the monuments,” the retired letter carrier said. “It was a trip of a lifetime for the majority of those guys because they wouldn’t have otherwise been able to get out there.”

A typical trip begins two weeks before the flight, when they’d hold a supper for the veterans and their families to go over the itinerary and get everything in order.

There were usually around 125 veterans on a flight, the eight to 10 board members, volunteers for any veteran who needed to travel in a wheelchair, three nurses, EMTs and a doctor. In total, about 160 would travel on the flight.

On the day of the flight, the volunteers would get to the Fort Dodge airport at around 4:30 a.m. for a 6:30 a.m. flight. As the veterans would arrive, Baker and the others would check IDs and get things sorted. “Of course, a lot of them needed wheelchairs. That was what I did

a lot of, was getting the guys that pulled up to the curb into the wheelchairs and getting them into the terminal and getting them out to the plane,” he said. “We always had the fire department help us getting them up into the plane because we don’t have a walkway terminal in Fort Dodge.”

When they landed in Washington, DC, they’d unload the planes and get the veterans and their family members or volunteers onto three big tour buses. They’d divide the veterans into three-person teams, so no one would get lost.

“We always stop first at the Lincoln Memorial, with the Korean Memorial and the Vietnam wall nearby,” he said. “Then we go to the Navy Monument and the Air Force Monument. We would go to the World War II Monument, and we would go to Arlington Cemetery to watch the changing of the guard.”

As the veterans were at a memorial, Baker and the board arranged for a caterer to arrive and load the food onto the buses, so the vets could eat when they got back on the bus.

“We’d take a little tour of downtown DC, around the Capitol and the White House and all that stuff while they were eating,” Baker said.

Then they’d continue seeing the monuments before heading back to the airport to leave at 8:30 p.m. They’d arrive back in Fort Dodge at around 10 p.m.

“When we got back, then we had a huge crowd that was always there to greet them, coming back and welcoming





them home,” he said. “We announced all the guys as they got off the plane. It’s just a really neat experience for them.”

For Baker, he thinks the flights are important, especially for the military members who served in the Vietnam War. “They’d come home and they would get such a bad welcome,” he said. “People see them coming off the planes and they just didn’t like the war in Vietnam, and they took it out on the veterans, even though it wasn’t their fault.”

When people are cheering for them as they come back to Fort Dodge on these flights, “It just, I think, gave them a sense that people really appreciated what they did,” he said.

The board ran two trips per year—in May and September—taking veterans in the order the applications arrived. A typical trip costs close to \$120,000. To pay for the flights, the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and other groups did fundraisers. “We had a number of organizations doing fundraising things, and the money just kept rolling in because it was such a good cause,” he said.

Thinking back on the flights he took, Baker remembered the WWII vet he

pushed around in a wheelchair on his first flight. “It was just such a joy, because he was still sharp as could be,” he said. “He could get up and walk around out of the wheelchair, but it was just so much fun to push him around and talk to him and hear his stories all day.”

About a year ago, the carrier convinced his father, who was in the military in 1952, to take one of the flights, despite not liking to fly. “He talks about that trip all the time,” he said. “So that was really special.”

Baker’s co-workers often asked him how a flight went. One letter carrier was a vet from the Vietnam era, and he was on one of Baker’s flights.

Baker has since retired from the Postal Service and from the honor flight board. “We have a new, younger board that has taken over and is going to keep it going,” he said.

He encourages anyone to get involved with local organizations that put together honor flights. “A number of states have the honor flight hubs. And if anybody has money that they want to donate, it all goes to pay for the veterans, because nobody gets paid,” he said of the volunteer effort.

**Baker was part of a group that would take veterans, such as Jim Coleman (r), a retired member of Branch 645, on trips to Washington, DC, to see war memorials and other monuments.**

## Branch golf tournament raises money for local kids

**Pride City Branch 229 in Pueblo, CO,** has been holding golf tournaments for four years, using the money raised to help members of the community. When they first put on the event, they chose to donate to a local high school

basketball team. “We just decided we wanted to give back to the community and help out fundraising for local young kids to try to generate money for them,” Branch President **Donald Hemphill** said.

**One of the teams from Branch 229’s tournament**





This year, the branch elected to continue helping children in the area by donating all of the proceeds from this year's tournament—\$11,000—to the local Boys and Girls Club. "There's always young men and women that are underprivileged. So, we decided to reach out to the Boys and Girls Club," he said.

The branch holds the golf tournament each summer for close to 100 entrants at the Elmwood Golf Course in Pueblo. The club offers the use of the course at a 50 percent discount, and the branch holds a silent auction, and raffles baskets to raise more money.

The branch has an organizing committee of seven to eight people that handles the tournament. In addition to organizing the event, they all attempt to get sponsors for each hole. Hemphill said they often get so many sponsors that they have to double or triple up the sponsors per hole.

At the end of the tournament, the branch gives awards for the first-, second- and third-place winners, as well as one prize for the last-place finisher. Hemphill has "won" the last-place award two years in a row. "I'm not a golfer," he admitted.



William Raymond

## *Carrier goes above and beyond for customers on his route*

**Grand Rapids, MI Branch 56** member **William Raymond**, retired this year after carrying the mail for a decade, capping a career that began in the Navy at age 17. While his mail-carrying days amounted to only a decade, he cared for his customers so well that they won't forget him.

Raymond's good deeds weren't flashy, and he didn't seek recognition for them. He just saw people on his route in Cadillac, MI, who needed help and got the job done. He often came back off the clock to do errands for them.

"I've replaced and installed three mailboxes because some of the elderly people can't do it," he said. "So, I come there and I don't charge them. I just came and put in their mailboxes for them. One got taken out by a snowplow, and I dug that hole out in the spring and I replaced the mailbox for them."

For another customer, an elderly retiree, Raymond put up a mailbox and also added handrails for his door because he knew the man had taken a fall in the past.

Raymond's simple brand of friendliness brought smiles to his patrons,

demonstrating that sometimes the small gestures are the most meaningful.

He would stop and talk to the residents of an assisted-living facility on his route each day, sometimes accepting cookies from them. A former Dish Network manager, Raymond once had a chance to help a resident there with an important mission: getting Frank Sinatra on her television.

"One lady, oh my goodness, she loved Frank Sinatra, and she had the Dish Network, and she would flip the buttons, and she'd be all messed up," he said. "So, she would stop me when I come by, and I'd go in her house, and I'd get her back on her Dish Network to get her Frank Sinatra."

Sometimes his service was nothing more than companionship.

"There was another lady who couldn't leave her porch. So, I would stop and talk to her every day. She was 97 years old," Raymond recalled. He also kept a close eye on people's property and even took some to doctor's appointments after finishing his route.

An appreciative customer nominated him as a hero, writing, "He will be sorely

missed, not only as an exceptional representative and employee of the USPS, but as a daily reminder of the importance in treating everyone in life with concern, dignity and respect.”

Raymond says his only regret is that

he didn’t join the Postal Service immediately after leaving the Navy, because he loved the job so much.

“I wouldn’t trade anything,” he said. “The Post Office was great. Never a boring day.”

## Branch holds blood drive in memory of former president

In March of last year, **Carmon Haynes**, the recent past president of Rome, GA Branch 536, started noticing that he was feeling lightheaded and having other symptoms. He went to his doctor and was diagnosed with Leukemia, a cancer of the blood and bone marrow.

Haynes had been a fighter all of his life and he wasn’t going to stand down against Leukemia. Haynes had been in the Air Force and joined the Postal Service after his military career ended. He was an outside steward serving all over Region 9 (Florida, Georgia, North and South Carolina) and Branch 536 president for 10 years, from 2015 to 2025.

“He was very passionate about his job,” current Branch President **Madison Vassari** said of Haynes. “Ornery as hell. He was a big Georgia Bulldogs fan. So, I had equated that tenacity to a bulldog-like tenacity.”

While he could work with managers when they were open to working with him, he wasn’t afraid to fight when management refused. “Rome in 2023, I think, filed the most grievances out of anywhere in the Georgia district—I think somewhere upwards of 1,300 grievances—that year,” Vassari said. “We had a very unagreeable OIC who just stonewalled a lot of stuff. Because she did that, and because Carmon understood the contract, he just kept churning out those grievances. By do-

ing that, he was able to secure us hundreds of precedent-setting decisions for dozens of different contract violations.”

Haynes had beaten cancer once, having battled throat cancer into remission in 2019. He tried to continue working after the second diagnosis but came to lean on then-Vice President Vassari for the branch work while Haynes did outside steward assignments. But by May, doctors told him that he was suffering from a rare and intensive strain of Leukemia and that his odds of surviving the next few years were not good. At that point Haynes resigned as president.

“He still offered support and guidance because he was very, very knowledgeable about the contract,” Vassari said. “And he offered support as much as he could.”

“I saw him one time while he was receiving treatment. He had not yet shaved his head, but he had certainly lost some of his hair and some of his weight,” Vassari added.

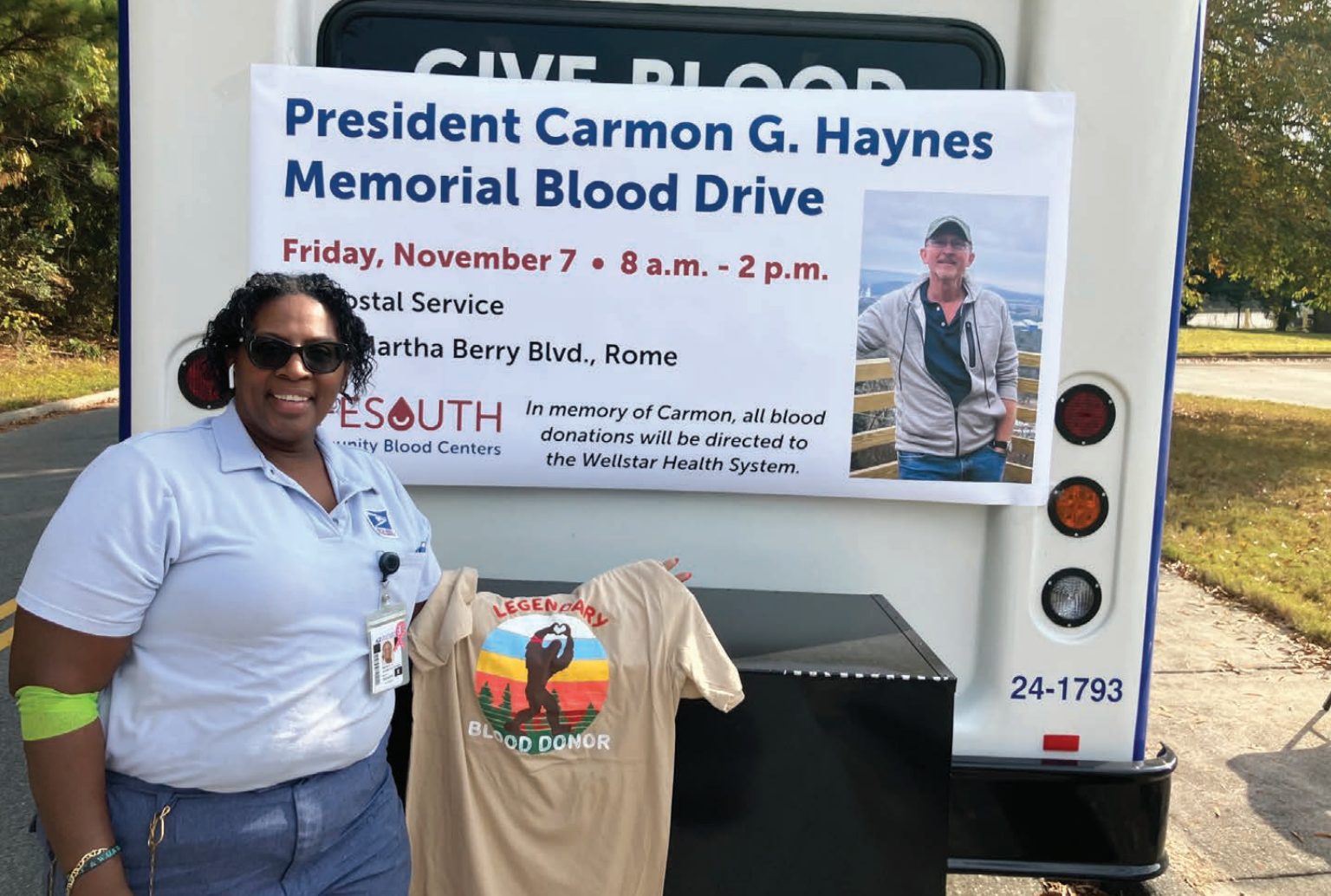
The chemotherapy treatment left Haynes immunocompromised and he had to be quarantined. Doctors soon concluded that he was unresponsive to the treatment and decided to send him home. He died on Oct. 1.

Haynes’s girlfriend told the branch that the best thing they could do to honor him would be to donate blood. Vassari arranged with the local Lifesouth Community Blood Centers to send a



Carmon Haynes





**Nicole Moore, a member of Rome, GA Branch 536, shows off a T-shirt after donating blood for the first time during the drive to honor Carmon Haynes.**

bloodmobile to the Rome USPS facility on Nov. 7. The hope was that they could hold a blood drive while Haynes was still alive, but after he died, they turned the event into a remembrance.

Although postal workers can take up to four hours of administrative leave to donate blood, with management approval, the branch arranged for the bloodmobile to arrive in time for letter carriers to be able to donate before they left for street delivery. Although the officer in charge and the manager of postal operations (MPOO) knew Haynes and were agreeable to the blood drive, they encouraged Vassari to hold it right outside of postal property to reduce paperwork. He quickly got permission from the city to hold it on a trailhead by the installation.

The drive was an instant success. “Someone from every craft donated,” Vassari said. “We had some managers donate. The MPOO donated. It was great, too, because they put up banners and stuff.”

The letter carriers and co-workers shared stories. “I would say it was

cheerful,” Vassari said. “A lot of shared memories of Carmon, and I think people were just very happy and proud.”

They even had a handful of walk-ins who were on the city property and saw the bloodmobile and decided to donate. “I got to actually talk a little bit about him to some of the pedestrians that came up,” Vassari said.

For a facility that has about 45 NALC members, the blood drive registered 19 donors, three of whom were unable to donate that day. The team collected 14 units of whole blood and two units of double red blood cells. That is a special type of donation, which returns plasma and platelets to the donor, and is especially valuable for trauma, surgery and chronic conditions like sickle cell anemia.

“Once separated by our components team, it will be sent to local hospitals and provide life-saving support to patients in need,” Lifesouth told the branch.

“I thought that was just awesome,” Vassari said. “Just such a great way to show some support to Carmon.” **PR**

# George Meany

## First president of the AFL-CIO

**A**s the first president of the newly formed AFL-CIO, George Meany brought the labor federation into the modern world.

Meany became president of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) in 1952 and immediately sought to merge it with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). When the two merged in 1955, Meany was elected the new alliance's president. He guided labor through many challenges and left his mark on the movement.

Meany came from Irish-Catholic roots in New York City. His father was president of the Bronx local of the United Association of Plumbers and Pipe Fitters. In 1910, at age 16, Meany followed in his father's footsteps, joining the union as an apprentice.

A decade later, the young plumber was elected to the union's executive board and soon became a full-time business agent. By 1934, he had risen to the rank of president of the New York State Federation of Labor.

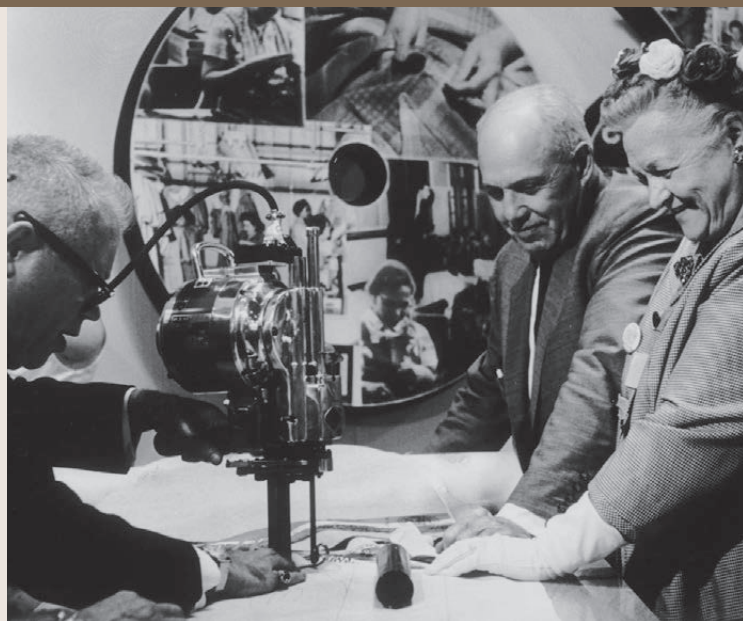
Under Meany, the New York AFL convinced the state to pass one of the nation's first unemployment insurance laws and boosted President Franklin D. Roosevelt to reelection in 1936. By 1939, Meany ascended to the office of secretary-treasurer for the national AFL. He helped with the formation of the War Labor Board, which grew union membership during World War II by protecting union workers' rights and resolving disputes as millions of workers joined the war effort. At the war's end, Meany insisted on the inclusion of workers' rights in the Marshall Plan to ensure that European workers would have a fair share of the benefits of economic recovery, and pushed for the creation of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions to promote unions in

postwar Europe and throughout the world.

Faced with congressional hostility toward unions and the passage of the repressive Taft-Hartley Act in 1947, a law that rolled back some union rights, Meany responded by creating Labor's League for Political Education, the first full-scale effort by the AFL to educate and mobilize union members, including voter registration drives, and efforts that expanded labor's political influence. It later became the AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education, serving as the political arm to raise voluntary funds and mobilize members for political education and campaign involvement.

Upon the death of AFL President William Green in 1952, Meany was elected president.

His first task was to unite labor. The AFL first brought unions under one umbrella when it was founded in 1886, but in 1935, several industrial unions led by United Mine Workers President John L. Lewis had split from the AFL to form the CIO. These unions separated because they wanted to organize all workers regardless of skill and were frustrated by the AFL's focus on skilled workers. Meany mended the disagreements and engineered a merger of the two groups in 1955. He agreed to accept the CIO's unions "as is," leaving the remaining conflicts between the two sides to be worked out after joining together as one organization. The modern AFL-CIO was born with 15 million members and Meany as its first president.



**International Ladies' Garment Workers President David Dubinsky demonstrates garment cutting for AFL-CIO President George Meany and his wife on May 6, 1960.**

Meany modernized and expanded the new organization. Under his leadership, the labor movement won unprecedented gains for working Americans, including improved worker safety laws, improvements to Social Security, anti-discrimination laws and expansion of federal and state workers' union presence. A strong supporter of civil and equal rights, Meany put the AFL-CIO's muscle behind the civil rights movement, insisting that the 1964 Civil Rights Act outlaw workplace as well as community discrimination in public accommodation, education, federally funded programs and voting rights.

Meany saw that members of Congress were being influenced by special interest lobbying, but Meany believed the labor movement was not just another special interest. Rather, it was the only organization in America that spoke for the common citizen—the "people's lobby" as he called it. That meant unions were more than advocacy groups; they were an essential part of American democracy. There could be no democracy without union rights and no union rights without democracy, he said.

Meany stepped down in 1979 and died the next year, but his legacy of leadership made a mark on the labor movement that is still felt today. **PR**



# NALC Branch Publication competition call for entries

**E**ditors of branch and state association newsletters and websites are invited to enter NALC's biennial competition for outstanding periodical publications.

A panel of publications experts will determine award winners in the various categories, which are listed below. The decision of the judges is final. Winners will be announced at a workshop held during the national convention in Los Angeles Aug. 3-7.

Entries must be received by **April 1** at this address: Publications Competition, NALC, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

All entries must have been created by NALC members; been published in branch or state association newsletters, between April 2024 and March 2026 (inclusive); and must be submitted by current branch officers or editors. For the Best Website award, the judges will review the current website or feed.

Please duplicate the labels on the following page (also available on *The Postal Record* page of the NALC website) and attach one to each copy of each entry. Submissions that do not comply with these directions will be disqualified. Each entry must be clipped or photocopied from your publication and, if smaller than 8½ x 11 inches, taped onto a full-size sheet of paper. Entries will not be returned. Entries will be judged in the following categories:

**Overall Excellence:** This category recognizes publications that best serve the membership. Judges will consider content (appropriate and original articles, useful information, local angles), style (clear writing, effective headlines, good story placement) and overall appearance (readability, attractiveness, use of photos and art).

Judging will be based on three publication issues you choose to submit; please note that you must send two copies of each issue. Each copy must have a completed "Overall Excellence" label attached.

Publications will compete in the subcategories of 1) large branches and state associations and 2) small branches. Large branches are defined as having 500 or more members, but the judges may alter that threshold to create a balanced number of entries in both categories.

**Best Editorial or Column:** This category is for opinion pieces such as editorials or columns by union officers or editors. The judges will consider such factors as the author's effectiveness in putting forth their point of view and insight into the topic. Each branch or state may submit up to three editorials or columns. Send two copies of each entry.

**Best News or Feature Story:** This category is for reports on topics important to letter carriers and for features on branch or member activities; do not submit columns or other opinion pieces here. Judges will weigh choice of topic, factual reporting and clear writing. Each branch or state association may submit up to three news or feature articles. Send two copies of each entry.

**Best Cartoon or Photo:** Each branch may submit any combination of up to three cartoons, photos or illustrations created by members of that branch. Cartoons will be judged on relevance, technique and how well they convey their point. Photos and illustrations will be judged on interest, impact and quality. Send two copies of each entry.

**Promoting Unionism:** The special award for the Promoting Unionism category includes, but is not limited to,

articles or photo treatments that raise members' awareness of and activism in the labor movement. The judges will look for attention-grabbing entries that promote pride in labor and involve carriers more deeply in NALC. Each branch or state association may submit up to three entries. Send two copies of each entry.

**Best Website:** This category recognizes websites that best serve the

membership. Judges will consider relevance of content, overall appearance and timeliness of information. Blogs, Facebook pages and X or Instagram feeds may be submitted as well. Please print out the web address of the site onto two 8½ x 11-inch pieces of paper and attach the "Best Website" label to each. Send two copies of the entry. **PR**

### 2026 NALC Publication Contest Entry OVERALL EXCELLENCE

Number of members in branch: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch no. or state name: \_\_\_\_\_

Located in city, state: \_\_\_\_\_

Name, title and phone number of person submitting: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2026 NALC Publication Contest Entry **BEST NEWS or FEATURE STORY**

Name of author: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of publication: \_\_\_\_\_

Month and year of issue: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch no. or state name: \_\_\_\_\_

Located in city, state: \_\_\_\_\_

Name, title and phone number of person submitting: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2026 NALC Publication Contest Entry BEST EDITORIAL or COLUMN

Name of author: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of publication: \_\_\_\_\_

Month and year of issue: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch no. or state name: \_\_\_\_\_

Located in city, state: \_\_\_\_\_

Name, title and phone number of person submitting: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2026 NALC Publication Contest Entry BEST CARTOON or PHOTO

Name of artist or photographer (must belong to your branch): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of publication: \_\_\_\_\_

Month and year of issue: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch no. or state name: \_\_\_\_\_

Located in city, state: \_\_\_\_\_

Name, title and phone number of person submitting: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2026 NALC Publication Contest Entry PROMOTING UNIONISM

Name of creator: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of publication: \_\_\_\_\_

Month and year of issue: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch no. or state name: \_\_\_\_\_

Located in city, state: \_\_\_\_\_

Name, title and phone number of person submitting: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2026 NALC Publication Contest Entry BEST WEBSITE

Number of members in branch: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch no. or state name: \_\_\_\_\_

Located in city, state: \_\_\_\_\_

Name, title and phone number of person submitting: \_\_\_\_\_

## Checklist for entries

- Submit two copies of every entry in the print categories. A copy may be clipped from the publication and taped to a sheet of 8½ x 11 inch paper, or it may be a page from the publication (or a photocopy of that page) with everything but the entry crossed out.

- Attach a completed label to each of the two copies of every entry. Please type or print clearly. For example: If a publication decides to enter one editorial and two columns in the "Best Editorial or Column" category, it must provide two copies of the editorial and two copies of each of the two columns, and it must affix a completed "Best Editorial or Column" label to each of these six items. Entries that don't comply with these rules will be disqualified.

- Submissions must be received by **April 1** at the following address: Publications Competition, NALC, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.



# Carriers and the mail make news online

**M**ail-centered stories frequently appear on social media and online news sites. The following are a few that have come to NALC's attention recently. If you find a story you'd like us to consider featuring, send it to [postalrecord@nalc.org](mailto:postalrecord@nalc.org).

## New York play features the story of lifelong pen pals

"Pen Pals" is a play about two women around the same age, Bernie and Mags, who live in New Jersey and London, respectively, but who formed a friendship via letters. They have been writing letters to each other since they were teenagers and have continued throughout the rest of their lives. According to the play's website, "they've never met, and yet they're best friends."

They share all the details of their lives with each other—fun moments, heartbreak and happiness. Despite being separated by the Atlantic Ocean, the pair are "closer to each other than anyone else in the world."

The play is based on a book, *Pen Pals*, by Michael Griffo, which takes place from 1955 to 2002 and was inspired by his mother who herself

had a British pen pal for more than 60 years.

According to *NJ Arts*, the play was originally performed in fall 2024 at the New Jersey Repertory Company in Long Branch, NJ. The show was extended and moved to the DR2 Theatre in New York City, opening on Aug. 15 and scheduled to run until Feb. 1. There are several pairs of actors portraying Bernie and Mags, so the performances are different every two weeks. Among the actors are Marcia Cross, Sharon Lawrence, Maureen McCormick, Catherine Curtin and Melissa Gilbert.

## Former Postal Museum director writes book on USPS history

James H. Burns, director of the National Postal Museum from 1984 to 1997, has written a book, *Delivering for America: How the United States Postal Service Built a Nation*, which explores the integral role of the Post Office across its 250-year history.

As the United States developed and changed over the years, America's postal service grew and changed with it. Mail has had several modes of transport, including horses, rail, airplanes, cars and ships. The book discusses the times in U.S. history when the mail system was most crucial, such as during the Revolutionary War and the Great Depression.

It also talks about the important role of the postal system during periods of expansion in U.S. history, when mail routes took on an even greater role in connecting communities and unifying the country.

Burns includes examples of postal workers operating under difficult conditions—like early airmail pilots navigating dangerous routes or couriers transporting valuable shipments during financial crises.



The book also includes visual materials, such as rare photographs, documents and artifacts that share information on everything postal.

In addition to historical information, the book examines how the Postal Service continues to affect Americans' lives despite technological changes ranging from the rise of automation to digital communications.

## Illinois teachers' pen pal program hits 20 and still going

About 20 years ago, two elementary teachers in Illinois—Chad Hamerlinck and Tonya Vincent—were searching for a way to provide authentic writing opportunities and foster connections between students at their two schools in Wethersfield and Cambridge. So, they came up with an idea to have a pen pals program between the two schools.

Students write to each other monthly. Because the two schools are only about 30 minutes from each other, unlike many pen pals, students from the two schools meet in person twice a year. The students from Cambridge visit Wethersfield in the fall and vice versa in the spring. When they meet, they play outside together, tour each other's schools and do "getting to know you" activities.

"After the initial shock and shyness, it doesn't take long for most to warm up and start talking with their pen pal," Hamerlinck told *The Kewanee Voice*. "I even had one of my students get invited to a birthday party of their pen pal. What a cool experience."

## Postal Service announces 2026 stamp lineup

The Postal Service has provided a sneak peek at the stamps set to be released throughout this year. Included among the people, places and ideas becoming USPS stamps this

year are Muhammad Ali, Phillis Wheatley, Route 66, Bruce Lee, love, Colorado statehood, Harriet Powers, figures of the American Revolution, international peace as well as several animals, plants and landscapes.

"This early preview of our 2026 stamp program underscores the Postal Service's commitment to celebrating the artistry and storytelling that make stamps so special," Lisa Bobb-Semple, USPS's Stamp Services director, said. "Each stamp is a small work of art—an entryway into a larger story that connects people, places and moments in history. This year, we continue to honor that legacy with a diverse range of subjects and designs, from beloved series and commemorative anniversaries to bold new releases that will inspire and excite collectors and admirers alike."

The stamps will be released throughout 2026 at various locations relevant to each of the stamps around the United States. **PR**

**Above I: James H. Burns's history of the USPS**

**Below: Some of the new stamps being released in 2026**





# From airwaves to the page

## A creative journey and tribute to lifelong friends

**D**ave Anderson has worn many creative hats—rock guitarist, country radio host, college journalist and now author—shifting seamlessly from one passion to the next as his life and interests evolved.

When they met at a church in the suburbs of Chicago, IL, at 13 years old, the trio—Anderson and his friends Steve Hill and Derrick Waggoner—had everything in common. They loved superheroes, sci-fi and adventure stories, rock music and making mixtapes, and shared a sense of humor.

This meeting in 1979 gave Anderson the inspiration to write a book featuring the three of them. Even at that young age, his head was filled with ideas for the story based upon their shared interests—from superheroes to mystery solvers to cartoons.

Although some of their interests changed throughout the years, from middle school onward, Anderson's friendship with Hill and Waggoner was a constant. Their love for rock music led them to form a band in high school, with Anderson playing guitar. After high school, even as Anderson went to broadcast school and later moved throughout the United States, he made sure to see them at least once a year and stay in touch over the phone.

Having previous writing experience at his high school newspaper and writing songs for his band, he was initially interested in working for a newspaper as a reporter but said he “got sidetracked with the radio.” He joked that his wife has told him he had a “face for radio.”

After broadcast school, he found work at a country music radio station. “It’s kind of weird when you think about it, that I became a country music DJ. I grew

up listening to rock and playing rock,” he said, but remembered that his and his friends’ dads liked country music.

From 1993 to 1997, he was the “Wake-Up Crew Gerbil” on Q-98.5 in Rockford, IL, then he became just “the gerbil” and worked on Rooster 106 in Columbus, GA, from 1997 to 2003. In his gerbil days, he did “man on the street” interviews and was a “stunt man.” Anderson performed harrowing feats such as jumping 13 stories into a bucket of water—13 storybooks that is.

Ditching the gerbil pseudonym when he began his new position at 102.5 in Rochester, MN, he decided to start going by “Dave Berg” as an ode to the frigid iceberg-like temperatures in the city. In this new position he led many radio contests on air, which benefited charities.

His 22 years in the radio industry afforded him opportunities to meet several well-known performers. He met both the queen and king of country music—Reba McEntire and George Strait—as well as Garth Brooks, Blake Shelton, Kenny Rogers, Miranda Lambert and Little Big Town. Additionally, he met comedians Bill Engvall and Bob Hope.

“Right when they made their debut, [Little Big Town] came into the studio and I got to talk to them and got to hear their first few songs before they kind of made a big splash on the country music scene,” Anderson said. Years later he met the group again and Anderson was excited to say, “They remembered me!”

In 2015, Anderson was informed that there would be corporate downsizing and was laid off from his station. He worked odd jobs until 2017, when he received a postcard informing him that the Post Office was hiring, so he applied.



Dave Anderson





Anderson (c) and his friends Steve Hill (l) and Derrick Waggoner



The Rochester, MN Branch 440 member draws comparisons between delivering mail and radio hosting. As a letter carrier he engages with the community, which is like the “man on the street” radio segments.

Following decades of conceptualizing and jotting down notes, in 2022, Anderson finally began the process of writing the book he first envisioned in 1979.

One of the ideas that stood out to him was his idea to characterize the trio as superheroes but landed on making his book a mystery inspired by Encyclopedia Brown and the Hardy Boys, series he read growing up.

Although the trio’s friendship took off in their early teens, he decided to age them down a bit to avoid the “teen-age angst” and questions of personal identity that often come with coming-of-age narratives. Instead, he focused on the humor and fun times he shared with his two best friends.

Anderson chose the title, *The Adventures of HAW*, as an ode to the friendship of Hill, Anderson and Waggoner.

The book is about the three friends attempting to solve the mystery of \$100,000 that goes missing from the middle school principal’s office. Anderson said the story is about 50 percent true with added humor and plot elements. The book concludes on a cliff-hanger, so Anderson is planning to write a sequel.

“I’m thinking of a ‘Mission: Impossible’ type of story for the sequel,” Anderson said. “I’m working on that right now. It really depends on free time. I’m hoping that by summer I’ll be done with it.”

Although the book’s content is mainly fun and lighthearted, the plot inadvertently became inspired by the death of Waggoner, which happened in April 2023 when he was 57. Adding to Anderson’s loss, only a few weeks before he finished

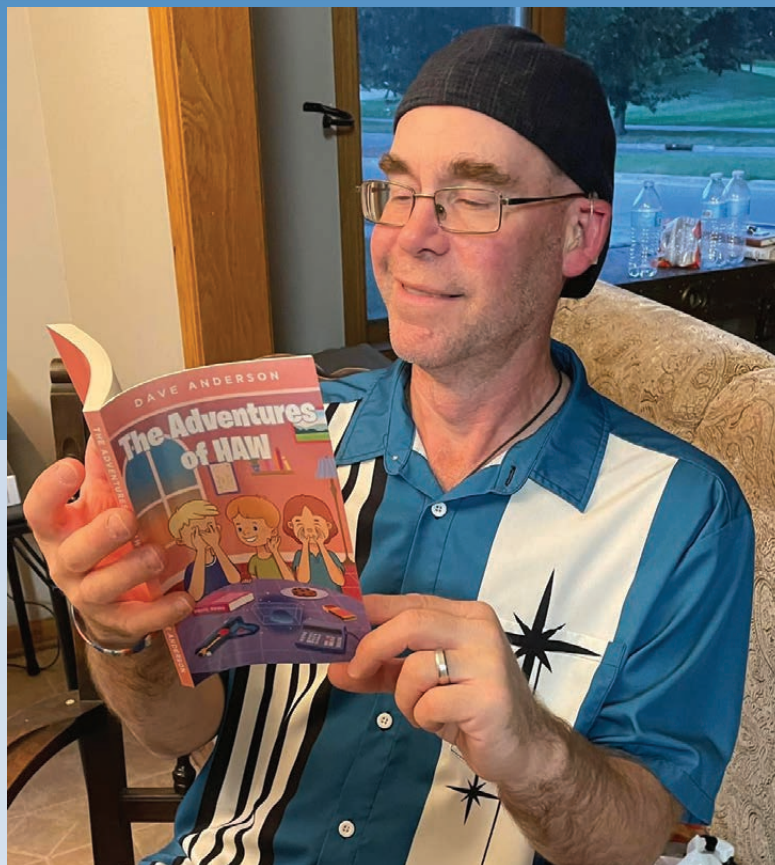
the book in 2024, Waggoner’s wife, Michelle, who the trio had known since childhood, also died.

“I found myself deeply affected by their loss and felt compelled to preserve their memory,” Anderson said. “Engaging with their memory after their deaths played a significant role in inspiring the book.”

In the sixth chapter of the book, Anderson delved into time travel. He dedicated a large portion of the chapter to Michelle and her experiences in seventh grade—when the book was set—and when she was an adult. He said that part of the book was one of the hardest to write, as it brought back emotions of those he had lost.

“It was very emotional and very real,” Anderson said. “I started thinking about my grandfather, and I started thinking about my grandkids, and the time that I might not be around to be there for them. I started to get emotional and get choked up while I was writing.”

If it wasn’t enough to have the book serve as a tribute to their decades-long friendship, Anderson shouted out his two friends and their wives in his acknowledgement, saying that he is “grateful and indebted” for their friendship. Under a photo of Waggoner, Anderson honored their friendship with the simple words: “1965—2023 Forever.” **PR**



Above: Dave Anderson with his book

Below: While working in country radio, he met some legendary musicians, including Reba McEntire (l).







## Veterans' legislative update

**D**uring the first six months of the 119th Congress, Congress introduced several bipartisan legislative initiatives aimed at protecting veterans. Unfortunately, the second half of the year brought serious concerns.

### Collective-bargaining agreements under attack at VA

In March, President Trump signed an executive order directing several agencies, including the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), to be removed from federal labor-management programs. The president cited national security concerns for this action. On Aug. 6, 2025, the VA announced the termination of most of its collective-bargaining agreements with federal employee unions, affecting roughly 370,000 employees. Federal employee unions immediately filed legal challenges; an appeals court allowed the administration to proceed while litigation continued.

### VA services affected during 2025 government shutdown

This past Veterans Day fell on Day 42 of the longest government shutdown in history. While the government reopened the following day and returned to normal operations, veterans across the country felt the effects of the shutdown. The VA was affected for more than a month, with thousands of its employees furloughed and certain services unavailable. According to the VA, a total of 37,000 workers were either furloughed or working without pay. Affected services included transition briefings for members planning to leave the armed services, career counseling and call centers. In addition, more than 50 regional benefits offices were closed during the shutdown. Numerous other services were curtailed or shut down as well; however, compensation and pension pay-

ments were still processed and paid to veterans during the shutdown.

### Tracking legislation affecting veterans

As Congress begins the second session of the 119th Congress, several bipartisan bills remain in Congress that address several critical issues, such as access to quality health care, safeguarding earned benefits, and mental health issues that include suicide prevention. Below is an updated list of the bills that were first reported last summer.

#### Protect Veteran Jobs Act— H.R. 1637/S. 914

Introduced in February in the House by Rep. Derek Tran (D-CA) with 45 original co-sponsors, and in March in the Senate by Sens. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Andy Kim (D-NJ), this bill seeks to restore employment protections for veterans affected by recent federal workforce reductions. It provides reinstatement eligibility for veterans who were involuntarily removed or dismissed without cause from civil service positions between Jan. 20, 2025, and the date of enactment. Eligible veterans must be reinstated to their former positions or to other civil service roles for which they qualify. This legislation directly addresses the thousands of veterans affected by layoffs under the Trump administration. In March, Kim and Duckworth introduced the measure as an amendment to the Republican-led continuing resolution, but it was blocked from passage.

#### Housing Unhoused Disabled Veterans Act—H.R. 965/S. 1415

Introduced in February in the House by Reps. Brad Sherman (D-CA) and Monica De La Cruz (R-TX) and passed by voice vote, this bill was introduced in the Senate in April by Sens. Alex Padilla (D-CA) and Dave McCormick (R-PA). The

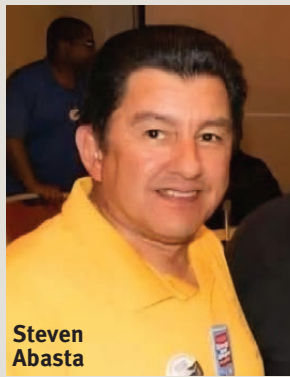
legislation would permanently exclude veterans' disability compensation from being counted as income when determining eligibility for housing assistance under the Department of Housing and Urban Development's HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program. This bill would help ensure disabled veterans do not lose access to housing support due to benefits intended to compensate for service-connected disabilities. H.R. 965 was passed by voice vote in the House on Feb. 10, 2025. The House-passed bill was sent to the Senate, where it is awaiting action.

#### Saving Our Veterans Lives Act— H.R. 1987/S. 926

Introduced in March in the House by Reps. Chris DeLuzio (D-PA) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), and in the Senate by Sens. Angus King (I-ME) and Tim Sheehy (R-MT), this legislation builds on a version from the 118th Congress. It would authorize the VA to implement a program providing free firearm lockboxes to veterans. Research has shown that limiting access to firearms for individuals at risk can significantly reduce suicide deaths. The bill represents a targeted suicide prevention strategy grounded in evidence-based public health policy.

#### Dennis and Lois Krisfalusy Act— H.R. 1344/S. 1127

Introduced in April in the House by Reps. Chris DeLuzio (D-PA) and Guy Reschenthaler (R-PA), and in March in the Senate by Sens. John Fetterman (D-PA) and Dave McCormick (R-PA), this bipartisan legislation would allow a memorial headstone or marker to be provided through the VA for an eligible spouse or dependent child of a veteran interred in a national, state or tribal veterans cemetery—regardless of the date of death. Currently, only those who died between Nov. 11, 1998, and Oct. 1, 2024, are eligible. The bill



Steven Abasta



Abasta joined the Marines in 1976.

## Veteran profile: Steven Abasta

would eliminate this restriction and extend the benefit beyond 2024 for an additional eight years, ensuring equitable and lasting recognition for veterans' families.

### VetPAC Act of 2025—S. 787

Introduced in February by Sens. Bill Cassidy (R-LA) and Mazie Hirono (D-HI), this legislation would establish the Veterans Health Administration Policy Advisory Commission (VetPAC). The commission would be charged with conducting a transparent, expert-led review of Veterans Health Administration (VHA) operations. Its goal is to improve the efficiency and quality of health care services delivered to veterans, ensuring that VHA policies are driven by best practices, data and accountability. On Dec. 2, 2025, S. 787 was placed on the Senate Legislative Calendar under the general rules and is awaiting a possible Senate vote.

### Rural Transportation to Care for Veterans Act—H.R. 1733/S. 784

Introduced in February in the House by Reps. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D-WA) and Juan Ciscomani (R-AZ), and in the Senate by Sens. Jon Ossoff (D-GA) and Susan Collins (R-ME), this legislation would expand eligibility for the VA's Highly Rural Transportation Grant (HRTG) Program. The program provides grant funding to veteran service organizations and state veterans service agencies to offer transportation at no cost for rural veterans traveling to VA health facilities. This expansion would increase access to vital health care services for veterans in underserved rural communities.

**Stay tuned to the "Government Affairs" section of [nalc.org](https://nalc.org) for any future updates on NALC veteran issues.**

**I**nspired by his father and uncle since childhood, Los Angeles, CA Branch 24 member **Steven Abasta** followed in their footsteps and entered the military in 1976, shortly after graduating high school. Although they both had served in the Navy, Abasta followed his own path by enlisting with the Marines. The Marines' slogan, "first to fight," resonated with him, as he valued the Marine Corps's reputation for being strict and disciplined.

Abasta spent three years in the Marines, working in administrative roles. He began as a private and worked his way up to corporal in an E-4 position. He spent all three years in California, saying that, to his surprise, he actually got to travel more with NALC than with the Marines.

Despite the strictness associated with the Marine Corps, his enlistment came with some fun, too. He was a member of the military all-star softball team, which gave him the opportunity to fly in helicopters to his games.

He also said that he developed "some lifelong friendships ... those are the people that would have your back."

"I liked serving my country," Abasta said. "I felt like I was doing my part, you know, for the country that's given me everything I have."

Despite the positive experience, he didn't like the treatment his fellow Marines were subjected to, which he said he believes "would never fly today in today's Marine Corps."

"If you weren't liked for whatever reason, or you weren't doing the job exactly the way they wanted to, you had to deal with a lot of stress," he recalled. He added, "I also saw a drill instructor tip over a desk on top of a recruit because he wasn't doing his exercises properly."

When his enlistment period ended, Abasta thought about reenlisting and becoming a helicopter mechanic, but it required a six-year commitment.

"I didn't want to get stuck in a situation," he said. "What if I didn't like it and I had to be there for six years?"

After leaving the Marines in 1979, Abasta spent four years working at a series of other jobs before finally applying to the Postal Service in 1983. A former paper route customer, who had become his mailman, urged Abasta to apply. It was several years before he got heavily involved in union work, becoming a shop steward in 1990 and a member of the service relations committee from 2001 to 2013. Although he officially retired in 2013, he continued serving the union as executive vice president of Branch 24 until 2017. He then became an arbitration advocate, a position he has held ever since.

He noticed similarities between the military and the Postal Service, such as heavy use of acronyms and manuals, and the similarities in what Marines and letter carriers had to endure from upper management.

"There's ... harassment that goes on in the military, and there's also harassment that goes on in the Postal Service," Abasta said. "Only in the military, you don't have a shop steward. You have to deal with it on your own. That's one of the main reasons I became [involved in the union]—to protect the letter carriers from that type of harassment."

### Join the NALC Veterans Group

If you are interested in joining the group, complete the sign-up card at [nalc.org/veterans](https://nalc.org/veterans).



# An update to cases pending at the Interpretive step



**Paul  
Barner**

In articles in the May and September/October 2024 issues of *The Postal Record*, I provided an update on the multiple disputes pending at that time at the Interpretive level of the grievance procedure. A recap of those cases and any issue resolved since then are listed below with a brief synopsis of the core issue advanced as the interpretive dispute:

- **Q11N-4Q-J-16655901:** This case arose when collection boxes were converted from city delivery to rural delivery. The Postal Service framed the interpretive issue as whether a jurisdictional dispute initiated by NALC that concerns work assigned or being assigned to rural letter carriers may be

appealed to arbitration pursuant to Article 15.4 of the USPS/NALC collective-bargaining agreement.

- **Q06N-4Q-C-09038600:** This interpretive dispute arose from issues related to implementation of, and compliance with, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Re: Article 32 Committee and the MOU Re: Subcontracting. These MOUs were implemented on Sept. 11, 2007, and placed additional prohibitions on contracting out city letter carrier work.
- **6X19-N-6X-C-23276415:** This case concerned the failure of the Postal Service to adequately protect access to employees' electronic payroll information. As a result, many employees enrolled in direct deposit via Postal-EASE fell victim to a criminal attack on LiteBlue, which resulted in the wages of city letter carriers, as well as other postal employees, being diverted and stolen. Prior to the attack, the Postal Service had failed to employ basic security protocols to prevent unauthorized access of employee accounts. In particular, the Postal Service had failed to implement multifactor authentication (MFA), among other available security measures for employees wishing to log into the LiteBlue website. MFA is required by the *Handbook AS-805, Information Security*, which was updated in June 2021. This case was heard by Arbitrator Dennis Nolan Jan. 23-24, 2024, and the date of the award was Sept. 25, 2024.

Arbitrator Nolan denied NALC's grievance. In his award, he posed a few questions:

What do the parties mean by the employer's obliga-

tion to "pay" employees? Is it enough to make a direct deposit in the bank account on record, or must the Postal Service take further steps to make sure the employees actually receive the direct deposit money? To put it differently, may the Postal Service simply act on the banking information it has or must it act as a guarantor for employees victimized by cyber criminals?

Arbitrator Nolan opined:

The term "pay" is ambiguous. It could fairly be applied either way. To prevail, however, the Union has to prove that its interpretation is superior to that of the Postal Service — that the Postal Service actually violated some provision of the Agreement. The Union failed to do so. The grievance must therefore be denied.

He ended his award with:

The Union failed to prove that the Postal Service violated any specific provision of the National Agreement by failing to pay employees after unauthorized access to LiteBlue resulted in changes to direct deposit information.

Read the award for C-36798 at [nalc.org](https://nalc.org).

- **6X-19N-6X-C-23546250:** This issue concerned the use of the blue hampers in an S&DC. It was resolved. As an update, NALC reached agreement with the Postal Service on settlement of this issue (M-02008) This agreement may be found on the NALC website at [nalc.org/mrs](https://nalc.org/mrs) by the corresponding "M-number."
- The parties consented to a national-level agreement for grievance 6X19N-6X-C 23546250. The parties agreed that no interpretive issue was found. Additionally, the Job Safety Analysis (JSA), Carriers Using Large Capacity Hampers, July 18, 2024, should be utilized for the use of these hampers in S&DCs and other delivery units.
- **6X 19N-6X-C25009597:** The issue in this case involves the Heat Illness Prevention Program (HIPP) and whether the Postal Service is required to provide heat illness training and maintain accurate training records. Initially, the USPS informed NALC that a dispute regarding the application of the HIPP was under review as a possible interpretive issue. Later, the USPS notified NALC that its review resulted in a determination that no interpretive issue was presented in the case. Recently, the USPS notified NALC that, based on a further review of issues raised in grievances related to the HIPP, a determination of an interpretive issue has been made.
- **6X 23N-6X-C 25506968:** The issue in this case involves the position recently taken by management representatives on Step B teams regarding the arbi-

(continued on page 45)

## NALC needs you



**James D. Henry**

**I**n recent years, USPS has been facing challenges that are sometimes difficult for it to manage. The landscape, due to technology and competition, has caused management to sometimes behave in a manner not consistent with our collective-bargaining agreement, thereby adversely affecting the work-room floor by requiring letter carriers to have to work inordinate amounts of overtime. It's NALC's mission to make sure management does not violate the requirement to not exceed the maximum work-hour limit and to maintain a

safe, hazard-free and harmonious work environment. Therefore, the need for NALC to formally address the contract violations and carriers' concerns through the grievance arbitration process has risen exponentially, resulting sometimes in an overwhelming volume of grievances for the local steward.

To face the ever-increasing—and seemingly willful and deliberate—contractual violations, the need for more shop stewards is at an all-time high. I sometimes like to refer to shop stewards as “warriors,” since they are on the front line every day fighting the good fight, representing letter carriers in every way necessary to redress wrongs and ensure that letter carriers' contractual rights are upheld. If you are already a steward, stay encouraged and maintain the line. However, I'm requesting all those who have ever thought about becoming a shop steward to now step up to the plate. If you have not previously considered becoming a shop steward, there is no time like the present.

It is easy for all of us to become comfortable and expect someone else to do the fighting. However, the right thing to do is to get in the ring, stand by, and, with your brothers and sisters, effect change and help uphold the integrity of our National Agreement. Doing the right thing generally means making decisions that are not based on your own personal needs and that don't expand your popularity or enforce your personal beliefs; it means doing what is best for the greater or common good.

**I realize that to become a shop steward would require a commitment. Commitment is a pledge to give your time**

and energy to something or someone you believe in. Practicing commitment is not always easy and requires incredible mental resilience to maintain, particularly in the face of adversity, but we all have the opportunity to live this core value every day. There are few causes more worthy than committing to becoming a shop steward to represent our fellow letter carriers and the values of the NALC.

Shop stewards provide a confidential way for members to bring forward their ideas and concerns. But most importantly, it is a steward's job to inspire, lead and build a sense of unity and solidarity among the wide range of workers in our union. These are some of the qualities of a good union steward:

- Professionalism
- Integrity
- Credibility
- Fairness
- Non-discrimination
- Leadership
- Trustworthiness
- Knowledge



The job of a shop steward is an essential part of the NALC. Shop stewards are important for the well-being of the letter carrier craft. They play the role of an intermediary between the employees and management to ensure the best working conditions and that all parties adhere to

the collective agreements. The duties of a shop steward include organizing workers, representing workers to management, negotiating workers' issues with management, ensuring implementation of agreements, building support for the union, and educating members about its principles.

**The time is now. The NALC wants you. The letter carriers need you.** You might say to yourself: I can't do the job because I don't know what or how to do the job of a shop steward. Have no fear. Anyone who decides to become a shop steward will be provided with the necessary training either through your local union or the national business agent's office. We're all in this together and the more “warriors” we have, the more formidable we become and the more expeditiously issues of the letter carrier craft are addressed.

Who out there will heed the call to stewardship? Who will commit to the greater and common good? Who will do the right thing just because it's right to do? Who will join me along with thousands of other NALC representatives and be willing to stand shoulder to shoulder, back to back, to collectively fight for one another? I hope it's you!



# Reporting to the DOL: Forms LM-2, LM-3 and LM-4



**Nicole  
Rhine**

**U**nless your branch has no annual income or financial activity, you must file with the Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS) one of three types of financial reports, depending upon the total annual receipts of the branch. The Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) requires unions to file the report within 90 days after the branch's (or state association's) fiscal year. Most branches' fiscal years end Dec. 31, so most should be filing by March 30 each year. Branch presidents and treasurers are responsible for ensuring that the

required reports are filed timely and accurately. The LMRDA does not provide for or permit an extension of time for filing for any reason.

The filing requirements are:

- **Form LM-2**—Lengthy report filed electronically by branches with \$250,000 or more in annual receipts.
- **Form LM-3**—Four-page report filed electronically by branches with total annual receipts of at least \$10,000 but less than \$250,000.
- **Form LM-4**—Two-page report filed electronically by branches with annual financial receipts of less than \$10,000.

**The officers who are required to file annual financial reports** are responsible for maintaining records that will provide, in sufficient detail, the information and data necessary to verify the accuracy and completeness of the report. The records must be kept for at least five years after the date the report is filed. Any record necessary to verify, explain or clarify the report must be retained, including but not limited to, vouchers, worksheets, receipts and applicable resolutions.

Willfully failing to file a report or to keep required records can lead to criminal penalties—specifically a fine of not more than \$100,000, imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. Knowingly making a false statement or representation of a material fact or knowingly failing to disclose a material fact in a report or other required document; and/or willfully making a false entry in, or withholding, concealing or destroying

documents required to be kept may result in the same penalties listed above.

As a reminder, since 2005, OLMS has required labor organizations to submit Form LM-2 electronically. OLMS also now requires all filers to file electronically. This rule was applicable to fiscal years beginning on or after Jan. 1, 2017.

**Additionally, more information is available on the DOL website concerning electronic filing as well as information on registering with the Electronic Forms System (EFS).** Anyone who needs to prepare or sign an LM form in EFS will need a specific personal identification number (PIN) for their union. The DOL advises that each union (i.e., each branch or state association) should select one representative to register with EFS online and obtain a PIN for that union (branch or state association).

More information on filing the appropriate LM form for your branch or state association can be found at [dol.gov/olms](http://dol.gov/olms).

**In addition to information on filing the LM report,** the same link can be used to search for other important information including, but not limited to:

- **Conducting Audits in Small Unions—A Guide for Trustees**—This provides branches with a limited, focused review of financial records that was developed for use by trustees from small unions. The guide can be found from the above link by clicking on under “Compliance Assistance” and then clicking “Union Resources” and then “Union Financial Integrity.”
- **Bonding requirements under the LMRDA**—All branches and state associations that have liquid assets and annual receipts of \$5,000 or more in value must be bonded.
- **Bonding computation worksheet**—Many NALC branches and some state associations either do not have a bond and should or are under-bonded. This worksheet will assist the branch treasurer in ensuring that any branch officer who handles funds or who has access to funds is bonded for at least the minimum amount required by the Department of Labor. (Both the bonding requirements and the computation worksheet can be found by following the same links listed above for the guide, but under “Union Financial Integrity” and then “Publications.”)

# Postal protection



**Mack I.  
Julion**

**T**his year promises to be a pivotal year for the Postal Service as well as for letter carriers. With all of the attacks on the federal workforce and the potential changes to the Postal Service via a new postmaster general, we must be prepared and united to do all we can to not only protect the service, but also our members. We are in the process of opening collective bargaining, in a year of our national convention, with congressional elections that could definitively decide the trajectory of our teetering democracy.

That is a tall order, but I believe we must highly prioritize the safety of our members while delivering the mail.

We currently have bipartisan legislation pending in Congress, the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (H.R. 1065/S. 493), which would address most of the issues that have contributed to the rise in attacks on our members. But there is another piece that could also go a long way toward our protection, and that is an increase in the presence and protection by the United States Postal Police officers (PPO).

**When I began as a letter carrier, the Postal Police were a normal part of our day.** It was not uncommon to see them while we were out on the streets delivering mail. Yet, somewhere along the way, their presence was diminished. Then we were told their purpose was to secure postal buildings and parking lots at night, and their numbers were dramatically cut. I guess they figured that the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) would be enough. Or they were supposed to be enough to act as a deterrent against criminal activity and protect us as they made their rounds like plain clothes detectives. Unfortunately, as we all know, that hasn't worked.

As the president of Chicago Branch 11, I noticed the steady increase in crimes against letter carriers since 2010. After Covid, the numbers were significantly inflated, and it had become just outright dangerous to carry mail in some locations. Of course, I began reaching out to anyone and everyone to keep our members safe. This included the Postal Police union and Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL).

I mention them because they have been working in tandem to protect our members as well as to restore the mission and the number of Postal Police on the streets. I frequently communicate with Frank Albergo, the president

of the Postal Police union, to share and receive information about the safety of city letter carriers. Recently he provided me with data that shows the impact of the presence of Postal Police as a deterrent against crimes against letter carriers. This data, compiled by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) of the Postal Service, showed that these crimes are not always random, but rather occur in clusters.

The Postal Police are seeking to increase their numbers and return to the streets to actively protect our members. Sen. Durbin, for his part, had introduced legislation in the last Congress, which would restore the duties of the Postal Police and provide funding to do so. He is expected to soon reintroduce his bill in this Congress. There is currently a House version of the bill, the Postal Police Reform Act of 2025 (H.R. 2095) introduced by Rep. Andrew Garbarino (R-NY). Meanwhile, the USPS has repeatedly made the argument that the Postal Police are only being self-serving in trying to increase its membership. (The OIG has oversight over the PPO.) To which I say, who gives a damn if their objective is self-serving if their presence would make our members safe?

Last year in Chicago we lost Sister Octavia Redmond to violence, and Brother Jay Larson in Rockford. Before them, among others, it was Brother Aundre Cross in Milwaukee while in the performance of his duties. At this point we need to advocate for anything and everything that will keep our members safe. If it means standing shoulder to shoulder with the Postal Police, then let it be a win-win situation for both of us!



## Shout-outs

I am so proud of the two young ladies pictured, not solely because they began as letter carriers in Branch 11, but because they have stepped

up and answered the call to represent our members in the branches and regions where they work now. Regina Antwine was recently elected president of Branch 643 in Texas (pictured with her national business agent [NBA], Shawn Boyd). And Aisha Culler (pictured with her NBA, Eddie Davidson, and me) is an arbitration advocate in Region 9 for Branch 233 in South Carolina. Knowing them in Chicago, I thought they would be the most *unlikely* to get this involved in the union, but obviously I was wrong. I am sure there are many more future leaders out there, if they are just asked and given an opportunity!



# USPS pilot testing and additional revenue streams



**Christopher  
Jackson**

**T**o all letter carriers and your families, I want to wish you all a belated merry Christmas and a happy new year. I sincerely hope you all are in good spirits and health.

In this month's column, I will share information on a GoPro camera pilot initiated by the Postal Service, and report on revenue streams that letter carriers throughout the country help deliver from major retailers that generate revenue for the Postal Service.

## **GoPro cameras**

In a letter dated Nov. 4, NALC was notified that the Postal Service would be using GoPro cameras to showcase holiday readiness and the start of the peak season. USPS states that carriers from the pilot locations will wear GoPro cameras to capture "day in the life" footage, including facility arrival and casing, vehicle loading, and package and mail delivery. The letter lists several locations that will participate in this pilot.

The use of GoPro cameras while carriers are in performance of their duties is inconsistent with postal handbooks and manuals, specifically the *Administrative Support Manual* and the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual*. I have requested a meeting and informed USPS that NALC is not in agreement with the use of GoPro cameras on city letter carriers.

If this is occurring to you, request to speak with your local steward or branch officer and request that a grievance be filed on your behalf. I will continue to monitor this pilot and provide updates to the membership.

## **Sunday and holiday delivery**

In 2013, the Postal Service started testing Sunday/holiday delivery service of Parcel Select packages from individual mailers in just a few sites. However, since then, Sunday/holiday delivery service has expanded to virtually all corners of the country and now most of the volume includes parcels from the e-commerce giant Amazon. This has been a significant source of revenue for USPS.

Throughout the year, the Postal Service routinely

sends a report on their weekly parcel delivery numbers, which includes Sunday and holidays. The Postal Service reported an average of 2.6 million parcels delivered each Sunday/holiday and an average of 26.4 million parcels delivered throughout each week this year. These parcels were delivered with an on-time delivery rate of above 99 percent.

## **USPS partnerships**

In 2018, the Postal Service entered into partnership with a major retailer to test same-day parcel delivery. This test initially started with just four sites. However, in 2020 this major retailer expanded to add their first sort center in Florida for Destination Delivery Units (DDUs) with same day delivery drops that operate seven days a week. This addition by the retailer brought in several DDUs in Florida. It was reported by the Postal Service that a total of 9.5 million parcels, with an average of 198,000 per week, have been delivered this year from this major retailer. These parcels were delivered with an on-time delivery rate of above 99 percent.

In addition to this partnership, the Postal Service also began a retail pharmacy next-day delivery program with a major nationwide retail drugstore that same year. This program started with service to 9,800 stores, however, this number has since been reduced to 9,300. It was reported that a total of 27,000 parcels, with an average of 595 per week, have been delivered this year from the retail drugstore. These parcels were delivered with an on-time delivery rate of above 96 percent.

**Overall, a total of 147 million parcels were delivered on Sunday/holidays, and 1.2 billion parcels were delivered in 2025.** I want to thank each and every letter carrier who played a role in delivering these parcels throughout 2025 and every year prior too. Without your tireless work that consists of delivering mail seven days a week, 365 days a year, this would not be possible. Please continue to provide the excellent customer service that you all bring to the American public.

# Safety committees



**Manuel L.  
Peralta Jr.**

**D**uring the bargaining for the 2007 National Agreement, the NALC and the USPS agreed to a pilot test involving district safety committees. Last year we reached agreement to add language to Article 14 and created District Safety Committees. Once the National Agreement was finalized, I asked our national business agents to submit names for those committees so that we could provide them to management and get these committees started.

The new language from the 2023 National Agreement is found in Article 14, Section 3.C:

C. There shall be established at the District Level, a District Joint Labor-Management Safety Committee.

District Safety Committees will consist of at least two (2) members from each party; with management members selected by the District Manager or designee and Union members selected by the NALC President or designee. District Safety Committees will meet quarterly. Either party may request a special meeting of the Committee. District Safety Committees are responsible for assisting in implementing District-wide safety initiatives, facilitating communication between Area and Local Safety Committees, and assisting Local Committees as determined by the District Manager and Union. The USPS/NALC National Joint Labor-Management Safety Committee will create guidelines for District Committees. Area Safety Committees are responsible for assisting and monitoring District Committees.

On Sept. 5, 2025, Joseph R. Bruce, vice president, Human Resources, issued a letter to the USPS officers addressing recent updates to the *EL-809* and *EL-809-t, Guidelines for Joint Labor-Management Safety and Health Committees*.

Bruce emphasized the following:

The cooperative efforts between Postal Service management and union organizations to build a premier safety program is the key purpose of our Joint Labor/Management and Safety Committees at all levels of the Postal Service. Working together, the safety committees can work directly with our employees to mentor, train, and promote employee safety to reduce accidents and employee related injuries.

Bruce also tasked each area- and district-level operational manager to ensure that the meetings of these committees (area, district and local/installation) are taking place on a quarterly basis, as provided for in our labor agreements, closing with:

Through this cooperative effort we will continue to promote safety awareness and prevention to keep our employees safe.

Following my receipt of this letter from Bruce, I prepared a memo to accompany his letter and distributed both to all NALC regional offices requesting they share this information with you.

Next, I want to draw your attention to *Handbook EL-809*, which needs to be used as the guide to your installation safety committee meetings. The introduction includes the following observation:

Safety must become the member's way of life, both on and off the job. **Safety never just happens.** If a workplace is safe, it is because somebody is working to make it safe. Safety and health committee members play a major role in making their workplace safe for all employees. (Emphasis added.)

**At Chapter 5 of the *EL-809*, you will find the duties and responsibilities of the local (installation) safety committee:**

All members are expected to do the following:

- a. Attend all scheduled meetings.
- b. Create and maintain an interest in safety, health and ergonomics and, thereby, help to prevent accidents.
- c. Review local safety and health rules and help management enforce these rules.
- d. Monitor the progress of accident prevention and health activities, and, when necessary, make recommendations for improvement to the installation head. Note: Safety and health committee membership does not entitle members to have access to individual employee medical records that do not include the employee's consent to share.
- e. Analyze data and work tasks to identify accident causes and develop recommendations to increase safety awareness and emphasis to reduce accidents.
- f. Review employee safety and health suggestions.
- g. Review safety-training records to determine if all employees are receiving appropriate training.
- h. Review employee-reported hazards and safety concerns, employee/ management responses and recommended corrective actions.
- i. Review accident reports, safety inspection abatements, and employee-injury reports. This excludes individual employee medical records that do not include the employee's consent to share.
- j. Discuss all matters relating to employee safety, health and ergonomics, except for individual grievances (unless permitted by national agreement) and make recommendations for resolution or improvement to the installation head.
- k. Help make recommendations for safety-process improvements. Committee members will use safety, inspection, ergonomic and abatement resources accessible to manage-

(continued on page 45)



# Roth TSP—Another tool to manage your taxes



**Dan Toth**

**T**raditional and Roth Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) accounts both serve the same purpose. They are tax-advantaged retirement accounts. The main difference is how or when they are taxed. Contributions to a traditional TSP are made pre-tax while Roth contributions are made post-tax.

Unlike a traditional TSP, when you go to withdraw your Roth, you don't have to pay taxes on your contributions since the tax was already paid. The money that your contributions earned in a Roth TSP can also be tax free if they are qualified.

Earnings are considered qualified if five years have passed since Jan. 1 of the calendar year when you made your first Roth TSP contribution and you are at least age 59½, permanently disabled or deceased.

The TSP provides an example to demonstrate the difference between the Roth and traditional:

A contribution to your traditional TSP balance will result in more money in your net paycheck. For example, let's say your gross (pre-tax) income for the year is \$50,000 and your tax withholding rate is 20%. If you contribute \$1,000 to your Roth TSP balance, there is no effect on your taxable income. However, if you make the same \$1,000 contribution to your traditional TSP balance, then your taxable income for the year will be reduced by \$1,000, which means your tax withheld for the year will be reduced by \$200 (20% x \$1,000). That \$200 reduction results in a bigger net paycheck.

When you take distributions of Roth TSP contributions and qualified earnings on those contributions in retirement, that's tax-free income. Reverse the previous example, keeping the same hypothetical 20% tax rate: If you take a \$1,000 distribution of traditional money, you'll only receive \$800. If you take \$1,000 of Roth TSP contributions and qualified earnings, you get the full \$1,000.

A benefit of the Roth is that it isn't subject to required minimum distributions (RMDs) at or after age 73. This means you can keep your money in the TSP as long as you want without being forced to start withdrawals.

Deciding on a traditional or Roth largely depends on predicting the future, which is difficult especially when the tax code is subject to change at any time by Congress. Roth may be advantageous when you're in a very low tax bracket right now, will continue to work when

you start making withdrawals from your TSP, and/or will be in a high tax bracket in retirement. Traditional is the opposite, and may be advantageous if you are in a high tax bracket right now but you will be in a low tax bracket when you start taking withdrawals.

**Don't worry if you're not sure what's best for you.** At the end of the day, if you are contributing at least 5 percent of your base pay (and therefore receiving 5 percent matching from the Postal Service), you are on the right track whether your contributions go into a traditional or a Roth account. You could even hedge your bets and contribute to each.

Matching agency contributions are still made even if you utilize a Roth. However, all agency contributions will go into your traditional TSP regardless of how you designate your contributions.

Contributions to Roth and traditional are combined and counted toward the contribution limits that can change each year based on inflation. For 2026, the elective deferral limit is \$24,500, the catch-up contribution limit is \$8,000, and the higher catch-up contribution limit for those ages 60 to 63 is \$11,250. If you are fortunate enough to max out your contributions, remember to spread it out over the entire year to ensure you receive matching funds from the Postal Service. If you were to reach the limit in November, for example, you wouldn't receive any more agency contributions for the month of December.

**A new feature coming to the TSP in 2026 allows Roth in-plan conversions.** This means that you can convert funds in your traditional TSP into a Roth TSP. While this feature provides another tool to maximize your tax strategy, it does impose a tax liability when converting. Any money you convert becomes earned income for that year and is taxed appropriately. However, you can't use the funds you convert to pay these taxes. You'll need cash in hand to pay the taxes. Suppose you convert \$10,000 from a traditional TSP to a Roth TSP, and you are taxed a flat 20 percent. You would owe \$2,000 of taxes for the conversion. This could be a huge problem if you were not aware and aren't ready to pay a \$2,000 bill. Learn more about Roth in-plan conversions at [tsp.gov](https://tsp.gov).

The TSP strongly recommends that you consult a tax advisor if you're considering a Roth in-plan conversion.

# MBA Retirement Savings Plan 2026 update



**James W.  
“Jim” Yates**

**I**n December of each year, the Board of Trustees meets to set the interest rates for all Mutual Benefit Association (MBA) Retirement Savings Plans (RSPs) for the upcoming calendar year. For 2026, the trustees have decided to keep the interest rate at 3 percent for all new accounts and those issued on Form 860 (2015 or newer).

The rate in effect at the time of purchase will remain in effect for 12 months, then rerate to the current year's percentage. From that point on, the interest rate will change every January based on the trustees' decision in the preceding December but will never go below the guaranteed minimum interest rate of 2 percent. For the rates on older contracts, please see our website at [nalc.org/mba](http://nalc.org/mba), or call the office if you are not sure which contract you have.

For 2026, the IRS has raised the annual contribution limit for traditional and Roth IRAs. The maximum contribution amount for 2026 will be increased to \$7,500 for those under the age of 50, with an additional \$1,100 in “catch-up” contributions available to those who reach the age of 50 or above in 2025.

**The MBA offers several RSPs for all city letter carriers who are members of the NALC, and their families.** These plans are the MBA RSP, the MBA Family RSP, the City Carrier Assistant RSP.

The MBA RSPs are retirement income plans designed to supplement your pension. You make small payments to your plan while you're working so that you can receive a lifetime of monthly payments after you retire.

The MBA RSPs are offered as traditional IRAs, Roth IRAs or non-qualified annuities.

With a traditional IRA, the contributions you make each year may be deducted from your federal taxes. In addition, earnings accumulate tax-free until the time of withdrawal. Upon distribution at age 59½ or older, the earnings and principal (your contributions) are taxed as ordinary income. Owners of a traditional IRA must take required minimum distributions (RMD) beginning at age 73.

Contributions to a Roth IRA are not tax-deductible but earnings accumulate tax-free. At the time of withdrawal, earnings are free from taxes if the owner has

held the IRA for a minimum of five years and is at least 59½ years old. Owners of Roth IRAs, or their surviving spouses, do not have to take RMDs from them during their lifetimes.

Similar to a Roth IRA, contributions to a non-qualified annuity are not tax-deductible. However, your earnings on that money are taxed when you withdraw it from the account, regardless of how long you have held the account. The principle has already been taxed and is not taxed again upon withdrawal. There is no contribution limit as there is with a traditional or Roth IRA. A non-qualified annuity is also not subject to RMDs.

**Participation in an MBA RSP is easy. Once enrolled,** you can simply make small contributions, as low as \$15 a pay period (\$25 a month, with an initial \$1,000 deposit). The easiest way for active city carriers to pay through payroll deduction. You can adjust how much you want to contribute, stop and start making payments, or pay in lump sums whenever you want. MBA will handle the automatic deductions, or bill you monthly or annually.

When a participating CCA becomes a career employee, they may transfer their traditional IRA funds to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) or continue the plan with the MBA to have an additional source of retirement income. The MBA will waive the surrender charge in this instance only. Due to IRS regulations, Roth funds from a personal IRA account cannot be transferred into the TSP.

If you need emergency cash, you can stay in an MBA RSP while withdrawing money any time after one year, subject to certain minimums and limitations. During the first six years you are in a plan, you will pay a surrender charge on the amount you withdraw in addition to any IRS penalties, if applicable. You can also surrender your plan for its cash value at any time subject to the same surrender charges.

**For more information regarding any of the MBA products,** please call the MBA office at 202-638-4318, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Eastern time. You may also visit our website at [nalc.org/mba](http://nalc.org/mba).



# New benefits and wellness programs



**Stephanie Stewart**

**A**s we start the new year, it's the perfect time to focus on certain NALC Health Benefit Plan mailings, programs and/or benefits (new and current) available for our members.

Whether you have been a member for many years or this is your start with us, you should always continue learning about the many resources made available through your health plan enrollment.

For a start, let's talk about these few key areas:

- Identification card (ID) mailing
- NALC Health Benefit Plan Member Access Portal

- myCVS™ On the Go app
- New programs for 2026

**By now all members should have received a new member ID card, which is specific to your health insurance file.**

While the identification number for current members has not changed, new cards include updated deductible information and should be used going forward to ensure accuracy when receiving care.

If you have not received new ID cards or need a secondary set for dependents listed on your policy, please reach out to one of our knowledgeable customer service representatives.

If you are short on time, you can always retrieve a digital card through our NALC Health Benefit Plan Member Access Portal.

By registering for our member portal, you have access to a substantial amount of information in a single, safe, password-protected place, which includes claim information, deductible and coinsurance accumulations, direct sign-on links to vendor partnership programs, and the ability to securely message one of our dedicated digital customer service team members.

## myCVS™ On the Go app

Managing prescriptions can be frustrating when life gets hectic. If you haven't taken the advantage of the myCVS™ On the Go app, I encourage you to do so. Enjoy the convenience of refilling and transferring prescriptions quickly, accessing your prescription history, finding a store and checking on your cvs.com or ExtraCare account and more.

Visit the CVS Caremark® mobile sites at cvs.com to "open" your CVS Pharmacy anytime, anywhere, or go

to the App Store on your Apple device or Google Play on your Android operating system and download the app.

## OSHI HEALTH™—new for 2026

If you have been suffering with gastrointestinal (GI) issues, then please keep reading, as I am excited to tell you about OSHI HEALTH™. Through our partnership with Cigna Healthcare®, the Plan is offering a new, clinically proven approach to GI care with quick and convenient access that includes nights and weekends.

Access next-day virtual visits with a team of GI providers, registered dietitians, and gut-brain specialists to help you find lasting relief for symptoms and conditions, which include:

- Abdominal pain and bloating
- Acid reflux and gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Undiagnosed GI symptoms
- And hundreds of other GI issues

## Priority Health Coaching—new for 2026

Also new for this year is Priority Health Coaching, which is a new benefit exclusively for our Plan members suffering with chronic conditions. This is a personalized health coaching program to help you take control of your health with easy access to a dedicated care team who prioritize prevention, education and care coordination.

Priority Health Coaching offers the following to help you every step of the way:

- **Personalized support**—Coaches take a whole-person approach to help you manage chronic conditions and build healthy habits that fit your lifestyle.
- **Realistic goal setting**—Whether you're working on nutrition, weight management or medication routines, your coach helps you set achievable goals that make a real difference.
- **Education and empowerment**—Learn more about your health conditions and how to manage them confidently with expert guidance.
- **Daily life tools**—Get practical tips and resources to make healthy choices part of your everyday routine.
- **Better health outcomes**—With consistent support, you'll build a strong foundation for long-term wellness.
- **Easy to access**—Connect with a coach by phone, video or app—whatever works best for you. No referrals needed, and at no cost.

- **Certified experts**—Our coaches are trained in nutrition, chronic condition management and behavior change, so you get trusted, expert support.
- **Confidential and judgment-free**—Your health journey is personal. Coaching sessions are private and focused on your goals.
- **Real results**—Many members see improvements

in energy, sleep and stress levels within weeks of starting to coach.

**We want you to stay involved, and there is so much more to share about the benefits and wellness programs we offer.** If you prefer to speak with someone, connect with us at 888-636-NALC (6252) Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern time.

## Executive Vice President

## Interpretive step (continued)

*(continued from page 36)*

trability of grievances. Specifically, certain management representatives asserting that a grievance appealed to Step B ceases to be arbitrable if the Step B team fails to issue a decision within 14 days, absent an extension agreement.

- **6X 23N-6X-C 25507021:** The issue in this case involves the Postal Service refusing to comply with a national-level award. Arbitrator Newman issued the NACI Award in a national-level arbitration (6x21C-6X-C-24165358) arising under the American Postal Workers Union contract, and NALC intervened in the case. Arbitrator Newman's June 30, 2025, award held, in relevant part, that a grievance challenging the removal of an employee terminated because of an unfavorable NACI report is arbitrable so long as the employee completed probation prior to the removal. Since the award was issued, USPS has failed to comply with it. USPS recently sued to vacate Arbitrator Newman's award in federal court.

- **6X 23N-6X-C 81163554:** The issue in this case is whether delivery routes that already existed at a facility before that facility became an S&DC must be evaluated under the ARAP-S&DC route evaluation and adjustment process established in M-02006. For nearly a year following the parties' execution of M-02006 and M-02007, USPS and NALC, following the ARAP-S&DC process, jointly evaluated not only routes moved into S&DCs, but also routes that already existed at the facility before it was converted into a S&DC.

USPS's recent unilateral refusal to use the ARAP-S&DC route evaluation and adjustment process, in instances where the routes existed in a facility which is now an S&DC, and either refusing to evaluate routes at all or using Chapter 2 of the M-39 instead of the agreed-upon process, triggered the instant dispute.

**As always, NALC will provide updates on any future developments regarding these cases, as well as any additional interpretive disputes that may arise.**

## Director of Safety and Health

## Safety committees (continued)

*(continued from page 41)*

ment representatives, including checklists, assessments, and analysis tools.

All of these tasks are important. They all serve to help make your workplace safer. If we truly study what caused an accident (look up root cause analysis in the Occupation-

al Safety and Health Administration [OSHA] library), then, and only then, will we learn how to prevent accidents.

Your branch president is the person authorized to appoint a letter carrier to the safety and health committee at your installation. If there is not a functioning committee, reach out to your branch president to get involved.



# Route inspections

**D**uring the upcoming months, the Postal Service will again be conducting route count and inspections in offices around the country. The results of these inspections may lead to route adjustments. The rules governing inspections and adjustments are found in Chapter 2 of *Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services* and Chapter 9 of *Handbook M-41, City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities*. The provisions contained in these USPS handbooks are enforceable through the grievance procedure via Article 19 of the National Agreement. A number of national settlements and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) are also applicable and enforceable.

This article will explain some of the basic principles of route inspections and the Postal Service's responsibilities before, during and after the week of count.

## Basic principles

The goal of any route inspection and adjustment is to ensure all regular routes are as close to eight hours as possible. This requirement is found in Section 242.122 of *Handbook M-39*, which states:

242.122 The proper adjustment of carrier routes means an equitable and feasible division of the work among all of the carrier routes assigned to the office. All regular routes should consist of as nearly 8 hours daily work as possible.

In addition to the language in *Handbook M-39*, Section 911.2 of *Handbook M-41* states the following:

911.2 The count of mail is used to gather and evaluate data to adjust routes fairly and equitably to insure that the workload for each route will be as near as possible to an 8-hour workday for the carrier.

## Before the inspection

Prior to determining whether routes need to be inspected, management is required to conduct a unit and route review. The results of these reviews must be shared with the local union and the regular carriers serving the route as stated in Section 211.1 of *Handbook M-39*. If the Postal Service determines the need to conduct a route count and inspection following these reviews, they are required to issue two separate notices.

Under Section 211.2 of *Handbook M-39*, management must determine the week of inspection and notify the local union. Management is required to post a schedule listing the day each route will be inspected. The day of inspection is the day a manager will count the route's

mail and accompany the carrier on the street. This notice must be posted at least five working days prior to the beginning of the inspection in accordance with Section 215.1 of *Handbook M-39*. Letter carriers may be required to start early on certain days in order to count mail. Section 215.2 of *Handbook M-39* requires management to post the schedule of starting times.

Prior to beginning the mail count, management has an obligation to train letter carriers on the proper procedure for counting mail and completing the PS Form 1838-C, Carrier's Count Mail-Letter Carrier Routes Worksheet as each letter carrier will fill out the form during the week of inspection. This "dry run" training must be conducted within 21 days of the beginning of the count week. Section 217 of *Handbook M-39* outlines the procedures for this training.

## During the mail count

Section 221.11 of *Handbook M-39* covers the schedule of days to be used for the count. Please note that Saturday is excluded from consideration for routes with abbreviated or no delivery on Saturday.

Each letter carrier will complete the PS Form 1838-C each day except for the day of inspection, and this requirement applies to both the regular and replacement carrier as stated in Section 221.132 of *Handbook M-39*. The only exception to this provision is on the day the route is inspected and management completes the form; however, the carrier has the right to verify management's count. This provision is found in Section 221.131 of *Handbook M-39*. The national parties' mutual understanding of this section is explained in the Step 4 settlement for Case No. H4N-5T-C42333 (M-00814).

Generally, each route will be inspected on one day during the process; however, management may conduct up to three days of inspection. If a route is inspected on more than one day, the manager will complete the PS Form 1838-C on only one of these days, as outlined in the MOU Re: Multiple Days of Inspection (M-01777).

## Line items on PS Form 1838-C

The most important part of completing the PS Form 1838-C is understanding the line items and how they are properly recorded. Section 222.2 of *Handbook M-39* contains descriptions of each line item, which should be explained during the dry-run training conducted prior to the inspection.

Line Items 1 through 13 record the mail volume based on the count. The times associated with casing and pulling mail are not recorded on the form. Line Items 14 through 23 record the time spent performing other office duties. Items with multiple entries should be differentiated by a letter designation, such as 21a, 21b, etc.

For most letter carriers, Line Items 21-23 are the most difficult to understand and record properly. Section 922.51 of *Handbook M-41* and Section 221.214 of *Handbook M-39* contain the language pertaining to lines 21-23 of the PS Form 1838-C.

Line 21 entries are described as “recurring” office functions, or the duties letter carriers complete every day. For example, obtaining and setting up the mobile delivery device, safety and service talks, retrieving small parcels and rolls (SPRs), and discussing daily expectations with the supervisor are all entries which are recorded on Line 21. When you spend time performing a Line 21 function, use the comments section on the form to describe the function.

Line 22 entries are “non-recurring” office functions which do not occur every day. Some of these entries may be things like conversations with the route inspector or a fire drill. Line 22 entries are also documented in the comments section of the PS Form 1838-C, the same as Line 21.

Line 23 entries are exclusive to time spent counting mail and completing the form or verifying the count completed by management on the day of inspection. It is important that letter carriers accurately record the time associated with each line item when completing the PS Form 1838-C. These times will be used to determine the office time during the route evaluation.

## Inspection day and conduct of route examiner

Route evaluation and inspections can be stressful for city letter carriers. Letter carriers are used to working independently and may be uncomfortable having a route examiner watching them all day long. Route examiners are there to observe letter carriers during the performance of their daily duties and record information. Sections 231 and 232 of *Handbook M-39* speak to the conduct of the route examiner.

Section 231.5 states:

231.5 The route examiner must inform the carrier that he/she intends to make a fair and reasonable evaluation of the workload on the route and that in order to do so the carrier must perform duties and travel the route in precisely the same manner as he/she does throughout the year.

The examiner should impress the carrier with the fact that management is just as anxious and desirous of obtaining an accurate count of mail and inspection of the route as the carrier is, so that a fair and equitable evaluation of the workload on the route may be made.

According to Section 232.1, the route examiner must:

- a. Not set the pace for the carrier, but should maintain a position to observe all delivery points and conditions.
- b. Not suggest or forbid any rest or comfort stops but should make proper notations of them.
- c. Not discuss with the carrier on the day of inspection the mail volume or the evaluation of the route. These matters must be discussed with the carrier at a later date when all data has been reviewed and analyzed.
- d. Make notations on the day of inspection on the appropriate form or separate sheet of paper of all items that need attention, as well as comments on the day of inspection. Also list any comments or suggestions for improving the service on the route, as well as suggestions or comments made by the carrier during the course of the inspection for improvement in delivery and collection service.
- e. Make comments and suggestions clearly, and in sufficient detail for discussion with the carrier and for decision-making purposes. The manager who will actually discuss the results with the carrier must have enough facts and figures to reach a final decision on any necessary adjustments to the route.

In the national-level pre-arbitration for Case No. H1N-1N-D 31781 (M-00304), the parties agreed that there is no set pace at which a carrier must walk and no street standard for walking. Letter carriers should perform their street duties exactly as they do every other day, such as taking comfort/rest stops as needed. Management should not deduct reasonable comforts/rest stops from the total street time during route inspections if deduction of the time is contrary to past local practice as explained in Step 4 settlement for Case No. NCE 2097 (M-00242). If excessive time for comfort/rest stops is deducted, the matter should be discussed with the carrier.

## After the week of count route evaluation

As stated earlier, the goal of any route count and inspection is to adjust the routes to as close to eight hours as possible. With this in mind, management must evaluate the office and street times for each route and determine whether the route is either overburdened and requires relief or less than eight hours and requires an

*(continued on next page)*



## Route inspections (continued)

(continued from previous page)

addition. After the completion of the count and inspection, prior to any adjustments being made, management should consult with the regular carrier on the route and explain the evaluated office and street times.

The PS Form 1840, Carrier Delivery Route—Summary of Count and Inspection provides a synopsis of the data management will use to evaluate the route and make any needed adjustments. This is a two-page form consisting of PS Form 1840 and PS Form 1840 (reverse). The first page includes the data from the count and inspection used for evaluating the route while the second page is used to show the office and street times selected for the evaluation, as well as any adjustments made to the route.

The information on PS Form 1840 is derived from several sources, including other forms used during the count and inspection process.

The PS Form 1838, Carrier's Count of Mail—Letter Carrier Routes (Mngt. Summary) contains the information recorded on the PS Form 1838-C by the carrier servicing the route or the inspector who completed the form on the inspection day(s). Copies of PS Forms 1838 and 1840 must be provided to the carrier prior to the evaluation consultation. This requirement is found in Section 923.1 of *Handbook M-41*.

The PS Form 1840 also shows the total street time used by both regular and replacement carriers each day of the inspection as well as the average street time for the week. Only the time used by the regular carrier should be used to determine the average as explained in Section 241.33 of *Handbook M-39*. Exceptions to this provision are in the case of a full-time route without a regular carrier or an auxiliary route. In these cases, the carrier who serviced the route during the week of inspection would be used to determine the average street time.

Once the data has been transferred to the PS Form 1840, management must evaluate the data and determine the office and street times for each route. Union representatives should ensure that the data is accurately transferred to this form as any discrepancies could have a negative impact on the route evaluation and any subsequent adjustments.

### Evaluated office time

When determining office time, management must select either the average office time used by the carrier during the week of inspection or the standard office

time allowance. This requirement is found in Section 242.311 of *Handbook M-39*.

Standard office time is determined by dividing the number of cased letters by 18, the number of cased flats by eight, and the total number of cased letters and flats by 70. These three figures are then converted to minutes and added to the standard office allowances for the line items on the PS Form 1838-C (excluding time spent performing line 22 and 23 functions) to establish a time. A detailed explanation of line items and standard time allowances is found in Exhibit 222.214a(4) of *Handbook M-39*.

Management does not have the right to reduce the office time below the standard time based on allegations of time-wasting practices during the mail count. National Arbitrator Benjamin Aaron addressed this issue in Case No. NC-C-11675, where he found “even though the Postal Service can demonstrate that the grievant was regulating his performance, it cannot reduce the office time below the average standard allowable time.”

### Evaluated street time

When determining the street time, management must select either the average street time during the week of inspection or the eight-week average street time from the PS Form 1840-B, Carrier Time Card Analysis. This requirement is found in Section 242.321 of *Handbook M-39*. In addition, Section 242.322 states: “The manager’s selection of the street time allowance cannot be based on the sole criterion that the particular time selected was the lower.”

The data from the seven-week random analysis is determined based on the language in Section 242.323 of *Handbook M-39*, which states in part:

Within 4 weeks prior to the week of count and inspection, the local union representative will make a random drawing of numbered lots from 1–4 to be used in determining the 7 random weeks to be selected for all routes at the delivery unit.

A complete explanation of the random draw process is provided in Section 242.323 of *Handbook M-39*. Once the weeks have been selected, the data is transferred to PS Form 1840-B. A sample of this form, which contains four pages including the instructions, is found in Exhibit 213d of *Handbook M-39*.

This Contract Talk has discussed the major compo-

(continued on page 51)

# Preexisting conditions



Regional Workers' Compensation Assistant Coby Jones

**M**ost of us bring preexisting or underlying medical conditions to our jobs that are not related to our work as letter carriers. While these conditions may be the result of prior injuries, they can also be genetic or age-related. When our postal work aggravates or contributes to the worsening of a preexisting condition, this aggravation or worsening is compensable by the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act

(FECA) regardless of the degree of such aggravation. This principle is based on long-standing Employees' Compensation Appeals Board (ECAB) precedent.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the term "contributed to" has been interpreted by ECAB to mean the slightest work factor and does not require the work factor to be a significant factor leading to the disabling condition.<sup>2</sup> If the medical evidence reveals that an employment factor contributes in any way to the employee's condition, the condition is considered employment-related for purposes of compensation under the FECA. This is known as the non-apportionment rule.

In contrast to the FECA, many state injury compensation programs require the attending physician to determine the percentage of the injury attributable to preexisting conditions as compared with the conditions that result from exposure to the work environment. The attending physician does not have to do this for OWCP.

**Our work as letter carriers may cause or contribute to the worsening of our preexisting conditions in a variety of ways.** A single traumatic event, such as a fall, may exacerbate a preexisting condition. Or our repetitive duties over time may contribute to the worsening of a preexisting condition. When employment factors cause worsening of an underlying physical condition, the employee is entitled to compensation for the periods of disability related to the worsening.

The worsening may be either temporary or permanent. OWCP, for example, distinguishes between temporary and permanent aggravation. In addition to direct causation and aggravation, OWCP applies two other categories of causation to the worsening of preexisting conditions. A "precipitation" occurs when exposure to the workplace causes a temporary flare-up of an underlying condition, such as dust in the workplace triggering an asthma attack. An "acceleration" occurs when factors in the workplace cause a permanent worsening of a preexisting condition,

making it worse than it would otherwise be. For example, going up and down stairs over time can lead to permanent cartilage loss in an already arthritic knee.<sup>3</sup>

The NALC has noted in recent years that OWCP has trended toward accepting degenerative conditions associated with preexisting conditions, such as arthritis, as "temporary aggravations" only, even when the attending physicians see the degenerative changes as permanent. This is particularly true now. Because of this, if the attending physician believes that the degenerative changes are permanent, they should say so and provide a medical explanation.

And in every case where a preexisting condition involving the same part of the body is present and the issue of causal relationship therefore involves aggravation, acceleration or precipitation, the attending physician must provide a rationalized medical opinion that differentiates between the effects of the employment-related injury or disease and the preexisting condition (*FECA Procedure Manual* 2-o805).

Preexisting injuries also can factor into schedule awards. Under OWCP procedures, schedule awards must include both permanent impairment resulting from conditions accepted by the OWCP as job-related and also any non-industrial permanent impairment present in the same scheduled member at the time of the rating examination. *FECA Procedure Manual* 2-o808.5d: gives this example:

[I]f an aggravation of left hip osteoarthritis is accepted as work-related but the claimant also suffers from non-industrial left knee osteoarthritis, both of which have resulted in permanent impairment, an assessment of impairment should reflect the total loss of the left leg, to include both the industrial and non-industrial injuries.

**The issue of preexisting conditions and non-apportionment** came up during the May 6 hearing held by the House Education and the Workforce Subcommittee/Workforce Protections, "FECA Reform and Oversight, Prioritizing Workers, Saving Taxpayer Dollars." Members of the majority party and the USPS Office of Inspector General proposed that OWCP abandon the non-apportionment rule and require physicians to determine the percentage of the injury attributable to preexisting conditions as compared with the conditions that result from exposure to the work environment. Compensation benefits would be reduced accordingly.

A future column will discuss how this proposal would be medically difficult to implement from a practical point of view and how it would financially devastate the lives of injured workers while negatively affecting OWCP policy and procedure.

<sup>1</sup> See for example Arnold Gustafson 41 ECAB 0438 (1989).

<sup>2</sup> Rudy C. Sixta, Jr. 44 ECAB 727-731 n 3. (1993).

<sup>3</sup> Note that "precipitation" and "acceleration" as used by OWCP are not medical terms normally used by physicians. They come from early ECAB decisions from the 1940s.



# ‘Women of the World Unite’



Special Assistant  
to the President  
Michelle McQuality

**T**he theme of the Coalition of Labor Union Women’s (CLUW) 23rd biennial convention, “Women of the World Unite,” acknowledged that the challenges women face in the labor movement are not unique to the United States. The convention was held Sunday, Nov. 9 through Tuesday, Nov. 11, and I was honored to attend the convention and represent NALC as the national vice president on the CLUW National Officers Council. During the

three days of general session, guest speakers and delegates highlighted the struggles of working women not only in the United States, but across the globe.

On Saturday, prior to the official start of the convention, CLUW offered the delegates a day of educational workshops covering a variety of topics including Organizing 101, Chapter Elections and Financial Responsibility, and Roberts Rules of Order. My favorite workshop was titled “Women Workers’ Rights,” which offered a comprehensive overview of essential federal employment laws that protect women’s rights in the workplace. Participants learned about key legislation including those enacted in recent years, the Equal Pay Act, the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, and the Providing Urgent Maternal Protections (PUMP) for Nursing Mothers Act.

Sunday, the first day of the convention, opened with a welcome video from AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, who expressed her regrets at not being able to attend in person. Then CLUW President Elise Bryant welcomed the delegates and began the day with a celebration of several recent political victories for women. The delegates cheered for Democrats Abigail Spanberger and Mikie Sherrill, who won gubernatorial races in Virginia and New Jersey, respectively. These ladies campaigned hard on economic issues and led a sweep for their party in both states. Also celebrated were several of our own CLUW delegates who had recently been elected to positions in their local governments as council members, commissioners and school board members.

The convention delegation welcomed Communication Workers of America President Claude Cummings Jr. President Cummings, a longtime champion of women in the workplace, expressed his unrelenting support of women’s rights and commitment to CLUW.

Next, the delegation had the pleasure of hearing from Lorena Gonzalez-Fletcher, the president of the California Federation of Labor, an umbrella organization for unions representing more than 2 million workers in California. She is the first woman and person of color to lead the organization. Later in the afternoon, the delegates were joined by Yvonne Wheeler, the first African American woman to serve as president of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. Both of these dynamic speakers inspired the convention attendees with stories of their organization’s recent endeavors in California, including their successful efforts in passage of Proposition 50, a measure that asks the U.S. Congress to change federal law and propose an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to require redistricting be done by “fair, independent, and nonpartisan redistricting commissions nationwide.”

On Monday morning, the delegates were honored to hear from the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) national secretary-treasurer, Liz Powell. Secretary-Treasurer Powell, along with CLUW National Treasurer Judy Beard, were original members of a group of more than 3,000 union women from across the country who gathered together to form an organization to address the critical needs of millions of unorganized working women and make unions more responsive to the needs of all working women. These women convened in Chicago, IL, in March of 1974, and CLUW was born. Both of these women have attended every CLUW convention since its inception.

In the afternoon, Assemblymember Dr. LaShae Sharp-Collins, representing California’s 79th District, greeted the convention and passionately discussed her efforts to address the challenges of the unhoused population to attain affordable housing that’s actually affordable, to protect reproductive freedom and a woman’s right to make her own health care decisions, and to prioritize an equal education for all children.

Tuesday morning was dedicated in part to the ongoing struggles of federal and government workers across the country. The convention opened business with videos of support from Elissa McBride, secretary-treasurer of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and Dr. Everett Kelley, president of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE). These videos highlighted the unfair dismissal of more than 200,000 federal employees and the ongoing plight of the workers who were furloughed as part of the government shutdown. A panel discussion with several AFGE members empha-

sized that the shutdown didn't just affect the workers, but everyone who uses any federal or government agency. From the most vulnerable people relying on food and health care assistance to travelers affected by air traffic control and TSA shortages. The panel discussion reminded us that every American is affected by the loss of government employees.

**And, of course, we completed the business of the convention.** Convention delegates passed resolutions, voted on constitutional amendments, elected new national officers, and, in true CLUW fashion, debated all of it heatedly. Delegates passed 15 resolutions on topics including support and aid for the people in Gaza; ending military occupation in Washington, DC, and other cities; support for the union garment workers in Asia who have been denied a living wage; and denouncing attacks on diversity, equity and inclusion efforts and work solidarity.

Another celebratory and also somewhat poignant moment occurred when the convention body bid farewell to our retiring executive officers. Elise Bryant has passionately served as CLUW president for the last eight years. Elise has dedicated many, many years fighting for the labor movement and women's issues. She has been a great friend and mentor. Also retiring were Joanne Sanders (International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees), executive vice president; Judy

Beard (APWU), treasurer; and Jennifer Grigsby (AFGE), recording secretary. All these dedicated ladies have given countless hours to serve not only their respective unions, but also CLUW. They will be dearly missed.

With many national officers retiring, many new members were elected to the National Officers Council. I was fortunate to be reelected by the delegation and am very grateful to continue serving as a vice president representing NALC. My sincerest thanks go to the NALC membership and the CLUW delegates who put their faith and trust in me.

However, not all of the convention was a celebration. Despite growing public support for the labor movement, delegates from many different unions shared a collective concern that the overall political climate was not favorable and achieving our goals was going to be particularly challenging in the coming years. In the coming months, CLUW will continue to focus on the midterm elections and get-out-the-vote initiatives.

**The convention left us inspired to seek fresh perspectives and to advocate for women in the workplace.** We encourage all of our NALC sisters and siblings to look into CLUW chapters in your area and get involved. For more information on CLUW, its mission and how to join, visit [cluw.org](http://cluw.org).

## Contract Talk

by the Contract Administration Unit

# Route inspections (continued)

(continued from page 48)

nents of route inspections leading up to the actual process of adjusting routes after the week of count and inspection. Future articles will discuss the adjustment process, as outlined in Section 243, and Special Route Inspections conducted in accordance with Sections 271 and 272 of *Handbook M-39*.

Rank-and-file letter carriers and union representatives should familiarize themselves with Chapter 2 of *Handbook M-39* and Chapter 9 of *Handbook M-41* to gain a better understanding of the route count and inspection process. These handbooks as well as additional resources are available on the NALC website.

They include the *2018 NALC Guide to Route Inspections* and the NALC Route Protection Program available at [nalc.org/workplace-issues/city-delivery/route-adjustments](http://nalc.org/workplace-issues/city-delivery/route-adjustments). National-level settlements, Step 4 settlements and MOUs can be found in the Materials Reference System at [nalc.org/mrs](http://nalc.org/mrs). Past "Contract Talk" articles pertaining to these issues are available at [nalc.org/workplace-issues/resources/nalc-publications](http://nalc.org/workplace-issues/resources/nalc-publications). An overview of route inspections is also available in the Members Only portal at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org). Log in to Members Only>Members Menu>Shop Steward's Guide>Forms>Route Inspections 2024 Convention Presentation.



## Monthly CSRS annuity payments for letter carriers who retire on March 1, 2026

The table below provides monthly basic annuity, survivor reduction and reduced annuity amount estimates for letter carriers covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) who plan to take optional retirement on March 1, 2026. Estimates are computed by using the given high-3 aver-

ages, which are based on the basic pay earned by full-time Step P carriers and vary by length of postal/federal/military service.

Reduced annuity amounts reflect the difference between the given basic annuity and survivor reduction figures.

Years of Service <sup>2</sup>	City Carrier / High-3 Average <sup>1</sup> : 78,638			Carrier Technician / High-3 Average <sup>1</sup> : 80,289		
	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction <sup>3</sup>	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity <sup>4</sup>	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction <sup>3</sup>	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity <sup>4</sup>
20	\$2,376	\$215	\$2,160	\$2,425	\$220	\$2,205
21	2,507	228	2,278	2,559	233	2,326
22	2,638	241	2,396	2,693	247	2,446
23	2,769	254	2,514	2,827	260	2,567
24	2,900	267	2,632	2,961	274	2,687
25	3,031	281	2,750	3,094	287	2,808
26	3,162	294	2,868	3,228	300	2,928
27	3,293	307	2,986	3,362	314	3,048
28	3,424	320	3,104	3,496	327	3,169
29	3,555	333	3,222	3,630	340	3,289
30	3,686	346	3,340	3,764	354	3,410
31	3,817	359	3,458	3,897	367	3,530
32	3,948	372	3,576	4,031	381	3,651
33	4,079	385	3,694	4,165	394	3,771
34	4,210	399	3,812	4,299	407	3,891
35	4,341	412	3,930	4,433	421	4,012
36	4,473	425	4,048	4,566	434	4,132
37	4,604	438	4,166	4,700	448	4,253
38	4,735	451	4,284	4,834	461	4,373
39	4,866	464	4,402	4,968	474	4,494
40	4,997	477	4,520	5,102	488	4,614
41	5,128	490	4,638	5,236	501	4,734
41+11 months & over <sup>5</sup>	5,243	502	4,741	5,353	513	4,840

1. High-3 averages for both grades (formerly levels) are for carriers who have worked full time on a continuous basis between March 1, 2023, and Feb. 28, 2026, at Step O/P.

2. Years of service includes any unused sick leave.

3. The reduction for a survivor's annuity is the amount necessary to provide maximum benefits (55 percent of basic annuity) to a surviving spouse.

4. If covered by the NALC Health Benefit Plan, a further deduction of either \$635.51 per month if for self plus one (PSHB code 77C), \$579.41 if for self and family (PSHB code 77B), or \$262.47 if for self only (PSHB code 77A) will be made. In addition, premiums for any coverage under the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program will reduce the net annuity further.

5. Under CSRS rules, the maximum allowable yearly annuity cannot exceed 80 percent of an annuitant's high-3 average. This limit is reached when an annuitant's years of service amount to 41 years and 11 months. Individuals with more than 41 years and 11 months of service will not get a higher annuity based on additional service, but may get slightly more than 80 percent of their high-3 average on the basis of unused sick leave accumulated under CSRS.

# Monthly FERS annuity payments for letter carriers who retire on March 1, 2026

**T**he Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) covers federal and postal employees hired on or after Jan. 1, 1984. FERS employees earn retirement benefits from three sources: the FERS Basic Annuity, Social Security and the Thrift Savings Plan.

An additional Special Annuity Supplement is paid to FERS annuitants who retire at Minimum Retirement Age (MRA) plus 30 years or more, or at age 60 plus 20 years or more. It is approximately calculated by taking an individual's Social Security age 62 benefit estimate, multiplied by the number of years of FERS

coverage, divided by 40. It is payable to age 62 and then ends. Social Security benefits are payable beginning at age 62.

The table below provides monthly basic annuity, survivor deduction and net annuity amount estimates for letter carriers who plan to take optional retirement on March 1, 2026. Estimates are computed by using the given high-3 averages, which are based on the basic pay earned by full-time Step P carriers and vary by length of postal/military/federal service. Reduced annuity amounts reflect the difference between the given basic annuity and survivor reduction figures.

Years of Service <sup>2</sup>	City Carrier / High-3 Average <sup>1</sup> : 78,638			Carrier Technician / High-3 Average <sup>1</sup> : 80,289		
	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction <sup>3</sup>	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity <sup>4</sup>	Basic Annuity	Max. Survivor Deduction <sup>3</sup>	Max. Survivor Reduced Annuity <sup>4</sup>
20	\$1,311	\$131	\$1,180	\$1,338	\$134	\$1,204
21	1,376	138	1,239	1,405	141	1,265
22	1,442	144	1,298	1,472	147	1,325
23	1,507	151	1,357	1,539	154	1,385
24	1,573	157	1,415	1,606	161	1,445
25	1,638	164	1,474	1,673	167	1,505
26	1,704	170	1,533	1,740	174	1,566
27	1,769	177	1,592	1,807	181	1,626
28	1,835	183	1,651	1,873	187	1,686
29	1,900	190	1,710	1,940	194	1,746
30	1,966	197	1,769	2,007	201	1,807
31	2,031	203	1,828	2,074	207	1,867
32	2,097	210	1,887	2,141	214	1,927
33	2,163	216	1,946	2,208	221	1,987
34	2,228	223	2,005	2,275	227	2,047
35	2,294	229	2,064	2,342	234	2,108
36	2,359	236	2,123	2,409	241	2,168
37	2,425	242	2,182	2,476	248	2,228
38	2,490	249	2,241	2,542	254	2,288
39	2,556	256	2,300	2,609	261	2,348
40	2,621	262	2,359	2,676	268	2,409
Each additional year <sup>5</sup>	65.53	6.55	58.98	66.91	6.69	60.22

1. High-3 averages for both grades (formerly levels) are for carriers who have worked full time on a continuous basis between March 1, 2023, and Feb. 28, 2026, at Step O/P.

2. Years of service includes any unused sick leave.

3. The reduction for survivor's annuity is the amount necessary to provide maximum benefits (50 percent of basic annuity) to a surviving spouse.

4. If covered by the NALC Health Benefit Plan, a further deduction of either \$635.51 per month if for self plus one (PSHB code 77C), \$579.41 if for self and family (PSHB code 77B), or \$262.47 if for self only (PSHB code 77A) will be made. In addition, premiums for any coverage under the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program will reduce the net annuity further.

5. Under FERS rules, there is no maximum allowable yearly annuity. However, given the FERS formula of 1 percent per year, it is highly unlikely that any FERS employee will ever exceed the 80 percent maximum limit under CSRS.

6. FERS employees who retire at age 62 or later with at least 20 years of service receive an additional 10 percent—their annuities are calculated at 1.1 percent times years of service times high-3 average salary.





# MDA end-of-year wrap-up

**N**ALC and MDA can't say this enough: "Thank you for all your hard work!"

With 2025 over and 2026 here, many branches have either completed or at least started working on their budgeting process for 2026. A budget is simply a strategic plan for the way you will spend your money over the next year.

This article is tailored toward asking branch members to use the same type of planning that they do for their branch budget, but applying that structure to community service. Specifically, how can we be successful in raising money for our national charity, the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA)?

**So, what are the steps in a strategic plan? What factors do branch leaders need to pay attention to while planning for the coming year(s)?** A good planning process answers the following questions:

- How do we know where we are going?
- How do we evaluate our progress?
- How do we know if we succeed?

Of course, the beginning point is to have branch officers get together with the branch MDA coordinator and committee members who are responsible for MDA in your branch.

The planning process starts with reviewing the purpose of NALC involvement with community service in the first place. The next step is to determine branch goals for the next year. Has your branch set goals for MDA fundraising? Goals for strategic planning should be smart and not outrageous. You do not want to discourage your MDA coordinator, committee or branch members.

Your goals should be specific, achievable and relevant—and you must have a timetable. The strategies you develop will be based on the needs, information and goals identified by the group. Choose the strategies that will:

- Accomplish the objective.
- Be handled by your committee in a reasonable amount of time.
- Involve most of the people on your committee, plus other members and activists.
- Contribute to achieving your overall goal and purpose.

**The next step is to figure out what the branch wants to do to raise money.** Here is a list of easy ways to raise money for MDA:

- Raffles
- Car washes
- Yard sales
- Satchel drives
- Local credit union partnerships

- Bowling tournaments
- Pool and dart tournaments
- Comedy/karaoke nights
- Charity golf tournaments
- Corn hole and bean bag tournaments
- Bake sales
- Casual days
- Bingo nights
- Branch member donation drives
- Pancake breakfasts or spaghetti dinners
- Muscle walks
- Texas hold'em tournaments (follow state laws)
- 5K Tough Mudders
- Trivia tournaments

**Once you have figured that out, you'll want to develop an action plan.** An action plan is a written outline that pulls all the pieces of your planning together. It includes specific tasks, times and assignments to each person about what needs to happen and when. The committee should periodically check the progress related to the tasks. The committee should ask themselves the following questions:

- Are we on schedule?
- Are our plans still feasible?
- Did we leave anything out?
- Have things come up that we did not anticipate?
- How did we handle them?
- Does new information suggest that changes in strategy are needed?

**Finally, review your objectives and strategy with the aim of adjusting and improving if necessary.** Depending on what the evaluation shows, celebrate your branch's accomplishments, make corrections and keep moving forward toward the goal. Then, next year about this time, repeat the whole process over again. If we can keep moving our strategic plan along, we will help get MDA ever closer to finding a cure, and we will provide the help and hope that the MDA families need.

**NALC branches have been successful in raising money for MDA in past years** because of branch leadership and coordinators. MDA is grateful for everything that you do.

"Again, I want to thank all those who have worked so hard to raise money for MDA," MDA Coordinator Christina Vela Davidson said. "Remember, you never know when it might be you or someone you love who may need help."

Locally raised funds must be sent to the national MDA office in Chicago: Muscular Dystrophy Association Inc., Attn: NALC; P.O. Box 7410354; Chicago, IL 60674-0354.

## Colorado

**H**appy New Year! We made it through another peak season only with the hard work of each and every one of us across Colorado. Letter carriers have fought many battles in 2025 on the legislative front—battles that will continue this year—and we need to be ready to *take action* when called upon.

If you aren't following the NALC's "News and Updates" page on the website ([nalc.org](http://nalc.org)), you should be checking in regularly. We will also share important details and update you on our Facebook page at "Colorado Letter Carriers." You can also check out our website at [coloradolettercarriers.org](http://coloradolettercarriers.org).

Let's work together in 2026 to stay more connected and on top of important pieces of legislation that affects city letter carriers. Have you checked out the latest edition of the "Bi-partisan Buzz" podcast? It can be downloaded on all platforms wherever you get your podcasts.

Reach out to us if you need any assistance, and let's get ready to stand on the front lines to protect what was fought for us years ago.

*Richard Byrne*

## Indiana

**L**etter carrier's wages, hours and working conditions are regulated by federal legislators. Federal legislators and state legislators influence one another. State legislators recently have directly affected federal legislators' district boundaries.

On Aug. 7, 2025, VPOTUS Vance visited Gov. Braun in Indianapolis to discuss redrawing Indiana's congressional lines. On Oct. 10, VPO-TUS Vance made an additional visit to attend his party's caucus to further influence redrawing congressional lines after it failed from the first visit. The aftermath led to POTUS Trump saying that Gov. Braun would not have his job if it was not for Trump. Without rebuttal, Gov. Braun urged the Indiana General Assembly to try again. Rumor has it that the vote will be for dramatics.

By the time you have read this, we will know the result of the Indiana General Assembly's decision on redistricting in the middle of the decade. This would be a violation to the state's constitution that requires redistricting only during the first year after the federal decennial census is conducted, which was 2021. Therefore, no sooner than 2031 can Indiana's governor sign into law a redrawn General Assembly and congressional map.

No matter that Hoosiers have been urging changes in utility charges, health care costs, property taxes, and the aftermath of the federal government shutdown. Meanwhile, the Indiana General Assembly—no matter their representative party—were bullied to focus on redistricting to oust two of nine U.S. representatives of Indiana. In honor of Martin Luther King Jr., we must not forget: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." Simply said, contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund so that we

can drive out this darkness with our love for letter carriers!

*Kieaunta Roberson*

## Michigan

**H**appy New Year, Michiganders! We have made it through peak season and unwrapped all our gifts, even with sore fingers from working in the snow. Now is the time to think about our New Year's resolutions. Many of us will focus on diet, exercise and mental health.

I'd like to challenge all of you to also make a resolution regarding our legislative agenda. This past year, we faced significant attacks on letter carriers, but thanks to the power of Lite-Blue, we were able to fend off at least three of these attacks on our members.

I don't anticipate that the challenges against letter carriers and the Postal Service will cease anytime soon. Here are two quick and easy resolutions we can adopt to stand up against these attacks:

- 1) Make it a monthly habit to visit the NALC Legislative page and take action on every item listed. The NALC makes it easy to send emails to your representatives concerning bills that support us, encouraging them to sign on.

- 2) Donate to the Letter Carrier Political Fund. This fund helps ensure that we have the financial support needed to persuade lawmakers to back bills that will benefit our members. While it can be disheartening to see politics work this way, we must "pay to play." If every NALC member contributed just \$1 a week or \$2 per pay period, we could raise over \$15 million to improve the lives of letter carriers.

These actions require only a few minutes of your time and just a small contribution from your pocket, but they can make a significant difference for all of us.

*Morgan Harrington*

## Tennessee

**B**rothers and sisters—

The Pledge of Allegiance reaffirms our loyalty to this great country. Soldiers swear their loyalty to the U.S. Constitution. Stewards pledge their loyalty through the *NALC Constitution* to uphold the contract and its bylaws. *Employee and Labor Relations Manual* 665.11 states that *all* employees (management and craft) are expected to be loyal to the U.S. government and uphold the policies and regulations of the Postal Service.

As brothers and sisters working together, we have an obligation to place loyalty to all laws and ethical principles above private gain. The steward is seen as the day-to-day representative of the union. The examples they set in the eyes of their brothers and sisters can make them the bearer of both good and unwelcome news. They cannot see everything, and rely on you as fellow brothers and sisters to ensure an abuse-free environment, honor the contract, and put in a good day's work.

We all must work cooperatively on the job as carriers and with management. We cannot seek or expect any special favors from manage-

ment. To avoid this requires all of us brothers and sisters to work together to achieve common goals as individual professional letters carriers but more importantly as a team.

In March 1799, Patrick Henry was quoted as saying, "United we stand, divided we fall."

*Tony Rodriguez*

## Texas

**T**he Supreme Court has approved Texas's plan to use a new congressional district map. This map enables Texas to add five additional Republican congressional seats, even though a lower court had previously ruled against it. The Texas court determined that the map was unfair to Democratic districts due to evidence of racial motivation and consequently ruled against it.

Texas presently holds 38 congressional seats in the House of Representatives, with 22 under the control of the Republican Party. The newly drawn map has resulted in the displacement of congressional representatives who previously maintained strong relations with the letter carriers of the TSALC. With the changes, candidates had until Dec. 8 to meet the filing deadline.

After the deadline, several Texas races saw notable shifts. Colin Allred withdrew from the U.S. Senate race and filed to run again for the 33rd Congressional District, a seat he previously held before his 2024 Senate campaign. He will face off against Julie Johnson, his successor, in the primary election. Rep. Jasmine Crockett, whose district was affected by the revised congressional map, has entered the U.S. Senate race. She will compete against state Rep. James Talarico in the upcoming U.S. Senate primary. Each of these candidates represents a strong ally for TSALC letter carriers. Attorney General Ken Paxton, Rep. Wesley Hunt (District 38), and incumbent U.S. Sen. John Cornyn will compete against each other in the Republican state primary scheduled for early March.

While we are seeing changes in our representation, our commitment to the TSALC mission remains the same. Have a merry Christmas and enjoy your family and the holidays.

*Everett Wyllie*

## Notice

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. Any guideline amounts are merely suggestions, and you may contribute more or less than the guidelines suggest and the union will not favor or disadvantage you by reason of the amount of your contribution or your decision not to contribute. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until canceled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, name of employer and occupation of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.



## Retiree Reports

### Anchorage, Alaska

It's that time of year again when we're having our retiree banquet along with the installation of officers to be held at 49th State Brewing. The date is Feb. 7, with a no-host bar starting at 6 p.m. and dinner served at 7 p.m.. Tickets are \$25 and are limited. For retirees, the \$25 cost per ticket holds your reservation and is reimbursed to you at the banquet. You have your choice of prime rib, halibut or a chicken entree.

We're awaiting the decision from the Committee of Laws regarding our bylaw change that allows meetings to be attended by Zoom. You can still log in and watch the meeting on Zoom, but it won't count as being in attendance just yet.

At the December meeting, Midtown members continue to win big! V.P. Josper Villegas has really instilled a culture of supporting the union and coming to union meetings and it shows. Roland Bugarin won the \$1,000 progressive door prize. The \$50 member in attendance door prize was won by Midtown retiree Joe Tufaga.

The Postal Service never ceases to amaze me. I recently processed a retirement packet for a 100 percent disabled veteran carrier who had 25 work days left. Yet management continues to harass him about his performance and threatens to fire him. These are the times I miss being a steward on the workroom floor. I'd make management go through all the work of preparing and putting on the case. I'd have the carrier testify and have him use that as his chance to tell management how badly they suck and are the biggest piece of sh!\$ he'd ever met. Yet, management will turn around and continue to do the same thing again. And maybe, just maybe, I'll get to sit in on a hearing and actually watch someone do this.

*Jim Raymond, Branch 4319*

## Nalcrest Update

### From the Trustees

I had the pleasure of setting up the Nalcrest exhibit table at the NALC rap session in Cleveland. It was a great opportunity to interact with many NALC branch leaders and to talk to them about what the letter carrier retirement community has to offer. Many letter carriers picked up applications for residency, as well as applications to rent the guest apartments for a visit to the Nalcrest community. Many branch leaders also took adopt-a-building forms so that their branches could make donations toward the painting of a Nalcrest building and have a plaque placed on the building recognizing their branch and their sponsorship. Many branches have retired members who have made Nalcrest their home. Many of those members came from parts of the country where they have traded snow and cold for sand and sunshine!

In early December, the Nalcrest residents kicked off the holiday season with a "Welcome Home" (to the seasonal residents) and "Happy Holidays" (for everyone) celebration. The evening

### Bergen Co. Mgd., New Jersey

Imagine living in a world where you can come in to work, case your mail, go on the road and make your deliveries, come back to the office and punch out without anyone questioning your work ethic.

That was my scenario back in the '70s and '80s, before the scanners came. To check on you, the supervisors would hide behind bushes or sit in their cars, crouching down behind their steering wheels trying to write you up for going over your lunch break by one minute.

One day the manager brought three of us in the office, and of course your first response should always be, "Will this meeting lead to any discipline?" When it was answered with a "No," he then stated to bring up the numbers (SPLY) and mentioned that we could and should be doing better. We all told him that we give 110 percent every single day, and when leaving the office, we informed him that we will just cut back 10 percent, you just had to see his face. (Ours all had smiles on them.) Actually a true story from the Hackensack main office.

Attend your union meetings.

*Dennis Spoto, Branch 425*

### Centennial, Colorado

A year ago, I wrote about navigating three large government agencies and trying to coordinate with the new PSMB being introduced. It got resolved in April, but not with an outcome I expected. More phone calls and letters resulted in a getting a substantial amount of money back—just in time for the holidays. My advice? Any time you are dealing with a government agency, contact your local federal representative. It's how democracy works.

Speaking of which, we will be installing new officers at our retiree brunch in January. By acclamation, Kelli Robles will continue to lead as president, Anne Ibison as V.P., Se Min Kil as treasurer and me as secretary. There was an election for sergeant-at-arms, and it was won by Juan Torres.

started with dozens of holiday decorated golf carts parading around the community in route to the Nalcrest Town Center. Then came the collective countdown to the grand lighting of all the holiday lights and decorations in the town center. Everyone then gathered in the Nalcrest Auditorium for an evening of fun and fellowship with food, beverages and live entertainment. For some residents, this is their first year living in Nalcrest, while others have lived here for more than 30 years. It's wonderful to see that however long our residents have lived here, they all love calling it home.

If you are looking for an affordable community to spend your retirement, like many fellow retired letter carriers, where it is safe and warm with tons of amenities, where you can be as active or inactive as you want, you may want to check out Nalcrest. We have 483 apartments that are leased yearly, and 17 guest apartment efficiencies that are rented long term or short term by the day for those who want to visit.

The waiting list is currently around 370 for annually leased apartments, but many on the list

Three stewards were also determined through the voting process, and I congratulate all who ran as well as all who voted—it's how the majority have a say in who we would like to have govern. So, my shout-out this month goes to Election Committee Chair Se Min Kil. He familiarized himself with the process, looked for guidance from longtime chairwoman Jo Schuetz, and then acted with professionalism, kindness and hard work. He is an appreciated asset to the functioning of our branch and his humor is becoming legendary. Simon sez...

Finally, the second week of every month is dedicated to retirees' breakfast gatherings. Tuesday is Aurora, Wednesday is Littleton and Thursday is Englewood. Call the union office to find out where your former co-workers will be gathering and make 2026 fabulous.

In unity—

*Barb Larson, Branch 5996*

### Paterson, New Jersey

History appears to be in the making! The National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 120 is about to elect its first-ever female president of Branch 120, Christy Ball. We are excited about her receiving the level in our union of which is a very well-deserved award. Christy is a tireless leader who is available on call and willing to help anyone in need whenever necessary. This just shows how hard work and dedication pay off if you are willing and have the fire and desire to represent our letter carriers.

Branch 120 has always opened its doors for the opportunity to train future leaders of this great union. We invite anyone who has a desire to learn to contact a branch leader or officer for more information.

We look forward to working with President-elect Christy Ball and wish her all the success needed for this very important position.

*Joseph Murone, Branch 120*

are not yet ready to move when an apartment becomes available. Those who are not yet ready to move maintain their place on the list, but are simply passed over when a vacancy occurs. For more information about Nalcrest, or to obtain a brochure, resident application or guest application, contact the Nalcrest office.

*Starr Hunter*

## Nalcrest Trustees

NALC Executive Vice President Paul Barner  
NALC Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine  
NALC Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Mack I. Julion  
NALC Director of Retired Members Dan Toth  
Nalcrest Trustees President Tony Diaz  
Nalcrest Trustees Vice President Fred Rolando  
Nalcrest Trustees Vice President Starr Hunter

## NALC offers deepest sympathies to the families and friends of departed brothers and sisters

Jose D. Pina	Br. 411	San Bernardino, CA	Jerome J. Burke	Br. 80	Springfield, IL	Thomas E. Smith	Br. 40	Cleveland, OH
Charles A. Perez	Br. 70	San Diego, CA	David E. Grant	Br. 80	Springfield, IL	Charles W. Stephens	Br. 40	Cleveland, OH
Man Zhou	Br. 214	San Francisco, CA	William H. Pippin	Br. 80	Springfield, IL	Willard D. Talley	Br. 40	Cleveland, OH
R. W. Brown	Br. 1100	Garden Grove, CA	Robert R. Briesse	Br. 69	Sioux City, IA	Ethen E. Lambert	Br. 1252	Jackson, OH
Charles A. Chandler	Br. 1100	Garden Grove, CA	Alfred S. Venseret	Br. 129	Baton Rouge, LA	David W. McGraw	Br. 458	Oklahoma City, OK
Bao Chen	Br. 1111	Greater E. Bay, CA	Philip P. Foley	Br. 92	Maine Merged	Corey D. Hanson	Br. 389	Easton, PA
Wesley Anthony	Br. 19	New Haven, CT	Harry L. Pinkham	Br. 92	Maine Merged	John A. Selady	Br. 274	Lehigh Valley, PA
Chesnel Edmond	Br. 19	New Haven, CT	Joseph P. Allen	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Edward G. Bernhard	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Richard J. Laden	Br. 19	New Haven, CT	Juan F. Garcia-Toral	Br. 34	Boston, MA	Joseph Chuly	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Mark A. Leventhal	Br. 19	New Haven, CT	Edward J. Ohara	Br. 51	Fall River, MA	James A. Davis	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Sandor Nemeth	Br. 19	New Haven, CT	Michael Milinazzo	Br. 25	MA Northeast Mgd.	Anthony J. Depaulo	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Eugene Patrarca	Br. 19	New Haven, CT	A. J. Miller Jr.	Br. 25	MA Northeast Mgd.	Thomas H. Evans	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Thomas Rubenstein	Br. 19	New Haven, CT	Harry P. Lupien	Br. 12	Worcester, MA	Donald S. Hruneni	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
James A. Jewett	Br. 142	Washington, DC	Michael J. Carpentier	Br. 434	Ann Arbor, MI	Anthony Iannacchione	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Winfred V. Mitchener	Br. 142	Washington, DC	Scott A. Stephan	Br. 56	Grand Rapids, MI	Harry W. Janicki	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
John T. Purcell	Br. 142	Washington, DC	Kevin G. Richtig	Br. 395	Iron Mountain, MI	L. H. Long Jr.	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Nirlep S. Sidhu	Br. 142	Washington, DC	Harley C. Harned	Br. 320	N. Oakland Co., MI	Edward J. Meleshenko	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Robert F. Washington	Br. 142	Washington, DC	Emily J. Newton	Br. 320	N. Oakland Co., MI	James Ottaviano Jr.	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Walter T. Grier	Br. 191	Wilmington, DE	Timothy M. Bailey	Br. 2184	Southeast Michigan	Joseph C. Petrick	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Calvin D. Battle	Br. 818	Key West, FL	Ismael G. Ramirez	Br. 2184	Southeast Michigan	Earl W. Richards	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Peter J. Cherkis Jr.	Br. 1779	Lakeland, FL	Henry L. Strange	Br. 2184	Southeast Michigan	Marvin E. Rodgers	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Steven M. Hochberg	Br. 2148	Sarasota, FL	Vernon C. Wehage	Br. 9	Minneapolis, MN	Ronald D. Smith	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Ronald G. Hearon	Br. 1477	West Coast Florida	Raymond E. Breakfield	Br. 343	St. Louis, MO	Nancy D. Spearline	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Donald A. Hyde	Br. 1477	West Coast Florida	Richard J. Bultas	Br. 343	St. Louis, MO	Lysle D. Williams	Br. 84	Pittsburgh, PA
Jack B. Smith	Br. 2567	Ashburn, GA	Claude E. Jackson	Br. 343	St. Louis, MO	Eugene J. Herman	Br. 17	Scranton, PA
Robert E. Sanders	Br. 263	Augusta, GA	Luis Morales	Br. 425	Bergen Co. Mgd., NJ	Joseph T. Pignone Jr.	Br. 725	Southeast PA Mgd.
Nichlas J. Hartley	Br. 331	Boise, ID	John Ratynski	Br. 425	Bergen Co. Mgd., NJ	John C. Brady	Br. 950	Abilene, TX
Kenneth E. Madden	Br. 219	Aurora, IL	James Wheeler	Br. 38	New Jersey Merged	Wayne K. Landers	Br. 950	Abilene, TX
Malik K. Parker	Br. 825	Oak Brook, IL	Edward R. Washock	Br. 358	Northeastern NY	James D. Pace	Br. 950	Abilene, TX
			Joseph N. Richer	Br. 134	Syracuse, NY	Jason R. Welch	Br. 1037	Amarillo, TX
			Howard P. Tarolli	Br. 134	Syracuse, NY	John D. Witt	Br. 1037	Amarillo, TX
			Harry J. Ziegler	Br. 134	Syracuse, NY	Robert W. Moody	Br. 132	Dallas, TX
			Brayton J. Bigelow	Br. 375	Utica, NY	Joseph A. Mclean	Br. 505	El Paso, TX
			Mark A. Alexander	Br. 545	Charlotte, NC	Joseph K. Wood	Br. 111	Salt Lake City, UT
			Maurice S. Harmon	Br. 40	Cleveland, OH	Duremius N. Davis	Br. 247	Tidewater VA
			Rodger A. Kingsmill	Br. 40	Cleveland, OH	Kenneth P. Johnston	Br. 79	Seattle, WA
			Thomas R. McCray	Br. 40	Cleveland, OH	Salvatore A. Corrao	Br. 2	Milwaukee, WI
			James L. Perry	Br. 40	Cleveland, OH			

Jonathan W. Curtis was erroneously listed as deceased in a previous issue of *The Postal Record*. We regret the error and apologize for any problems it may have caused.

## COLA: Cost-of-living adjustment

- The projected accumulation toward the sixth regular COLA under the 2023-2026 National Agreement was **\$166** in December following the release of the November 2025 consumer price index (CPI). The sixth COLA will be based on the increase in the CPI-W between the base index month and January 2026, less any previously calculated COLAs, and will be payable the second full pay period following the release of the July 2026 index.
- The 2026 COLAs for the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) benefits are based on the increase in the average CPI-W between the third quarter of 2024 and the 3rd quarter of 2025. Based on the November 2025 CPI-W, the projected 2026 COLA for CSRS is **2.8 percent** and FERS is **2.0 percent**. The 2026 retiree COLA calculation will be finalized in October 2025 with the release of the CPI-W for September 2025.
- The 2026 projected COLA under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) is **2.7 percent** following the release of the November 2025 CPI-W. The 2026 FECA COLA calculation will be finalized when the December 2025 CPI-W is published during the month of January 2026.

Visit [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) for the latest updates.

## Please take note:

There will be no Branch Items, State Summaries or Retiree Reports in the February *Postal Record*. That edition will be the special annual tribute issue honoring contributors to the Letter Carrier Political Fund during 2025.





## Branch Items

### Albany, New York

It was inspiring to see almost 50 members in attendance at the November union meeting for Branch 29. It might be because we had nominations for delegates to the 2026 national convention, and nominations for our branch leadership and shop steward positions. I was proud to see so many of our members throwing their name in the ring for positions within our branch.

I wish everyone running for an elected position good luck, and a piece of advice: Please do not be discouraged if you don't win your election. You stood up for the members and proclaimed you are willing to help represent them to the best of your ability. It's up to the members to decide who they think is the best candidate for the job, and as a very wise union leader once told me, the membership always gets it right! I look forward to working with whomever the membership elects for vice president, secretary, and our trustees to improve our branch and the representation of our members. I'm excited to see who is chosen for the shop steward positions in the Delmar Post Office, the Henry Johnson Carrier Annex and Terminal Station.

No matter what happens, we will have some new faces in new positions to bring some fresh energy and perspective to our branch. My focus will be on educating all the newly elected officers and stewards, as well as our rank-and-file members. So, keep a look out for future articles, the *Mailbox Chatter*, and if you haven't attended a union meeting in a while, now is the perfect time to start coming again. Hope to see even more new faces on the first Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Polish American Community Center on Commerce Avenue.

*Norris Beswick, Branch 29*

### Arizona Merged

This is to serve notice of Branch 1902 bylaws change posting requirement.

The original language of Article V, Section 5 is as follows:

Article V, Section 5: Permanent vacancies will be filled by nomination and election at a regular meeting with the membership being notified in writing at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting at which nomination and election take place. The President shall appoint an officer to serve until an election can be held.

Proposed change:

Article V, Section 5: Permanent vacancies during a three (3) year term shall be filled by the President. The appointed officer shall serve the remainder of the term.

*Richard Manke, Branch 1902*

### Charlotte, North Carolina

Branch 545 would like to wish everyone a very happy new year. As we turn the page to 2026, we all know that there is a certain level of uncertainty and anxiety amongst our local members for the future with the start of the Westside S&DC, the implementation of the new local contract, route adjustments, the cur-

rent national contract ending, and elections for our national officers later this year.

Yes, we acknowledge these issues and the significance of each, but please rest assured, everyone, even with all this, there is a renewed sense of confidence and faith. The faith we have in our union stewards, leadership, and—most of all—in ourselves. If we stand together and work together with our union stewards and officers, there is nothing, and I mean absolutely nothing, that management can do to us that we can't overcome together and win.

We have the game plan to hold management accountable to the contract, and we have the language to back it up. If we just do the little things correctly—for instance, write statements for our union stewards, and follow the *M-41 Handbook*—winning becomes so easy for all of us, but I emphasize that we must do the little things correctly. Let's all work together to make sure 2026 is the year that management are the ones feeling the anxiety, because they know we are too strong, united and educated on the language to beat us.

The union leadership would like to let all our members know that we are continuing with our in-person meetings. We are holding our meetings on the third Tuesday of every month for anyone who is interested in attending. Food will be provided at the meeting for those who are able to attend. We look forward to seeing all of our members who are able to make it out. Also, if anyone is interested in participating in our local union in any capacity, please contact our local union office or speak with the union steward in your office.

*Justin Fraley, Branch 545*

### Cincinnati, Ohio

Hello, Queen City. My name is January, the first month of the new year, but probably a year just like any other at the P.O. I am always optimistic things will be different, until that first day back to work on the 2nd of the month and the first thing out of the supervisor's mouth is, "There is no mail in this building today, be out of here within an hour."

Whenever I hear this, the slower I become for the day and beyond. It just melts my heart when I'm told to hurry up, because it just makes my day a little longer and more money is put into my pocket. After all, if a closing supervisor can sit around for at least eight hours a day and make a minimum of \$79,000 a year, I'll take what it takes to be comfortable doing my job safely and correctly, making sure every customer is taken care of.

Back during the first week of December, our opening supervisor was on vacation, so it was just the manager and the closing supervisor, until a call was made and our actual station manager, who is overseeing another station, showed up for the week to run the floor in the morning. So, we had two managers running things for a week. Let that sink in for a minute when it comes to our deficit we supposedly run every quarter.

Like I have said before and will say again and again, I'm sure for years to come, who is policing all the money that is thrown away every minute, day and week by postal management?

Here comes another interesting year for the P.O. Is everyone ready for some fun with the stupidity we deal with? Meetings every second Thursday of the month in Forest Park.

In solidarity—

*Chris Rought, Branch 43*

### Emerald Coast, Florida

This article is out of frustration because of all the things that are happening within our branch and the USPS. I am frustrated because we are not working together as a team, and I hate to say this, this includes management, and working together is the best way to do things. The instant we start working apart, meeting our goal of delivering the mail is defeated. We constantly hear about being on the "radar." We are on this report, or that report, but no one looks at how working together can allow us to get off these so-called reports. We as carriers are without blame and do believe we can do better. We need to take pride in our work and be professional while we are on the street serving the community.

Then on the management side, they need to get more involved and do their jobs. Being a postmaster or supervisor is more than sitting at the desk eating or talking on the phone. They (management) should be willing to accept suggestions from the carriers on how to make things more in line with accomplishing the basic goal of delivery; we as carriers do it every day. I have watched supervisors sit in the office and do absolutely nothing but pretend they are working. There's nothing wrong with asking a season supervisor for assistance in learning their job or asking the carriers for their suggestions on how to make something better on the street, instead of talking slick to the carriers and losing all respect from the carriers.

Hope everyone enjoyed their holiday.

*Percy Smith Jr., Branch 4559*

### Eugene, Oregon

This year's election was historic for the Emerald Empire. Having merged with Central Oregon, we had nominations for both sides of our branch. To make this even more memorable, we have elected a Central carrier to our executive board. Branch 916 welcomes Erica Conrad as one of our newest trustees.

Since the agreement to merge, it has been the goal of our branch to represent all carriers from both sides of the mountains. Carriers in Central have been stepping up to become stewards, help run their food drive, and become delegates to our conventions. However, having an officer from Bend, who can better represent our carriers over there, is such a wonderful opportunity to help grow the unity of our branch.

One difficulty with the merger, and the vast distance between members, has been trying to create successful hybrid meetings that allow members from far away to join and participate in our branch meetings. There have been and will continue to be growing pains as we try to streamline the process and offer better service to our distant members.

The results of this election create a catalyst for the much-needed improvements as we continue our quest to make quality meetings. In addition to hybridized branch meetings and steward meetings, we will now need to hybridize our board meetings and our audit meetings. While many of the pitfalls and difficulties associated with these kinds of things can be difficult, a generation from now this will all be par for the course.

Once again, welcome to the board, Erica Conrad, and all our new officers.

*Frost, Branch 916*

## Fargo-West Fargo, North Dakota

**A**s we are in the midst of winter, we want to thank every carrier for their work, resilience and professionalism you continue to show during our busiest season, when conditions can be poor. When the weather changes and we are in the “winter” season, it’s always an adjustment. It’s not always a positive feeling when one is getting ready for work and hearing the local weather forecast. Seek advice from veteran carriers, if needed.

The peak season brings on long days, higher volume, unpredictable weather, and the challenge of delivering safely in darkness—but it also brings moments of community, gratitude and teamwork that remind us why our work matters. Receiving positive comments from customers often makes a big difference.

Prioritize your well-being as a letter carrier. Watch for icy steps, uneven walkways, and early-sunset visibility issues. Headlamps and traction devices are available, take small careful steps on snow or ice, and be aware of pets that may be more active with holiday guests coming and going. Safety is never secondary to speed. Pace yourself early in the day and take advantage of daylight whenever possible. Warm layers, waterproof gloves and dry socks can make a big difference. Remember to hydrate, even in cold weather.

Many customers want to help, and thank them for keeping their walkways and steps clear and sanded, and ensuring their mailbox remains accessible. These small actions can help keep carriers and their routes safer.

We want to recognize the retirees we had this year: Noel S., Mike S., Walter W. and Melissa S. We recognize our retirees for years of dedicated service, and we welcome several new PTF carriers.

I’m hoping every carrier has a safe winter season and is continuing our work in 2026, and I’m looking forward to spring weather.

*David Steichen, Branch 205*

## Fresno, California

**I**t is amazing how postal management treats letter carriers disrespectfully; they lie and are vindictive. Acting just like our president. Flat out abusing hardworking union workers. Their managing style is totally wrong, and uncalled for.

Over the decades they tell snitches, “You see that guy? I am going to bust his ass.” Yet another waited for carriers to leave the postal



**Hazelwood, MO Br. 5847 recognizes DeAnna Chatman for rescuing an elderly woman on her route who had fallen.**

parking lot exit just to tell them, “I am going to write you up. I want you to know that.” Said with a smirk. Then, an abused carrier told his supervisor that he had a niece dying of cancer and was having trouble going to work. The supervisor snapped at him, “So what? Get back to work.” Then he leaned back in his chair, saying out loud, “Life is good.” This type of behavior must be stopped.

Union representatives must defend our members. There is no question about it. When a supervisor mocks, whooping next to a Native American carrier, that supervisor should be fired. I always defended these victims. Snitches and management would not like that.

Sometimes I would be issued discipline shortly after. Charges would be false, then rescinded. Management should be more mature and not punitive with their false and punitive charges. These examples I write really happened. And were enjoyed by snitches.

Remember: We are supposed to be united as a union. Be united and help our brother and sister members. It goes a long way. We are as strong as we are united.

*Jesse Dominguez, Branch 231*

## Glenview, Illinois

**P**lease allow this notice to serve as official notification to all members that Branch 4007 will be having a special meeting that has been requested of the branch president to be called to order by petitioned branch members. In order to vote on the 2025 Christmas gratuity gift to “all members” of Glenview Branch 4007 for this holiday season.

This special meeting will be called to order on Jan. 5 in the Glenview Installation lunch room at 7:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted—

*Brian J. Gavin, Pres., Branch 4007*

## Hazelwood, Missouri

**W**e’d like to recognize one of our carriers, DeAnna Chatman in Maryland Heights,

for doing a great job out on Route 39. She noticed a 96-year-old woman who had slipped and fallen. The woman had been there for a few hours, and the carrier called for emergency service and got her help. The doctors said that if the woman had been there a little longer, she wouldn’t have made it. Great job to our outstanding mail carrier serving the community.

*Denna Hoskins, Branch 5847*

## Kansas City, Missouri

**E**cclasiastes 3:1 reads: There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens—a pending new contract, a new postmaster general and a new Branch 30 executive board.

Hailing from South Troost and president of Branch 30 since 2015, Melvin Moore’s decision to retire and pass the gavel initiated a season of change in Kansas City. The results of the Branch 30 elections held at the October meeting are as follows: branch president—Curtis Walker; vice president—Kenneth Best; recording secretary—Troy Smith; treasurer—Terry Myers; financial secretary—Byron Townsend; Mutual Benefit Association (MBA) representative—Kevin Williams; health benefits representative/director of retirees—Anita Franklin; sergeant-at-arms—Duane Shaffer; trustees—Brenda Orr (chairman), Steven Murray and Kane Nguyen; and postal scribe—Calvin Davis.

Janice Mickles assumes chairpersonship of the entertainment committee and the title of “Party Czar” after Terry “Party Poo-bah” Myers stepped down.

She didn’t miss a beat, as the 2025 Branch 30 Christmas party was officially certified “off the chain” by Party Inc. Two-hundred fifty participants dined on a varied and delicious meal by Guess Catering. The feast was plentiful as NALC carriers slid through after delivering the nation’s mail. The Masters of the Mix certainly did their part. Djgelevn, showing versatility, seamlessly went from The Temptations, “Silent Night” for the early crowd; to the fan-poppin’, line-dancin’, go-getters, on 803Fresh’s “Boots on the Ground.” A significant increase in the number of younger union brothers and sisters in attendance was impressive.

2026 will provide new opportunities for each individual to step up their responsibilities in regard to NALC participation at all levels. At the same time, the NALC must find a way to engage and encourage the letter carrier of today. Our success or failure depends on the proof of our efforts. This is a season of hope.

*Calvin Davis, Branch 30*

## Knoxville, Tennessee

**H**appy New Year, sisters and brothers!

We have a few recent changes to the contract. Hallelujah!

Article 8, Section 2 has been added, which provides full-time carriers with the right to terminate their tour of duty when reaching their respective work-hour limits without being subject to disciplinary action. What does this mean? For eight-hour carriers not on the ODTL or Work Assignment List, this means that they can clock out and leave when reaching 11 and



## Branch Items

a half hours of work or 60 hours in a service week.

Section 4 has been created, which guarantees pay at two and one-half times the base hourly straight time (a 250 percent pay increase) for any work beyond 12 hours in a day and 60 hours in a week. Grievances will no longer be required and will now be automatically applied when these work hours are exceeded.

Section 5 has been modified to allow carriers to sign up for both the 12-hour and eight-hour OTDL. It allows carriers to work up to 12 hours on their regularly scheduled and non-scheduled days. Additionally, it provides a new opportunity for ODL carriers to volunteer to exceed 12 hours of work in a day or 60 hours of work in a service. ODL carriers cannot be forced to work beyond the applicable work-hours limits and in turn receive protection from discipline for terminating their tour when those limits are reached; however, under this new provision they may choose to volunteer to work beyond the work limits. These provisions will remain in effect during the penalty exclusion period.

*Tony Rodriguez, Branch 419*

### Lima, Ohio

Hello, Lima. I hope all is well and everyone is loving the weather. As reported last month, the branch held the election of officers. There were three contested seats.

After the votes were tallied up, the results were as follows: For vice president, Brian Sharp retains his seat by a 66-to-15 vote over Amber Wolf. For sergeant-at-arms, Ned Delong and Andrew Dubuque finished with a 61-to-19 vote in favor of Ned Delong. For health benefits officer, Fred Brinkman retains his seat with a 78-to-5 vote over Kayla Baugh. Congratulations to all of our elected officers who will serve for the next two years. The officers will be sworn in at the next meeting.

Friendly reminder to always carry some dog spray, keep your tap key safe and always be aware of your surroundings!

And as always, union meetings are held every second Tuesday of the month at Rigali's Pizza Village, 505 W. North St. at 7 p.m. Thank you.

*Jeffery Steegman, Branch 105*

### Marrero, Louisiana

Happy new year, brothers and sisters. As we begin 2026, I want to wish you and your families a happy, healthy and blessed new year. This will be an important year for our union, the National Association of Letter Carriers.

We are looking forward to the negotiation and release of our new National Agreement, which will shape our working conditions and economic conditions for years to come. The NALC will also hold its national election, and our branch will conduct local union board elections this year. Also, many states will be voting for U.S. senators and representatives. Stay informed, pay attention, and most importantly, vote. Your voice matters and makes a difference.

As you plan your New Year's resolutions, consider these:

1. Support the Letter Carrier Political Fund. Even the minimum contribution of \$5 a pay period strengthens our voice and protects our jobs.

2. Increase your Thrift Savings Plan contribution. Retirement comes sooner than you think. A small increase today can make a big difference tomorrow.

3. Take care of your health and well-being. Get a little more active, join a gym, walk with friends, or simply make time for yourself. Every positive step matters.

As winter settles in, protect yourself from the extreme cold while delivering mail. Your safety comes first.

Also, check out the audio version of *The Postal Record* and the NALC podcast, available on Apple Podcasts and Spotify.

Wishing you a happy, prosperous and blessed 2026. Stay safe, stay strong and stay united.

In solidarity—

*Abraham Askar, Branch 4323*

### Milwaukee, Wisconsin

In the September *Postal Record*, in "News from Washington," President Renfroe spoke before the House Subcommittee on Government Operations. He gave testimony on crimes against letter carriers and urged Congress to pass the bipartisan Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (H.R. 1065/S. 463) bills.

Renfroe reported that in the last three years, five letter carriers were murdered on the job, one being from Branch 2, Milwaukee, brother Aundre Cross. I would like to update everyone on the status of brother Cross's case, which surpassed three years last month.

The defendant will go on trial the last week of July 2026, unless there is an agreed-upon plea beforehand. The federal DOJ has removed the death penalty in the case. The wheels of justice move slowly, and with the recent pandemic affecting all court cases, it feels like there's no justice whatsoever.

Between 2022 and 2024 there were 15 individuals who committed criminal acts against Milwaukee letter carriers. A few cases are still outstanding, as their court dates are later this year. Of the individuals sentenced, the level of punishment varies for armed robbery, use of a dangerous weapon, reckless endangering safety, felon with a weapon, stolen mail, check erasing, and the list goes on.

The majority were sentenced, and those crimes brought judgments from probation to up to 12 years in prison, depending on the individual and their involvement in the crimes. Most are state charges, and with our state prisons at maximum capacity, the likelihood of a full sentence enforced are slim, if the criminal is a model inmate.

I would like to thank our Branch 2 president, Rob Kosier, for allowing me to submit this article. Please be safe out there.

*Gordie Skare, Branch 2*

### Monterey, California

Well, here it is—2026. Can you believe it? I hope you can all take a deep breath and breathe a sigh of relief that the holiday rush is over.

I can't believe the terrible standards the new PMG has apparently set for delivery. I spent the money to pay for priority packages, and they can't even get there on time. Oh, yeah, I know,

we aren't guaranteed anything, but five days to travel 150 miles? I can drive it in three and a half hours. I wrote the PMG and complained—we should all spend five minutes doing that!

I just can't believe, that when I hired in, you *must* get the mail to the plant every day or heads would roll. We'd drive it there ourselves if the last truck had left when we returned. Now—who cares, let the mail sit overnight and be delayed, let the perishable gifts spoil—the only ones who seem to care are those doing the work.

Maybe it's time to consolidate postmasters. Doesn't seem they do much in many places. I've worked with a couple of good ones over the years, but good managers are few and far between. Come on, Headquarters—do something!

Why won't management do anything about abusive supervisors? I'll bet if they were treated the way they treat their employees, they wouldn't like it. Sometimes it takes effort to know what your employees do for you—or do they even care? They don't make themselves look good.

May 2026 bring you great joy, and may we see positive changes in the future for the career we hold so dear!

United we bargain—divided we beg.

*Patty Cramer, Branch 1310*

### Nashua, New Hampshire

Brothers and sisters, here are the election results for the e-board: president—Chris Gannett, vice president—Mike Reed, secretary—Mike Come, treasurer—Eric Savard, sergeant-at-arms—Nate Plamondon, trustees—Kess Partridge, Sean Driscoll and John Thompson, and director of retirees—Dennis Guilbert.

*Henry Gorman, Branch 230*

### New Orleans, Louisiana

Greetings. First of all, I want to wish everyone a very happy holiday. Hope everyone had a wonderful Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and also Christmas and New Year's. It's the festive time of year! I'd like to congratulate the Branch 129 president and LSALC president, Mr. Troy Scott, on his retirement from USPS with 40 years, nine months and 15 days of service. En-

### Notice

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. Any guideline amounts are merely suggestions, and you may contribute more or less than the guidelines suggest and the union will not favor or disadvantage you by reason of the amount of your contribution or your decision not to contribute. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until canceled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, name of employer and occupation of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.

joy, my brother; it's well-earned and deserved. Also, shout-out to the Branch 4342 President, Mr. Sterling Caston, on his branch recognition of retirees. A job well done. A Letter Carrier's Salute to both these brothers for their dedication and commitment.

We are nearing the end of the year. It was exhilarating, frustrating, disappointing, disheartening. A lot of things we overcame. There is much more work to do. Change is coming! It's on the horizon! Better days are coming! If you believe, you can achieve! Don't be downhearted. Look to the future with confidence! Anticipating what could be, what must be, what shall be a better time for all letter carriers, both active and retired! We have a strong union, thanks to the men and women of the NALC. Keep supporting your union.

You can accomplish and achieve if you believe and put in the necessary hard work it takes to win. We must stick together and stay strong together!

Stand fast, brothers and sisters, united in our beliefs. We shall overcome!

Continue to attend branch meetings. Don't just be a wallflower! Be active! Participating and commenting, engaging, becoming better stronger union members. Do continue to give to LCPF. It goes a long way to help us with the politicians. Don't be blindsided! Don't fall for the okie doke! We can do it! A house divided cannot stand!

As always, yours in unionism—

*Marshall Wayne Smith, Branch 124*

## North Florida

As I write this article, Congress has yet to take care of feeding those in need and extending health care to those less fortunate. Now is the time to ensure that you are registered to vote. With midterm elections in the near future, we have the opportunity to correct the errors from the last election. Congress has turned into an us-against-them ongoing feud, and then there are those representatives who are deathly afraid to disagree with the president.

Even the Supreme Court is making adverse decisions. Here in Jacksonville and Daytona, the 50501 rallies have thousands protesting the adverse changes coming from the president. His tariffs severely affected farmers to the point the president now is proposing to send \$12 billion in relief (taxpayer dollars). Then there is his push to redistrict congressional areas, to say nothing about how they are ruining our military.

So far he has left the USPS alone, but it's only a matter of time. Please write your representatives and make sure your voices are heard. Donate to the NALC Letter Carrier Political Fund so we have another voice with congress.

Branch 53 wishes all NALC families a very happy new year.

*Bob Henning, Branch 53*

## Northeastern New York

Branch 358 hosted several breakfasts and seminars for our retirees in November. After attending the NALC health benefit seminar in early November, we decided to share information with our retirees at seminars.

Mike Brim, RAA for Region 11, addressed the retirees and shared information on upcoming cost-of-living increases for CSRS and FERS retirees. He also spoke about legislation and the effects for active and retirees. Mike was very knowledgeable and eloquent on all the issues.

Also, President Chris Jackson presented a 60-year plaque to Joe Trzeciak, and a 50-year award to Nick DeMeo. There was also 25-, 35-, 40- and 45-year pins given to members. There was a good turnout for these events, and it always great to spend time with our retirees.

On a sad note, Branch 358 is mourning the loss of Ken Nolin. Ken was the past president of Branch 416 in Troy, NY. After the merger with Branch 358, Ken became vice president of the branch. Ken was a strong advocate for letter carriers and was involved for many years. On a personal note, Ken was more than a union brother, he was a great friend. Many years ago, when I experienced a house fire, Ken and other branch members assisted in getting my home repaired. He selflessly volunteered his skills and time to help me during a difficult time.

Rest in peace, my friend!

*Frank P. Maresca, Branch 358*

## Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Happy new year to all my fellow NALC members. Hopefully this article finds you well. Have you kept your resolutions to this point? Did you make any resolutions? Either way, I challenge you to add one more resolution: Get more active in your local branch. If you have not attended a meeting lately, go the next one. Volunteer to help with a branch function. Or, the ultimate: Become a steward and/or officer for your branch.

Someone sent me a meme, and while I cannot share the photo, I can share the caption: "Your union membership is like a gym membership. You can pay your monthly dues, but if you do not show up and participate, you don't become stronger." It will not just be you that becomes stronger, your branch and members become stronger as well when participation increases. NALC has one of, if not, the largest unionized workforces. With how strong we are now, just imagine how much stronger we would be on the workroom floor or even in Congress if more of our members became active.

In closing, regardless of how much I might disagree with fellow members, I remember that in the end, we are all a family within the NALC and we should treat one another as such. "I love you and there isn't anything you can do about it."

*Eric E. Beu, Branch 458*

## Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Branch nominations/elections were held in late November. The following officers were reelected by acclamation: Pat Rothwell (EVP), Dave Bugay (V.P.), Tamara Hartman (secretary-treasurer), Joe Roman (OWCP/retirement), Ed Heide (trustee), Paul Mooney (trustee), Paul Miller (trustee), Brenda Dobrosky (assistant secretary-treasurer), Alex Criegro (health benefits), Carole Ann Connelly (mutual benefits), Jason Bialek (Allegheny County Labor Council). Incumbent Ted Lee was challenged by former Branch 332 V.P. John Goodwin for the office of president. Lee defeated Goodwin and will

serve a three-year term along with those listed above. Congrats to all.

Flavor of the month seems to be hooded sweatshirts. If management is claiming that "hoodies" are not part of your uniform and therefore not to be worn on the clock, contact your steward or the branch hall.

Management continues to conduct 1017-Bs even in the middle of the holiday season. Make sure you're requesting and submitting a 3996 if you're of the opinion that you won't be able to complete your assignment within the prescribed time. When you fulfill your contractual obligations, it will make management look even more petty for either denying all overtime or approving something ludicrous like 10 minutes on a Monday.

I recently received a decision back on a grievance we filed, and it really reaffirmed the power of statements and interviews. So, please—I'm asking you to make a New Year's resolution to support your brothers and sisters in the grievance process in 2026 by getting involved and going on record with the truth for the person next to you. When carriers speak with one voice, there is no choice but to listen. Here's to a healthy, safe 2026!

*John Conger II, Branch 84*

## Providence, Rhode Island

I hope everyone had an enjoyable and safe holiday season. It's important to be intentional about finding time to enjoy the holiday season amidst the business that comes with this time of year. As may be the case at your stations, scanning integrity has been a major emphasis by management over recent months, particularly since Postmaster General David Steiner was onboarded. Much like everything else with this job, it's up to us to do the right thing. I get it, our jobs have become more tedious over recent years, and we're being micromanaged more than ever by management over time, but we must remain diligent. We're ultimately the ones responsible for doing the right thing.

An important detail for Branch 15 members is that, going forward, union meetings will no longer be held at the APWU hall in Johnston, but at our Oaklawn Avenue office location in Cranston. If you need the specific address, including the unit number, feel free to ask your steward or reach out to someone in the branch.

*Anthony Turcotte, Branch 15*

## Racine, Wisconsin

There was a time that going to McDonald's was a treat. It was an event. Today it's standard dinner for many. You could walk in and be helped by any one person manning the eight or more registers. Walk in today you face one register, ordering from a kiosk, an app, QR code, GrubHub or DoorDash.

The mall was the place to be and be seen on weekends. Gimbels, JCPenney, Boston Store and Sears were the two-story anchor stores. Our local mall attracts mostly mall walkers these days.

Times are changing. Mail volume is dwindling. Parcels are in. Look at how much the USPS has changed. Blink and you're going to miss the change. Kiosks and self-help stations



## Branch Items

are either replacing or reducing window clerk staffing. Letter carriers have the safest job out there. That may change significantly with new housing developments going to all cluster boxes rather than door-to-door or curbside delivery. Protect your routes.

Thanks to all who walked the parade route and collected letters to Santa during Racine's Christmas parade this past November. We used to personally (from Santa) answer letters we collected, with a return address from the North Pole. Kids loved it. However, our Milwaukee District snatched that away from us, thus becoming a corporate takeover of a local project.

Branch 436's carrier task force walking the parade route dwindles with each passing season, picking up fewer and fewer letters each season as well. Today's world makes kids grow up too fast and lose their innocence too quickly. It's OK to believe in the magic of Christmas, the Easter Bunny or even the Tooth Fairy. Keep that magic alive before the world starts fighting back and you realize Santa has a deductible and the Easter Bunny a co-pay.

*Chris Paige, Branch 436*

### Rockville, Maryland

**T**onya Detrick, regional administrative assistant for Region 13, installed our officers on Wednesday, Dec. 3. She did a great job! I thanked Tonya for the fine work she is doing at the NBA office and the \$50,000 she has won for our members in pre-arb settlements over the last three months.

I also thanked our members for having the confidence in electing me, and most of our EB again, for a 25th consecutive year. It is truly and honor and a privilege to represent the city letter carriers in our branch. I pledge that our stewards and officers will work as hard as we can to force management to comply with the National Agreement and to treat our members with dignity and respect.

Our vice president, Chuck Clark, stepped down as our V.P. after holding that position for many years. He did a remarkable job as V.P. and is our webmaster. Our website has more than 350,000 hits! When I thanked Chuck for the outstanding job he did as our V.P., he received a standing ovation that lasted several minutes. The only other person to receive a standing ovation at our union meetings was Vincent Sombrotto! So, we say goodbye to a great V.P., but thankfully Chuck will remain a chief steward for Gaithersburg, Frederick and Damascus.

We are continuing to win an additional 250 percent for the non-ODLs for Article 8, Section 5G violations in Rockville. For Step O carriers, this amounts to an additional \$100 per hour of violation. That is on top of the \$60 the non-ODL already made, for a total of \$160 per hour of violation! In 2024, we won an arbitration for this amount and numerous pre-arbs in 2025. You can download the arbitration from our website at [nalc3825.com](http://nalc3825.com).

In the struggle—

*Kenneth Lerch, Branch 3825*

### St. Louis, Missouri

**W**ell...the Postmaster Grinch stole Christmas! Last year, the USPS unilaterally initiated route inspections in the St. Louis installations. Those inspections differed in that the union was not allowed to participate.

Of the six stations inspected, USPS eliminated 72 routes. That did not include the additional loss of one T-6 assignment for every five routes abolished. The results were devastating to operations.



### Pennsylvania letter carriers demonstrate against anti-union proposals.

Every inspection was conducted by the same (USPS) team, and they repeatedly ignored established route inspections rules. The union filed numerous grievances.

One of the most blatant violations involved eliminating the junior seniority carrier's route when a bid route is abolished—a requirement clearly stated in our local LMOU. Despite being repeatedly reminded of this provision, the inspection leader dismissed the provision as “an issue for the postmaster.” Compliance with this rule is simple, especially for COR, a program that automatically eliminates the appropriate (junior) routes. USPS chose not to use it.

The union requested that routes be restored to their pre-inspection configurations, but USPS dismissed the idea and instead suggested bidding by station. The union countered with bidding by station with modest compensation for carriers affected by management's intentional violation of the junior carrier provision. No response from management. Rumors began circulating about a citywide posting of routes, though management never communicated anything to the union. The union contacted the postmaster for clarification with no response.

On Nov. 1, USPS management held a stand-up at the stations announcing citywide postings. The union was given no information. Finally, after multiple attempts, USPS invited the union to a meeting where they proceeded to blame the LMOU for their actions.

The postmaster wanted citywide postings. Now, 1,100 routes are up for bids with disruption of mail service and a demoralized workforce. All because one incompetent postmaster failed to do her job.

*Tom Schulte, Branch 343*

### Seattle, Washington

**T**he problem with algorithms are that they are pretentious. They pretend to be something they're not. They sell themselves as purveyors of truth, when they're really disingenuous sneaky bastards with hidden agendas. They hide in the smoke and mirrors of heady math and massive data studies, and insist that one must

have studied at the foot of the master to truly Grok the all-knowing algorithms and their inner truths. Time-projection tools such as DOIS, COR, PET—these USPS algorithms are everywhere. So what? What's wrong with algorithms?

Well, firstly, you can run an algorithm all day and it won't yank a hammy or pop a quad. It won't get carpal tunnel or slide down a flight of stairs, and it'll never stub a toe and spill a load of mail. It's in constant linear motion. It's the shortest distance between two points. There are no curves for an algorithm. No bumps. This is the road less traveled. For the worker, there are nothing but bumps, snags and distractions, snarled traffic and weather patterns, which are just a few of the delays along their workday.

Management may say that numbers don't lie. If that's true, then it must be the human element that's lying. That's pretty simple. You can trust them numbers, but those workers—not so much. Those, them-there worker bees, who have to deal with reality, are just plumb packed with excuses. “I had to hydrate.” “The snow drifts.” “My vehicle imploded.” Just trying to subvert the system. No complaints from the algorithm side of the clipboard, as they labor away in their orchards of cherry-picked data. It's a veritable garden of Eden. And since they claim it's fair, as it's simply applied data, you still have to wonder about the numbers. Is this tree of knowledge a forbidden fruit?

*Don Nokes, Branch 79*

### South Jersey, New Jersey

**O**pportunity missed! I am referring to National not moving up one of the best legislative and political organizers (LPOs) in the country, if not the best, in my opinion. Ozzie Lecky has been our local LPO, and faithful aide to our current national LPO for many years, and his achievements in signing up members throughout our region go unmatched.

The reason I am making an issue of this is for what I believe is in the best interest of this great union. Many of the past LPOs have used this position to catapult to a higher position in this union, which I can understand, since many of those can utilize their knowledge and other abilities at the national level, where they can help our members in other areas.

The one thing you very rarely see is that one person who has no desire to use one position in the union to get to a higher level. We have that person right here in the Bill Revak branch, who has the “it” factor when it comes to legislation. I have never seen anyone with the desire to learn and constantly grow in a position that many feel is dry and boring.

When I first appointed Ozzie to this position, never did I believe he could take this branch to the level he has, even though I knew he had the will to do it. Our branch has received the recognition of top-ranked branch of our size at the last convention, which now has 900 members.

For National to bypass Ozzie, I believe, is a huge mistake. You have a young man who is committed to the cause, which National says is most important, but they seem to have other intentions by their latest choice. Hope they don't regret this move!

*Gary DiGiacomo, Branch 908*

## Southeast Michigan

An early onset of winter weather made the holiday “peak season” especially challenging for Branch 2184’s active members. That was a preview of what will be a challenging and defining year for letter carriers, our union, and our nation. First up will be negotiations with the Postal Service on a new collective-bargaining agreement. It is widely expected that the lengthy debacle of the previous negotiations process will not be repeated this time around. Given the long history of bad faith by the USPS toward city letter carriers in all matters, a negotiated agreement is also unlikely.

As always, most of the bargaining attention will focus on economics. NALC should pay little or no interest to the financial status of the Postal Service. The agency’s economic woes are mostly self-created and can be internally addressed. There has been an obvious “elephant in the room” for decades. Tens of thousands of useless management employees do not touch the mail and add nothing whatsoever of value to the mission of the organization. Instead, they merely obstruct the work of letter carriers, those who do have real jobs. Letter carrier work can be and should be largely self-directed.

Additionally, the contractual grievance process as presently structured is useless as a means of deterring repeated violations of the National Agreement. Postal management openly treats contract compliance as a joke, knowing that no matter how effective our local branches and dedicated stewards are, they will continue doing whatever they want. Until management is incentivized to abide by the terms of the contract through a means of enforced accountability, any grievance process will remain toothless. Letter carrier workplace rights will continue to be willfully ignored and hundreds of thousands of grievances will not change a thing.

*Joe Golonka, Branch 2184*

## Springfield, Ohio

Greetings, one and all. We had two carriers retire recently. Both are veterans. Tony Carr served in the Army and began his postal career in October of 1998. He carried mail for 27 years and if he ever called in sick, you knew something was wrong. Gene Moorman served in the Air Force for 20 years and then carried mail for 20 years. His rock concert stories always kept me entertained. Congratulations to you both for a job well done.

Like the sands through the hourglass, so are our struggles with the DPS. After much complaining up the chain by our postmaster and our union president, the powers that be responded with a cracker jack blue ribbon team who spent some time in our office over a period of two weeks observing. Their conclusion was that DUT time was not being met. As a result, carriers had to wait on mail. Holy wasted resources, Batman! We’ve been telling them this for months. Their solution was the carriers’ start time should be moved from 7:30 to either 8 or 8:30. I’ve been with the P.O. for over 30 years, and this is always the solution to mail-processing problems. Address anything but the actual problem.

The Dayton plant says the DPS machines, the carriers and meddling kids are the real prob-

lems! I guess we will just continue with the 15 to 25 percent error rate that typically occurs with our DPS. Nothing like handling the same pieces of mail over and over again. Oh wait, we already do that with CFS and all the other mark-up mail. Maybe the P.O. should just do away with the 2 percent error rate target and maybe try something a little more realistic, like 6-7.

Merry Christmas to one and all. See you in the new year!

*Jerry Martens, Branch 45*

## Staunton, Virginia

Congratulations to Roxanne Brown, the new international president-elect of the United Steelworkers! President Renfro invited her to speak at our convention in Boston in 2024.

Sister Brown is a proud member of the Women of Steel. The message was that we all have superpowers, and we need to use them!

She praised our superpower, delivering millions of ballots safely and securely. She asked us to use our superpower, our voice and vote, too.

Sister Brown always had superpowers, but without the support of her union siblings who developed and fostered the Women of Steel program, it is less likely that she’d be using them to lead her union today. Her brothers understood their trade was traditionally male, and they knew the strength of their union depended on growth and change.

My first opportunity to work with the Steelworkers and Women of Steel came in 2008 while on release for the NALC. An amazing team! I began talking with NALC leaders right away, hoping we would form a similar group. I have always been a proud NALC member and am blessed to have a diverse group of excellent mentors and partners in crime. I can also tell you stories of being held back or held to a different standard because I am female. First week as a TE, one of my brothers told me I was stealing a man’s job.

So, when I heard President Renfro at the 2023 rap session and again at the 2024 convention that the NALC was developing our own mentorship program, I was ecstatic. In fact, I was choked up. Still hoping that a substantive, formal program will be introduced at the 2025 rap session. Until then, all you awesome mentors, keep up the good work! Together we grow and rise.

Solidarity—

*Cindy Connors, Branch 513*

## Toledo, Ohio

Branch 100 sent a delegation to the Committee of Presidents meeting in Orlando. There still seems to be varying interpretive issues with certain language in the new contract locally. We had hoped that by the time we sent another delegation to the rap session in Cleveland, these issues would have been resolved. But alas, issues remain.

Preparations are underway by our dynamic duo, Deb Pipes and Samantha Yerg, for our annual Christmas party. They, along with several elves, always transform our hall into a winter wonderland. The theme this year: “The Nightmare Before Christmas.” The food and drinks provided are always well received by those in

attendance, and everyone has a great time with the dancing, games and contests.

The first week in December, our branch representatives attended a labor-management meeting with Toledo’s postmaster and a couple of his minions. We attempted to negotiate a reasonable settlement for numerous cases, but to no avail. Once again, management chooses not to settle locally, pushing all the cases up the chain in the process, only to likely pay more when the cases are finally resolved. This seems to be management’s strategy across the country. Refuse now and pay more later. A couple of years ago, 85 to 90 percent of the cases were resolved. In 2024, that percentage dropped to 27 percent. This year, only 16 percent of our cases have been resolved.

With our caseload soaring to record heights, our postmaster’s solution is to threaten to end releasing all Formal A representatives. We await his decision. It appears the Postal Service is trying to sabotage the entire grievance procedure.

*Ray Bricker, Branch 100*

## Tri-Valley, California

I love L.A.! Congratulations to the back-two-back World Series Champion Los Angeles Dodgers. Game-7 of the World Series was amazing and had all the suspense that any baseball fan could ask for. The Toronto Blue Jays played exceptionally well throughout the series but ultimately fell short against a very talented team. Overall, it was an excellent matchup. “I dare to say, they will win again, let’s go for the three-peat, Dodgers!”

Speaking of three-peating, recently three of our installations conducted route inspections. Unfortunately, each inspection team followed the same outdated approach that attempted to shortchange carriers of their time. I’ve spoken with carriers about their concerns and frustrations during the inspection process. Some dread this experience and struggle to trust the outcome—which is completely understandable. Route inspection can often make carriers feel as though the deck is stacked against them. Mail volume seems to vanish, along with the time that it may usually take to complete a route. Meanwhile, supervisors are closely observing and following carriers throughout the week. In some offices, stress levels appear to be through the roof. Nonetheless, the most important thing to remember is to stay calm, take a deep breath, and approach the process with composure.

Please be advised that although reports have surfaced of supervisors giving improper instructions to carriers during route inspections, and of route examiners recording inaccurate or subjective comments in an effort to reduce carrier’s time, our branch continues to closely monitor the inspection process and address any inappropriate actions by management.

Management’s ill-advised practices will be formally challenged through the grievance procedure. We encourage all members to keep the branch informed of any improper activities occurring within their installations. Additionally, please take time to review the *NALC Guide to Route Inspections* for further guidance and awareness.

*James C. Perryman Jr., Branch 2902*



## Honor Roll

### NALC recognizes its brothers and sisters for their long-term membership

NALC members who have completed 50 years of membership in NALC are awarded a Life Membership Gold Card that entitles them to all privileges of membership in NALC without payment of dues. To receive a gold card and 50-year lapel pin, the branch secretary must write to the NALC secretary-treasurer and request the award for the member. This is in accordance with Article 2, Section 5 (a) of the *NALC Constitution*.



Additionally, the national secretary-treasurer's office handles

branch requests for lapel pins. Accordingly, the secretary-treasurer's office can only provide suitable lapel pins when receiving proper notification by the branch secretary in the year when a member is to complete the following number of years as a member: 25 years, 30 years, 35 years, 40 years, 45 years, 50 years, 55 years, 60 years and 65 years. Special plaques are available for members who complete 70 years and 75 years. This is also per Article 2 of the *NALC Constitution*.



**All requests must come from the branch secretary.** Longtime members are encouraged to inform their branches when they reach a longevity benchmark.

### Below is a list of those NALC members who have received an award in the past month:

#### 75-year plaques

Kent P. Murdock	Green Bay, WI	Br. 619
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#### 65-year pins

Jerry G. Newcomb	Owensboro, KY	Br. 234
Chas E. Arcand	Green Bay, WI	Br. 619
John O. Schaetz	Green Bay, WI	Br. 619
Kenneth R. Seigworth	Green Bay, WI	Br. 619

#### 60-year pins

Merle P. Mago	Canton, OH	Br. 238
Chas E. Arcand	Green Bay, WI	Br. 619
John O. Schaetz	Green Bay, WI	Br. 619
Ronald W. Trinkner	Green Bay, WI	Br. 619

#### 55-year pins

David R. Guzman	Bellevue, NE	Br. 4128
Clarence H. Johnson	Bellevue, NE	Br. 4128
Mark S. Marcum	Bellevue, NE	Br. 4128
John J. Trezza	Jamaica, NY	Br. 562
Robert E. Lee	Canton, OH	Br. 238
Wayne E. Schroth	Canton, OH	Br. 238
Robert J. Lovas	Barberton, OH	Br. 897
Joseph F. Buss	Pawtucket, RI	Br. 55
Michael Carruolo	Pawtucket, RI	Br. 55
Arthur R. Crookes Jr.	Pawtucket, RI	Br. 55
Gilles G. Leclerc	Pawtucket, RI	Br. 55
Roscoe D. Callahan Jr.	Aiken, SC	Br. 1569
John S. Clark	Aiken, SC	Br. 1569
Robert A. Ferguson Jr.	Anderson, SC	Br. 1871
Willie J. Gaines	Anderson, SC	Br. 1871
Jerry W. Charles	Danville, VA	Br. 595
A. L. Tucker	Danville, VA	Br. 595

Ronald S. Liebergen	Green Bay, WI	Br. 619
Roger J. Macmurray	Green Bay, WI	Br. 619
Ralph E. Miller	Green Bay, WI	Br. 619
David Passarelli	Green Bay, WI	Br. 619
Merlin J. Sanderfoot	Green Bay, WI	Br. 619
Allen E. Sievert	Green Bay, WI	Br. 619

#### 50-year gold cards and pins

James T. Long	Huntsville, AL	Br. 462
Michael S. Haner	Grand Rapids, MI	Br. 56
David R. Guzman	Bellevue, NE	Br. 4128
Mark S. Marcum	Bellevue, NE	Br. 4128
Kenneth L. Trimble	Cleveland, OH	Br. 40
Michael J. Donahue	Pawtucket, RI	Br. 55
Donald F. Jackson	Aiken, SC	Br. 1569
Victor L. Dorsett	Danville, VA	Br. 595
Donny W. Rhodes	Danville, VA	Br. 595
Norbert E. Schaefer	Milwaukee, WI	Br. 2

## Election Notices

### Burlington, North Carolina

This is official notice to inform all active and retired members of Branch 2262 that nominations of representatives for the spring seminar (March 26-28, 2026) in Raleigh will be held at the regular stated monthly branch meeting on Jan. 27 at The Cutting Board, 2699 Ramada Road, Burlington.

Elections for representatives for the spring seminar will be by secret ballot, if needed, at the regular stated monthly branch meeting on Feb. 24 at The Cutting Board.

*Mark Bare, Pres., Br. 2262*

### Palatine, Illinois

Delegate nominations and elections update: Branch 4268 submitted a request on Oct. 8, 2025, for dispensation to adjust the timeline for its delegate nomination and election process. Due to recent restructuring and significant organizational changes within the branch, additional time is needed to complete these steps.

With approval, the branch will hold nominations for national and state convention delegates at the regular meeting on Jan. 14, and elections will take place at the regular meeting on Feb. 11, with voting conducted by mail.

*Robin Booker, Sec., Br. 4268*

### Wilmington, Delaware

This is official notice to all members of Branch 191 that nominations for the following office and position will be held at the regular branch meeting on March 11 at 409 Old Dupont Road, Wilmington: vice president. This position will be for the remainder of the current term. By virtue of their offices, the president and vice president are delegates to the national convention, provided they meet the criteria put forth by the branch bylaws.

Elections will be held by secret ballot at the regular monthly meeting, if necessary, from 4 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. on April 8, at the union office at 409 Old Dupont Road, Wilmington, and results will be announced at the end of the April 8 meeting.

*Marisela Ramos, Sec., Br. 191*

## Mutual Exchanges

**FL: South Florida (9/07) to Santa Fe, Albuquerque, NM.** Looking for a mutual exchange with a regular city carrier. Email for more info. John, 4fity4@gmail.com.

**FL: Tampa (10/22) to Myrtle Beach, SC area.** City carrier. Town and country, FL office 33615, 11 district offices, OT+. Tanner, 706-631-1962.

**MI: East Lansing (3/19) to Flint, MI or surrounding area.** 810-964-1027 (call or text).

**TX: Tyler (6/23) to Dallas, Fort Worth, TX or surrounding areas as far as Greenville, TX.** Regular city carrier. Overtime available! Mary, 214-476-3307 (text) or marymartin03@yahoo.com.

### How to place a Mutual Exchange ad

The cost of Mutual Exchange ads is \$15 for up to 30 words and \$25 for 31-50 words per month. Ads must be received by the 5th of the month preceding the month in which the ad will appear (e.g., January's deadline is for the February publication). Mail ad with check (payable to NALC) to: Mutual Exchange Ads, Postal Record, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

Ads are published for NALC members only. A branch officer or steward must endorse the ad to certify membership. Include your name, address and branch number. Begin each ad with your state abbreviation, city and seniority date.

Specific route information or mention of three-way transfers will not be published, nor any wording that offers cash or property to facilitate an exchange. Mutual exchanges must be approved by both postmasters involved. Seniority of carriers involved shall be governed by Article 41, Sec. 2E of the National Agreement. Carriers may not exchange assignments, since vacated positions must be posted for bids in accordance with local and national agreements.

**Please note:** There will be no Branch Items, State Summaries or Retiree Reports in the February *Postal Record*. That edition will be the special annual tribute issue honoring contributors to the Letter Carrier Political Fund during 2025.

**FIGHT  
LIKE HELL!**



# Tell Congress to support our priority legislation

NALC's Legislative Action Center is where letter carriers can access the information and tools necessary to educate lawmakers on our issues and priority legislation. You can find out who your representative and senators are, what bills are most pressing, and useful background information.

- Join together with thousands of other letter carriers to take action on the issues that matter most to us
- Find your representatives and senators, and contact them
- Learn more about the bills in the House and Senate that are being monitored by NALC
- Access NALC's fact sheets on our priority issues and legislation



Scan the QR code to go to the NALC  
Legislative Action Center or go to [nalc.org/  
government-affairs/legislative-action-center](http://nalc.org/government-affairs/legislative-action-center)





# Help your NALC family affected by natural disasters

The **NALC Disaster Relief Foundation** provides hands-on relief for carriers affected by natural disasters, such as wildfires, hurricanes, floods and tornados. It receives donations to be used to assist regular NALC members affected by natural disasters.

NALC response teams throughout the country are activated to go to disaster locations and offer assistance to NALC members and their families who live in the same household. Basic supplies, including uniforms and food, are available for those who need assistance.

Financial support may be available depending on the availability of funding and qualifying criterias. Any regular member of NALC who has faced hardship as a result of a natural disaster will be able to apply for assistance.

**Make a donation by sending a check or money order to:**

**NALC Disaster Relief Foundation  
100 Indiana Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20001-2144**

*The foundation is a 501(c)(3). Your contribution to the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation may be eligible for a tax deduction. It is recommended you seek further advice from your tax advisor.*



**NALC  
Disaster  
Relief  
Foundation**

