



# News 56



A publication of National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 56, Grand Rapids MI



# 56 Calendar

**Stewards Training** – April 23rd

**State Convention** – April 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> Traverse City, MI

**General Meeting** – May 2nd

**Annual Retiree Dinner** – May 7th English Hills Golf Course

**Arbitration Advocate School** – May 19<sup>th</sup>

**Stewards Training** – May 28<sup>th</sup>

**KIM Region Golf Outing-Lansing** – June 2<sup>nd</sup> More slots available (No cost to branch)

**General Meeting** – June 6th

**Stewards Training** – June 25th

**National Contract Negotiations Start** – June 26th

**Stewards Training** – July 30th

**RAP Session** – Aug 9th – 11th

**Stewards Training** – Aug 27th

**General Meeting** – Sept 5th

**Golf Outing** – Sept 8th Boulder Creek Golf Course

**Stewards Training** – Sept 24th

**Formal A & Beyond** – Sept 29th – Oct 4th - Baltimore, MD

**General Meeting** – Oct 3rd

**KIM Training** – Oct 12th – 14th Kentucky

**Committee of Presidents** – Oct 19th – 21st - Las Vegas, NV

**Health Benefits Seminar** – Oct 20th – 23rd - Las Vegas, NV

**Stewards Training** – Oct 29th

**General Meeting** – Nov 7th Officer & Delegate Nominations (Must be present or submit in writing prior to nomination)

**Stewards Training** – Nov 26th

**General Meeting** – Dec 5th Branch Elections

**Steward Training** – Dec 31st (Subject to Change)





From the multiple desks of the President –

2019 is upon us and started off in a whirlwind and hasn't let up, at least not for me. As many of you have heard or figured out by now, Kyle has moved onto a higher position in the Union and I assumed the reigns as your branch 56 President on Jan 3rd. We can all speculate how easy this job is and, "If I was in charge, I'd do this or that" all the way up until you get to set in the cool kids chair. I spend most of my day fielding questions or trying to make some sense of the calendar on my cell phone. I explain to people that my calendar looks like a topographical map without roads. I keep things on my calendar broken down

into different colors or everything just runs together. I still carry my route at least once a week and as often as I can, and it still feels like there's simply not enough time in the week to get everything accomplished for the members and branch.

Usually with the changing of the guard, comes full scale changes. We are no different at branch 56 and we are implementing small changes in an attempt to bring solidarity amongst the members. One would be foolish to believe everything will happen over night and everything will be changed and make everyone happy. Most carriers hate change and are creatures of habit. We are looking at changing that perception and the more input we get, then the merrier we can all be – that's the goal.

We did have a group of members that wanted to meet up on Superbowl Sunday at the hall and just hang out and watch the game together. This was not a union sponsored event but just some members wanting to get together and bond. The branch did not rent or furnish anything for the gathering. The event has raised the question, are we going to rent the hall? Currently we are not. There is a liability issue, we would need to have a hall manager, a calendar for booking, clean-up, damage....blah blah blah and the list goes on. We plan to look at how to efficiently and fairly utilize the hall for events but until we can really set down and go over all the different things associated with it, we will just hold off for now. Stay tuned for updates.....

I have asked the Executive Board to meet before each general meeting to discuss items that we feel need to be raised to the members during the meetings in hope that we get everything covered and the board has answers when brought up after a motion has been made. In Jan, Feb and March we have done this, and it seems to have moved the pace of the meetings along without a long drawn out debate. The trustees are making recommendations to the body, motions being made, discussion ensues and then a vote. After the vote, we move onto the next topic. We have also implemented using media so the members can see some of the hot topics and reports on the screen when being discussed.

The body voted during the Feb meeting to purchase newer laptops for the stewards, since the ones most have where purchased as refurbished ones. Most stewards use

their own home laptops because of this, and the speed of the ones provided by the branch. Keep in mind that we need newer / modern laptops but since they are being moved around constantly, they need to be rugged as well. We also experienced a power surge at the hall during Feb and lost the Financial Secretaries desktop due to it frying the motherboard. The plan is to purchase 2 laptops a quarter until we can get the stewards all up to speed. We currently have 10 stewards and myself as the Chief Steward for Grand Rapids and our outlying AOs that are merged with us. We have 4 certified Formal A's for the city including myself. Once we replace a stewards laptop then we will pass the older model down to the alternate steward so they will have something to work on in case the fulltime steward is unavailable.

A big shout out to 2 branch 56 brothers who made the Postal Record for helping our customers in times of need. Adrien Loiselle and Garrett Rhodes.

John Adkins and Rebecca Holt both graduated from the School of Stewards taught by the NBA Office and held here at our hall in final days of Jan into Feb.

The Annual Retiree Dinner is right around the corner on May 7<sup>th</sup>. This is a great event that the branch puts on to recognize our fellow brothers and sisters that have paved the way for our generations and others to come. If you are a branch member and would like to attend and socialize with our retirees, please contact the branch VP Don Karl for details and pricing.

The 95<sup>th</sup> Biennial State Convention is fast approaching as well, April 28<sup>th</sup> thru 30<sup>th</sup> in Traverse City, MI. 32 members were nominated and a total of 20 will be attending as paid delegates. 3 did not meet the requirements to go as a paid delegate and 9 decided they did not want to go.

Welcome back to Mindy Dekker and Keven Plite. I asked Mindy to be the branch Recording Secretary since it was vacant once I appointed Don Karl as the Vice President. Thankfully she accepted and has been a great asset to the branch in the short time she has assumed the role. She is one organized sister. Keven is currently the #10 seniority carrier in the city and volunteered to take over as the informal and formal A steward for Eastown to help alleviate some of the duties off my plate. Keven has been at this for a long time representing the contract and is a plethora of knowledge. Michelle Nicholas is working her way into becoming a full-time steward to replace Keven when he retires.

While vacationing in Mexico in February, I received an email from management informing me that zip codes 49506 and 49512 would be going through a 6-day full route count. Upon my return, Keven Plite and myself sat down with management and reached an agreement to do a minor route adjustment instead of the full-blown count.

I have also been in negotiations with management to update the Article 8 SOP / Overtime Tracker. Once an agreement is reached, Keven Plite and Dave Teusink will update the actual tracker. We will get this new updated tracker out to the stewards as

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soon as we can. The goal is to make tracking overtime as easy and equitable as possible in compliance with the National contract.

In closing, my goal for the branch is to have more open communication between ourselves and a stronger bond with each other as union brothers and sisters. Let's stop throwing each other under the bus to management and come together and be united. We may not convince every carrier that the union is for them but we can still educate them and show them why we have a union. I may not have all the answers off the top of my head but I know where to find them.....

Until next time,

Your President

Darrell Helsley

616-328-9750



## Proposed bylaw changes.....



### ATTENTION

Proposed bylaw changes were submitted at the April branch meeting. They will be discussed at the May 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting and voted on at the June 6<sup>th</sup> branch meeting. We encourage you to attend and voice your opinion.

**Happy spring everyone**..... warm weather will bring us all a much-needed break from the challenges of winter delivery. You are not thanked enough for all that you endure.

I hope as the weather warms, we will see even more of you at the meetings each month. We have already seen many new faces. These are the future leaders of this union.



### **Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF)**



We are making a concerted effort to sign people up for the letter carrier political fund. **We must defend our health insurance, retirement, door to door delivery, the mailbox itself, five-day delivery, among other things.**

By federal law NO union dues may be used for any political activity. Therefore, we have LCPF, a political action committee to be our voice in government. We have been successful in fighting off the legislative attacks so far, but they show no signs of giving up in their efforts. It is important to note that the LCPF supports anyone who supports our jobs, regardless of their political party. LCPF has supported democrats, republicans, and independents.

I hope you will consider the **"give me \$5 campaign"**. \$5 a pay check is not enough to notice but it could make a big difference in defending our jobs. If you wish to donate please come to a meeting or contact me at [nalc56vp@comcast.net](mailto:nalc56vp@comcast.net) and we will find a way to make it happen. You can also set it up yourself using an allotment on postal ease or your bank account.

### **Website (NALC56.org)**

2019 has a full calendar of events. Darrin Braska, our web designer, put the calendar on our websites for ease of access. I hope you will check it out regularly as we will update it throughout the year. If you have any pictures or ideas for the website, please send them to [nalc56vp@comcast.net](mailto:nalc56vp@comcast.net)

### **Social Activities**

John Adkins and Jamie Nichols have taken on the challenge of organizing social activities for the branch. They have a list of events including picnics, kickball, and pumpkin carving. They are also seeking ideas for other events that would be fun for our members. I hope to see you all at these events.

### **Golf Committee**

Mike Schregardus and John Adkins are running the golf committee this year. Our golf outing is one of our most popular events each year. It is also a great fundraiser for Muscular Dystrophy. We are looking for prize donations. If you know of any businesses or individuals who might donate please let us know at [nalc56vp@comcast.net](mailto:nalc56vp@comcast.net) or tell your steward. This is a very worthwhile cause.



In Solidarity,

Don Karl -Vice President

## What's the Branch Treasurer up to?

Greetings from your branch treasurer. My name is Chris Smith and I have been the branch treasurer since 1994, with a brief hiatus as Vice President and Health Benefits Representative somewhere in the early 2000's. The branch treasurer is tasked with great responsibilities. The Treasurer must keep all the branch funds accounted for and disperse payments as directed by the membership.

Branch 56 currently has eight (8) funds that I am responsible for. The funds are derived of the Checkbook, Mortuary, National Convention, Building, Entertainment, State Convention, Training, and MDA as provided for in the Branch by-laws. Each fund is allocated a per member amount of dues money except MDA which is not comprised of any dues money.

Each month I make the branch deposit in each fund as directed by the Financial Secretary. I disperse our funds to pay vouchers (bills) as approved by the membership. I am responsible for collecting receipts and completed vouchers, so our expenses are paid in a timely manner. The Department of Labor has many regulations for unions and receipts and vouchers are just two of them.

I use a bookkeeping program to reconcile each fund with the banking statements monthly. This program is very helpful to keep the balances of each fund in line with what has been approved to pay out of a specific fund. The branch has specific monies paid out of specific funds such as the Christmas party expenditures come out of the Entertainment fund and training expenses come out of the training fund. The Branch By-laws describe what each fund is used for.

The treasurer is also tasked with the payroll for the Officers and stewards and anyone else approved for wages such as the Election committee. Currently our branch does payroll on a monthly basis. Our payroll consists of a monthly salary for each position, a stipend for stewards who attend contract training and any lost time wages approved by the membership and/or by-laws.

Once a year the branch (treasurer) is mandated to complete a report called the LM-3 for the Department of Labor and the Form 990 for the IRS. This report accounts for every penny received and dispersed for the year. The report includes things such as number of members, membership dues, assets disposed and acquired, payments to officers and their expenses, taxes, office supplies, postage and the list goes on and on. Thankfully this is only once a year.

As a so-called numbers person I really enjoy this position, even when it's necessary to shut the book and find the inverted numbers the next day to get the columns to reconcile. Currently I am compiling data to complete the LM-3 report that is due next month in addition to the normal monthly duties.

In Union Solidarity, Chris Smith  
Treasurer Branch 56  
Greetings fellow carriers

Due to the sale of our old union hall and the purchase of a new building branch 56 had to fill out a Department of Labor form LM2 instead of the normal LM3.

The LM2 is far more in depth and takes hours to fill out. Chris Smith stepped up and got it done. savings the branch a lot of money over hiring an CPA.

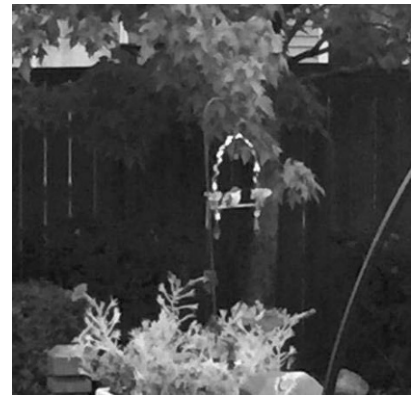


For those of you who don't know me, my name is **Malinda Dekker** aka Mindy, and I am happy to be your recording secretary. Things are falling into place quite nicely in our new building and it is one to certainly be proud of. If you weren't able to make it to our open house, you should definitely try to make it to a contract training or a general meeting. I'm sure you will not be disappointed. There are plans to have other events in the future, so there will be opportunities to socialize with other union members and their families.

As you will notice in my articles I don't necessarily write a lot about delivering the mail. Or about management and their going's on. Yada, yada. Not that it doesn't have significance, but a lot of it you have already heard many times. So you may like my style.....or maybe not. What I write about comes from the heart and hopefully you won't find it too boring.

Winter is finally loosening its icy grip on us. It's time to shake those winter blahs and enjoy the fresh spring air. Doing activities outside in the spring is so refreshing to me. I don't mind doing yard work, ( of course it can be tough when it's 80 or 90 and humid), but it is still enjoyable. I even attempted a small raised bed garden last year. I must say that it went pretty well, but I will do things differently this year. Just like everything else, there is a learning curve.

The new thing that I am very excited about is Hummingbirds. We put up feeders last spring and we were fortunate enough to have them stay awhile. I even made them a little swing, and I was ecstatic when they acutely used it.

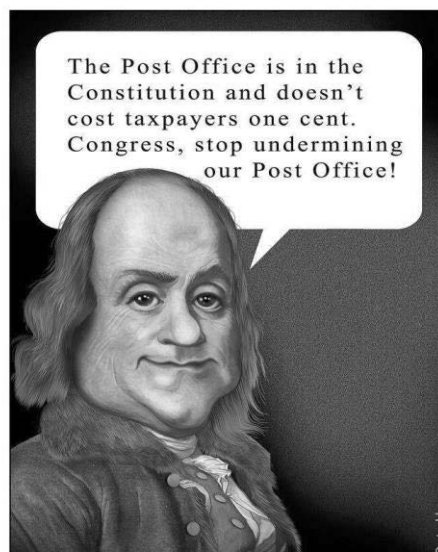


## Kentwood

What does the Usps, FedEx, UPS & Amazon have in common? Nothing! Why? Because only the Usps has honored my request that no packages be left, that I'll pick them up. Feelings aside, here in Kwood we'll be saying so long to Wendy Dennis & Clayton Sawyer before the year is out.

Congrats to you both!

Cooper, a/steward Kentwood





## National Association of Letter Carriers – Region 6

### National Business Agent

### February 2019 Report



“The union won’t represent me!”, “I want someone that will fight for me!”, “You take my dues but don’t do anything for me!” Unfortunately, I will hear remarks like that on a rare occasion. Sometimes those type of remarks come from someone having a bad day and is frustrated by an unreasonable manager - someone needing to vent. That’s understandable. I’ve worked at this job too long to have those type of words poison my impression of all our hard working stewards and branch officers. It’s okay to vent sometimes - we all need to.

I had a young lady call me and say all those things on the *second* phone call I took from her one day. The first call she explained her circumstance, I asked a few clarifying questions, then told her she didn’t have a contractual violation. Needless to say, she wasn’t happy. If I could write the contract the way I want it to be life would be fabulous for city letter carriers. Guess what, our employer won’t let me. I get it – it can be frustrating, but that doesn’t mean your representatives aren’t working for you. We have to abide by what has been negotiated and try to negotiate other issues that are not addressed in our contract. We don’t have a magic wand. We do have an employer. Does that employer ask of us things that are not contractual? Sometimes. We grieve those instructions. But, if those instructions are unsafe – meaning they could be injurious to ourselves or others – those are the only instructions we do not have to follow. But be aware, if you believe the instructions are unsafe, we would need to offer an affirmative defense – that means, we would have to explain to a neutral arbitrator the reasons why those instructions were not safe. Then, that arbitrator, would have to agree our reasoning is...reasonable.

On a similar note, at times we will receive requests from members to have a steward outside their office to represent them for whatever reason. Members have to realize that branches have elections for a reason. Those that run for office, or ones that are appointed by someone that ran for branch president, deserve the respect for stepping up to serve the membership. For our office to overrule the branch membership’s wishes would be a disservice, and a very disrespectful action towards the branch. Members have a right to vote, and better yet, if the requirements of Article 5 section 2 of the National Association of Letter Carrier’s Constitution is met, members have the right to run for a branch office. If you, as a member that qualifies per the Constitution, don’t like the way you and your branch is being represented, I have three words for you – run for office.

That last paragraph should not be read with a negative connotation, just the opposite. I do understand that some people may not have the required amount of time to run for a branch position. That’s okay. I just ask that they help the branch in any capacity they can. Those that have committed to the branch offices their time need all other member’s support. Support to help us achieve the type of contracts (LMOUs) our member’s want (including the member who voiced their displeasure with the union).

We are a union – a body made up of many parts. All of those parts need to work in conjunction in order for the union to represent, protect and organize its members – all of those parts need to work together to continue to grow and strengthen for the betterment of *our* members.

**Spring is in the air.** How do you know you may ask? No, it's not by the months on the calendar. It's by all the route count and inspection notifications sent out by management. That's how you tell its spring in the NALC union world. Has your branch been scheduled for an inspection?

Route inspections are nothing that needs to be feared – just the opposite. We need to embrace the opportunity. When was the last time your route was inspected with you assigned to it?

If count and inspections are done properly your assignment should be adjusted to how you perform, on average, on your assignment. What's wrong with that? The big question (or obstacle) is how can I be assured the inspection will be done properly? That's where the union, your union, comes in.

Our office will offer route count and inspection training to any branch that requests it. We will also conduct any training the branch may need for their stewards in order to police the inspection process.

So, why Spring inspections? Typically, spring has lower volumes of mail so management thinks they can eliminate assignments or add to them. That could happen for two reasons. Either routes are in fact, short or light; or, we don't know all the functions we are responsible for doing per the handbook M-41 (City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities).

If assignments are adjusted properly during a light volume inspection – that's ok. The inspection will produce Route Base Information (RBI-letter, flat and parcel volumes, office line item times, casing rates, street times and P.M. office times, etc.) for that volume. You will have that information after the inspection is concluded. Then, when volumes go over that RBI, you then have the right to request and submit a PS form 3996 (Carrier-Auxiliary Control) to reflect the increased volume.

Decades ago the Postal Service used to do annual count and inspections. I wish they still did them. Annual inspections kept carriers sharp in what is required of them to service our customers. Without the counts, management has allowed carriers to take short cuts in performing our jobs. Why does management allow us to do that? TIME. It saves time on assignments to eliminate service to our customers. I don't know about you, but I take pride when people ask what I do. I tell them I'm a public servant – a city letter carrier. My job is to serve my customers – not serve my managers. If I do things required of me, there is nothing management can do adversely to me.

Whenever we have route count and inspection trainings please invite all CCAs to the training. Even though they currently don't have bid assignments, they will learn what is required of them, and why. All carriers need to understand why we say, "Eight hours work for eight hours pay".

In Solidarity,

Troy Clark  
National Business Agent – Region 6  
Kentucky – Indiana – Michigan (KIM)

Branch 56 hosts the.....

# K.I.M. Region training School of stewards

John Adkins-East Paris



Rebecca Holt-Wyoming



Winter 2019 School of Stewards



# What happens when you get hurt at work??

By Bob Pearson - Northwest

We have just finished a brutal weather season and I am sure carriers had slips and falls. No slip and fall is minor. Every one of them can have far reaching complications further down the road. Some can be disabling and need surgery; some might need rehabilitation. So what is the remedy?

Simple, if you slip, trip or fall you **NEED** to notify your supervisor as soon as possible. You need to make a record of the incident. You need to have a full disclosure of the incident and how and where and when it happened. Not Simply: I fell, at the steps and I think I hurt my elbow. How did you fall?? What did you land on? What did you hurt exactly or where do you hurt? What were you doing, not just delivering mail? What type of mail- packages? What surface did the incident occur on, was it smooth, broken, weathered, uneven? Were you doing your delivery as required and assigned? What date, location, time, weather conditions? All this information is to protect **YOU** the Carrier, from wrongful denials. Remember you work for the USPS.

They are required to provide a safe, secure working environment. You **MUST** report the incident within 30 days to be a covered injury, but you have 3 years for any needed medical for the particulars, once it is approved. But the best rule is the earlier you report the incident, the better to have all the information available for the reports. What is that report?

It is a CA1: Report of Traumatic Injury that is the report that **MUST** be completed for any coverage and declaration of injury. It has information that is from the carrier and then further information to be completed and **SIGNED** by the supervisor. **THEN REMEMBER THIS**, you can be seen of your choice, any doctor.



That form is a CA7, Authorization for Payment it authorizes you to go to the doctor **YOUR DOCTOR** and they will be paid. Without the CA7, **YOU** are responsible for medical bills not the USPS!

Remember you need to report “possible” injuries when they occur, and the right to insure a medical specialist sees them! This is the **IMPORTANT POINT** to remember, **YOU** are covered for all medical expenses pertaining to the injuries. And the USPS for up to 45 day **PAYS** you continuously as if you were working. With the COP: Continuation of Pay option on the CA1. You doesn’t have to use Sick Leave for these incidents. This is not a policy or a contract referral. This is the **LAW!** Protect yourself and you will continue to be the dedicated carriers you are!

**The 27th annual Letter Carriers’ Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive is on Saturday, May 11, 2019.**



**Deliver  
the Cure**  
with **MDA®**



# NALC Health Benefit Plan



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## **HEALTH BENEFITS by Mike Schregardus**

Hello again to all the health benefit junkies.

First, I got some numbers from the NBA's office on how many people joined the NALC's health plan. We had 18 new members sign up for the health plan during open season, which is fantastic. The total number of grand rapids carriers that belong to the NALC health plan is now 208, or 30.95% of our branch. Nice.

Our branch currently has 672 members including active and retired. We had the 4<sup>th</sup> highest increase in NALC health plan members in the KIM region. That's like, AWESOME. The only branches that had more members sign up, were all much bigger branches than us. Branch 14 Louisville, branch 1 Detroit, and Taylor Branch 2184. I know that it's because of all of you who have the NALC health plan talking it up and letting our brothers and sisters who are union members know about all the positive things about **OUR NALC** Health Plan. Definitely couldn't do it without you.

On another note Scot McKale, Gary Krull and I were sent last month to an all day OWCP training given by RAA David Mudd of the NBAs office. For me personally, it was a refresher from a class I went to with Gary Smith and Kyle Inosencio about 6 years ago. Now it did have quite a few differences and a few new twists, but that's Mr. Mudd. I also know that he was not feeling a 100%, but to get us fools trained he knew he had to push through. He did a great job with the presentation. I learned a few new things and also learned that I had actually been giving the correct information to people.

If I can get it done in time for this newsletter, I want to get a flow chart on the steps to make sure that we all are on the same page. It is a lot of responsibility on the injured party to get the correct process moving in the correct direction (shoot that kind of sounded like Kyle UUGGHH) **but Ladies and gentlemen we are here to help as much as possible, do not hesitate to call Scot, Gary or myself.** Yak I know I have babbled too long again. So, to spare all of my followers and just let you know I will be talking about suicide prevention steps and signs in our next letter. So, members of the Blue patch, carry on, your customers count on you!!!

Mike Schregardus Your

NALC Health Benefit Representative.

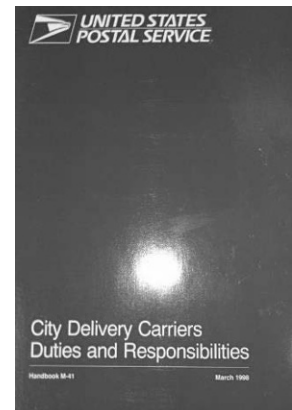
Hello from GRCA,

I wanted to take a moment to touch on fixed office times

The Office time associated with your route is a block of time in which you perform daily functions also known as *fixed office time*. Fixed office time includes various tasks that are reoccurring. Fixed office time for Grand rapids is 33 minutes. That means that management counts your mail and adds that time to your fixed office time. If you have 30 minutes of mail to case, then your office time would be 63 minutes. I have had carriers tell me that their supervisor told them that they should only be in the office for 30 minutes. How is this possible? Its not! Management is disregarding or eliminating your 33 minutes of fixed office time. I am not saying that your fixed office duties always take 33 minutes. In fact, it could be more or less than 33 minutes on any given day. The point is *route management*. Sometimes we get so caught up in getting the mail delivered or worrying about time for pivots that we forget we are professional carriers who have professional duties to complete. These duties include more than casing and delivering mail. Here is a list of a few things we should be doing.

- ✓ Checking your vehicle
- ✓ Withdrawing mail
- ✓ Getting accountables
- ✓ 5 minutes personal time (time to go to restroom, sunscreen, winter gear, etc...)
- ✓ Checking holds
- ✓ Pink cards
- ✓ Retrieving your keys scanner
- ✓ Edit Book/Red book
- ✓ Route book
- ✓ Completing forms (PS Form 3996, 3971, vehicle repair tag, etc...)
- ✓ Stock satchel and vehicle with forms
- ✓ Casing SPR's
- ✓ Flagging parcels (If carrier chooses)
- ✓ and any other reoccurring office activities
- ✓ PM office duties
- ✓ Clear accountables
- ✓ Marking up nixies (UTF, NSN, etc)
- ✓ Reasonable wash up time

Learn more by  
reading the M-41  
in your route  
book



Over the years we have had many different route adjustment processes. They have varied in numerous ways but all of them used office time as an intricate part of the route adjustment process. When you skip office duties you are essentially asking for a longer route. If you feel you do not have time do these things that should be a red flag that your route may already be overburdened or you are succumbing to the pressures to get it cased, delivered, and get off the clock.

Remember that your office times are a discussion with your supervisor just like your estimate of our route will be. Have a great week!

Chris Jacobs Steward Zone 3 and Zone 7

NALC 56 Annual Golf outing

September 8<sup>th</sup> 2019

Boulder Creek Golf Course



**MDA**<sup>®</sup>  
Golf Classic

Great food!

Great Friends

Great Fun

Great Cause





## LCPF, the time to give is now

The NALC has negotiated a National Agreement that will help keep us unified and equal. We pay our union dues to ensure that we can be as well prepared as possible to attain a fair contract for Letter Carriers. We've always been successful. This also goes for our fight with Congress. The contract oversees every day operations, but Congress has the ultimate say over the longevity of the USPS. Under Article 43.1,

Congress has the ability to take away everything that our Brothers and Sisters, in the 1970 Strike fought for, with one stroke of a pen. **Currently there are White House Budget plans to:**

**Raise FERS pension contributions by 1% for 6 years (pay cut of \$3,600 annually), eliminate FERS COLA's for Current and Future Retirees, Eliminate FERS Social Security Supplement, Moving the High 3 to a High 5 and talk of moving the USPS as a whole to "on budget". Also the White House Taskforce was looking into Privatization and eliminating Collective Bargaining.**

Are you going to sit back, and hope that Congress or the White House does the right thing, or are you willing to stand up and fight for your future? If you are ready to fight, there are some things that you may not be aware of. For example: how do we finance our legislative struggle? Not with dues money, but with LCPF contributions. Not one single dollar from dues goes into Political Activity.

**LCPF is a Non-Partisan PAC** that contributes to candidates that are friendly to Letter Carriers regardless of their party. NALC contributes to candidates that support NALC issues. Neil Young said it best: *"Be on my side, I'll be on your side."* We need support on both sides of the aisle to keep Letter Carrier issues at the forefront. **The interests LCPF protects are:** A strong USPS, job security for Letter Carriers, affordable health care benefits, fair and livable wages and safe and secure pensions to name a few. **The ballot box and bread box are connected.** As federal employees, Congress has oversight of nearly all aspects of Letter Carrier jobs. Furthermore, giving to the Letter Carrier Political Fund is a good investment. **(For 35¢ a day, you are protecting your job and benefits.) Think of it as job insurance, as many of us pay on average, per day: \$1.80+ for life insurance, \$2.20+ for individual car insurance, \$4.40 (or much more) for health insurance, \$3.50+ for homeowner's insurance.**

If you need any assistance please contact me at: [fjerestad@nalc.org](mailto:fjerestad@nalc.org), (202) 230-2992.

### LCPF Disclaimer

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Congratulations to our Uniform voucher winners

February winner: Sheyenne Stephen

March Winner: Darcy Yonkman

April Winner: Dustin Stephen



Any member with less than 3 years of service who attends a branch meeting gets to put their name in a bucket. At the end of each meeting a name is drawn and that carrier gets \$80 uniform voucher.

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## Wounded Warriors Leave update from NALC HQ

On November 5, 2016, certain veterans who begin or resume a civilian career with the Postal Service following their military service became eligible to have credited and use up to 104 hours of a newly-created and distinct category of leave called "Wounded Warriors Leave." The creation of Wounded Warriors Leave came about in response to the passage of the Wounded Warriors Federal Leave Act of 2015, which allows employees who meet the eligibility requirements to use this new category of leave to undergo medical treatment for a service-connected disability rating of 30 percent or more.

Recently, the Postal Service released a Management Instruction setting forth its policy guidelines and standard procedures for administering this new category of leave. NALC activists should familiarize themselves with these policies so they can best inform, and enforce the rights of, the letter carrier veterans they represent.

The eligibility requirements are outlined in the Management Instruction, which states:

### **Eligibility**

#### **General**

*All classifications of career and non-career Postal Service employees are eligible for Wounded Warriors Leave if all of the following applies:*

- a. They meet one of the eligibility requirements provided under Eligible Employees and*
- b. They have not previously established eligibility for Wounded Warriors Leave.*

*Eligible employees are entitled to only one 12-Month Eligibility Period in connection with Postal Service employment.*

#### **Eligible Employees**

*To be eligible, you must meet the criteria of one of the following:*

##### *1. A career and non-career employee:*

- a. With a full-time, part-time or non-traditional schedules;*
- b. Who begins serving his or her first appointment on or after November 5, 2016; and*
- c. Who has a single or combined service-connected disability rating of 30 percent or more.*

##### *2. Employees who:*

- a. Leave the Postal Service's employment to participate in active duty military service;*
- b. Return directly from that military service to a career or non-career appointment on or after November 5, 2016; and*
- c. Have sustained a single or combined service-connected disability rating of 30 percent or more that was incurred during the employee's immediate absence.*

##### *3. Employees who:*

- a. Take military leave from the Postal Service to participate in active-duty military service;*
- b. Return directly from that military leave on or after November 5, 2016; and*
- c. During military leave sustain a single or combined service-connected disability rating of 30 percent or more that was incurred during the employee's military leave.*

In the Postal Service, this benefit is available to eligible new employees hired on or after November 5, 2016, as well as employees hired prior to that date who leave the Postal Service's employment or take military leave to participate in active duty military service, sustain a service-connected disability rating of at least 30 percent during that military leave or service, and then return directly from that leave or service on or after November 5, 2016.

Employees who begin employment with the Postal Service on or after November 5, 2016, with pending disability determinations, who at any time during the first 12 months of employment receive a 30 percent or more disability rating, will be eligible for leave retroactively to the first day of employment. Any leave without pay (LWOP) or leave used while the determination is pending will be reimbursed and replaced with Wounded Warriors Leave, as appropriate, up to the maximum number (104) of days allowed.

It is an employee's responsibility to notify the Postal Service of his or her eligibility before requesting Wounded Warriors Leave. Employees must provide documentation from the Department of Veterans Affairs, or on any Office of Personnel Management (OPM) certification form developed for administration of Wounded Warriors Leave, certifying they have a qualifying service-connected disability.

The rules for accrual and crediting of Wounded Warriors Leave, as well as the timeframe in which the leave must be used, varies depending on whether an eligible employee is new to the Postal Service, being re-employed, or returning from military leave. The exact policy for each category of eligible employee reads as follows:

***New Employees with a First Time Appointment***

*Each eligible employee will be credited with 104 hours of Wounded Warriors Leave following the Postal Service's receipt of documentation supporting the employee's eligibility. Wounded Warriors Leave will be available for use retroactively to the first day of employment.*

***Employees Returning to the Postal Service***

*Employees with a service-connected disability rated at 30 percent or more will have any unused portion of their Wounded Warriors Leave restored for the remaining months of the Twelve-Month Eligibility Period that began on the first day of their initial employment, if they meet the following requirements:*

- a. Began employment with the Postal Service on or after November 5, 2016;*
- b. Leave postal employment during the 12-Month Eligibility Period; and*
- c. Return to the Postal Service for a career or non-career appointment within the 12-Month Eligibility Period.*

***Employees Returning to the Postal Service from Military Service***

*When employees return to duty with the Postal Service on or after November 5, 2016, directly from military service (with a break in service), and as a result of that military service, have sustained a new service-connected disability rated at 30 percent or more, they will:*

- a. Receive the full 104 hours of Wounded Warriors Leave upon the Postal Service's receipt of documentation of their eligibility for Wounded Warriors Leave; and*
- b. Have 12 calendar months to use the leave.*

*Wounded Warriors Leave will be available for use retroactively to the first day of re-employment with the Postal Service.*

***Employees Returning to the Postal Service from Military Leave***

*Employees returning to the Postal Service from Military Leave (without a break in service) who sustain a new service-connected disability rated at 30 percent or more will receive the full 104 hours of Wounded Warriors Leave upon the Postal Service's receipt of documentation supporting the employee's eligibility. Wounded Warriors Leave will be available for use retroactively to the first day of return to service and the employee will have 12 calendar months to use the leave.*

Wounded Warriors Leave expires at the end of an eligible employee's 12-month eligibility period. This happens regardless of the employee's actual Wounded Warriors Leave balance. If the employee leaves the

Postal Service at any time during or after the expiration of the 12-month eligibility period, any remaining leave will not be reinstated, carried over, or paid out, except as permitted by OPM regulations if the employee transfers to another federal agency, or otherwise permitted by the Postal Service's Management Instruction.

If an eligible employee began employment with another federal agency and transfers to the Postal Service within the 12-month eligibility period, the employee is eligible to use Wounded Warriors Leave for the remainder of the 12-months. In these instances, the employee must certify the number of hours of Wounded Warriors Leave used at the former agency. The Postal Service will provide the employee with the remaining Wounded Warriors Leave.

Ideally, absences in which Wounded Warriors Leave could be used would be known in advance; however that may not always be the case. The Postal Service acknowledges this and within its policy describes what employees should do to request Wounded Warriors Leave in circumstances of foreseeable and unforeseeable nature. That policy reads:

#### ***Foreseeable Leave***

*All employees requesting Wounded Warriors Leave must:*

- a. Submit their request on PS Form 3971, Request for or Notification of Absence, in advance to the appropriate supervisor; and*
- b. Designate the reason for the absence as "other" and write "Wounded Warrior Leave" in the space provided.*

#### ***Unforeseeable Leave***

*The Postal Service makes an exception to the advance approval requirement for unexpected treatment that qualifies for Wounded Warriors Leave. When the need to use Wounded Warriors Leave is not foreseeable, the employee must notify the appropriate supervisor of the following items:*

- a. The employee's treatment;*
- b. The expected duration of the absence; and*
- c. The applicability of Wounded Warriors Leave as soon as possible.*

*Alternatively, the employee may use the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system to record his or her absences. If the employee does not submit PS Form 3971 before the absence, the supervisor must provide it to the employee upon his or her return to duty.*

An employee's supervisor is responsible for approving or disapproving requests for Wounded Warriors Leave by signing PS Form 3971, and returning a copy to the employee. In addition, to verify that Wounded Warriors Leave requested by an employee is appropriately used for the treatment of a service-connected disability, the requesting employee must provide proof from the health care provider. The Postal Service has created a new form to be used for this verification: PS Form 5980, *Treatment Verification for Wounded Warriors Leave*.

This new category of leave is a very important benefit to letter carriers who are also veterans with a disability rating of 30 percent or greater. Disabled veterans generally are required to attend regular medical appointments to maintain their health and to continue their eligibility to receive their veterans' benefits. Frequently, such appointments must be scheduled during normal work hours, and therefore letter carriers in the past often were required to use LWOP to attend those appointments. Wounded Warriors Leave should provide some relief to those who are eligible and must receive necessary treatment.





# NALC Fact Sheet

Department of Legislative and Political Affairs — National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO  
100 Indiana Ave. NW — Washington, DC 20001-2144 — 202-393-4695 — [www.nalc.org](http://www.nalc.org) © NALC

## Oppose Postal Privatization—S. Res. 99 & H. Res. 33

Nearly 500 million pieces of mail are delivered to over 157 million addresses six days a week by the U.S. Postal Service. USPS's service obligation allows communities large and small to benefit from the same level of service, regardless of wealth. It also allows USPS to partner with private shippers, which would be unable and unwilling to service much of the country without help.

With founding principles in the U.S. Constitution, USPS has remained a national treasure since its formation in 1792. This self-sustaining, independent establishment of the federal government does not receive any taxpayer funding and relies solely on revenue derived from the sale of postal services and products.

### The Postal Service is the core of U.S. mailing industry

- With 630,000 employees, USPS is at the center of the \$1.4 trillion mailing industry that employs over 7.5 million Americans (5 percent of all jobs nationwide).
- USPS's universal network plays a crucial role in the function of private shippers such as UPS, FedEx, and Amazon, which partner with USPS because it provides unique 'last-mile delivery' to every business and residential customer in the country six or seven days a week. This reliable, efficient service is too costly for private shippers to maintain alone.
- USPS's massive infrastructure guarantees that no matter where you are in the country—urban, suburban, or rural—USPS will deliver to you.
- USPS delivers more than half of all business-to-consumer and consumer-to-consumer packages each year.

### International impacts of privatization.

- Throughout the European Union, postal privatization and profit maximization efforts resulted in disinvestment, lower service quality, and higher prices (despite more competition) as well as drastic cuts to both employment and wages.
- Privately-owned post offices only operate in areas deemed lucrative, resulting in large sections of unserved rural, suburban, and even low-income urban areas.
- Between 2010 and 2013, only a few years after the EU began the process of postal privatization, prices in France increased by 13 percent, in Italy by 17 percent, and in the UK by 50 percent.

- Despite job gain predictions, postal privatization led the Royal Mail (UK) to shed 33 percent of its jobs and the Portuguese post to cut over 26 percent. Employment in the wider postal sector is down 26 percent in France and 31 percent in Belgium.

### Privatizing the Postal Service would have far-reaching negative consequences nationwide.

- Privatization would jeopardize the jobs of 630,000 postal employees, over 25 percent of which are military veterans, and impact the 7.5 million Americans in the mailing industry.
- Service could cease for America's rural and low-income communities, negatively impacting nearly all 50 states in some form, but especially large, less-populous regions.

### Financial losses are due to Congress, not USPS

- In 2006, Congress passed the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act, a postal reform measure that included a mandate on USPS to "pre-fund" tens of billions of dollars for retiree health benefits decades in advance -- a crushing financial burden that no other enterprise in America faces.
- This pre-funding burden, which continues to cost USPS billions annually, accounts for 92 percent of losses since 2007 and 100 percent of losses over the past six years.

### USPS is much more than a delivery service

Letter carriers provide far more than the delivery of mail. They are members of the community, the eyes and ears of their neighborhoods, and often the only source of daily contact for the elderly and disabled. They often serve as first responders for lost children and the victims of crimes, accidents and fires. And they provide the first sense of normalcy after hurricanes, floods and other natural disasters.

USPS is the nation's second-largest employer of U.S. military veterans and remains the most popular government entity in the U.S. (with an 88 percent approval rating).

Postal privatization imperils far more than its supporters reveal. It is not the answer to the USPS's manufactured financial crisis and it would not benefit the American public.

**NALC opposes postal privatization in all forms and supports S. Res. 99 and H. Res. 33, which calls on Congress to ensure that the Postal Service remains an independent establishment and not subject to privatization. S. Res. 99 is sponsored by Jerry Moran (R-KS) and Gary Peters (D-MI). H. Res. 33 is sponsored by Reps. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) and Rodney Davis (R-IL)**



# NALC Fact Sheet

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100 Indiana Ave. NW — Washington, DC 20001-2144 — 202-393-4695 — [www.nalc.org](http://www.nalc.org) © NALC

## Pre-funding: The Case for Repeal

In 2006, the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA) was enacted, a postal reform law with a mandate that USPS “pre-fund” decades’ worth of health benefits for its future retirees. This liability is unique to the Postal Service since no other public or private enterprise in America is required to pre-fund retiree health benefits. The mandate manufactured a financial crisis in an otherwise profitable agency.

As reported in the Postal Service’s annual 10-K financial statements, the mandate has cost an average of \$5.4 billion annually since 2007 and is responsible for **92 percent** of USPS losses over the last twelve years. It accounts for 100 percent of losses over the past six years:

Impact of the Pre-funding Mandate on USPS Net Income under the PAEA (\$billions)			
Fiscal Year	Net Income/ (Loss)	RHB Pre-funding	Net income without Pre-funding
2013	(5.0)	(5.6)	0.6
2014	(5.5)	(5.7)	0.2
2015	(5.1)	(5.7)	0.6
2016	(5.6)	(5.8)	0.2
2017	(2.7)	(4.3)	1.6
2018	(3.9)	(4.5)	0.6

*Were this burden not imposed, USPS would have recorded surpluses of nearly \$4.0 billion since 2013.*

The pre-funding mandate has prevented the agency from properly investing in its networks. Even worse, the resulting financial losses have been used to both threaten core ser-

vices that Americans rely on -- such as door-to-door service, six-day delivery, and convenient post office hours -- and to advance proposals to privatize the Postal Service and attack the jobs and rights of America’s postal employees.

USPS is at the heart of a \$1.4 trillion mailing industry that employs 7.5 million Americans. Its unmatched networks link more than 157 million American households and businesses to each other seven days a week. It is essential to our nation’s voting systems and to multiple industries, communities and populations, including: e-commerce; prescription drugs; the nation’s paper, publishing, and advertising businesses; and to millions of small businesses and tens of millions of citizens in rural, suburban, and urban communities across the country.

The prefunding mandate forced the Postal Service to exhaust its \$15 billion borrowing limit with the U.S. Treasury and forgo normal pension funding. Nevertheless, the USPS’s pension plans are well funded and it has amassed nearly \$50 billion for future retiree health benefits -- enough to cover premiums for 10-15 years. Ending the pre-funding mandate would save USPS billions annually.

The Postal Service, the most trusted and highest-rated agency in the federal government, plays an essential role in our economy. Its current financial crisis need not continue. If the prefunding mandate were removed and a new rate-setting system (now being developed by our regulators) were installed, the agency would be well-positioned to thrive in the 21st Century by investing in its networks and new products and improving service quality -- all while honoring its retiree health obligations.

**NALC urges Congress to repeal the pre-funding mandate.**

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**Branch training is last Tuesday  
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