

## Interest arbitration panel chair named



Dennis R. Nolan

**N**ALC and the Postal Service have selected Arbitrator Dennis R. Nolan to serve as the neutral chair of a three-person interest arbitration panel to set the terms of a new national agreement between NALC and USPS. Under the law, each side will also appoint a representative to serve on the panel and represent their respective positions.

Arbitrator Nolan is a member of the American Arbitration Association's labor panel and has been a full-time labor arbitrator since 1976, serving for many years as a national arbitrator on the NALC/USPS panel. In 1985, he was selected for

membership in the National Academy of Arbitrators, and eventually served as its president in 2006.

Arbitrator Nolan served as the parties' neutral arbitrator in the interest arbitration proceedings for the 2019 National Agreement, which were near conclusion when the parties reached a negotiated settlement late in 2020.

As final preparations for interest arbitration are made, NALC and the Postal Service continue to negotiate in an attempt to reach a tentative agreement. Further updates will be provided as the collective-bargaining process moves forward. **PR**

## NALC trains first Emergency Response Team

**N**ALC held a weeklong training session for the first 29 members of the Emergency Response Team (ERT) March 3-8, as NALC prepares to launch the ERT program.

ERT members are NALC members from around the country who will help other NALC members when they're dealing with trauma. They won't act as counselors, but instead will offer peer-to-peer support with critical events, such as deaths and life-altering injuries. The hope is that they also could be used for situations involving suicide awareness, suicide prevention, mental health issues or substance abuse.

"The members of our union, if given the skills, the knowledge and the opportunity to help other members, they will do that," NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said of the initiative at the NALC rap session in November.

The training was held at the Maritime Conference Center in Linthicum Heights, MD, near Baltimore and



The attendees go through critical incident training led by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation.

was led by Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr., Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Mack Julion, Special Assistant to the President Michelle McQuality, and Assistants to the President for Administrative Affairs Chris Henwood, Tamara Twinn and Ed Morgan.

The first three days featured in-depth training by Dr. Jeffrey M. Lating of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF), a leader in providing training on comprehensive crisis intervention and disaster behavioral health services to emergency responders and other professions. Lating has co-ed-



**The ERT training attendees and facilitators**

ited and co-authored three books in the areas of stress and post-traumatic stress and has served as a clinical consultant and crisis-management trainer with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other organizations.

Lating is “a professional who comes in and teaches a lot of skills that are necessary to deal with difficult circumstances where people are experiencing trauma,” Renfroe said.

In the ICISF training, the attendees were given tools, often described as “emotional first aid,” to assist people experiencing trauma-related mental health effects. They learned the core elements of a comprehensive, systematic and multicomponent crisis intervention curriculum both for individuals and groups. They left with the knowledge, tools, and techniques necessary to provide crisis support to groups and to recommend follow-up services. Upon completion of the three-day training, the attendees were certified by the ICISF.

In addition, the team members learned about the postal-specific resources for responding to members in crisis, including through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), the Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs (OWCP), the Mutual Benefit Association, the Federal Employees’ Group Life Insurance, the Federal Employees Retirement System and some of the health plans in the Federal Employees Health Benefits program.

They also were made aware of NALC’s plans for the administration of the ERT, how incidents will be reported, and the decision on whom to deploy and to where.

Though ERT members are prepared to help with crisis situations and follow-ups, they do not file grievances,

investigate accidents, or represent members with OWCP.

“The first phase after we train them, is that we will utilize them to go help our members in response to what we would call ‘critical incidents,’” Renfroe said. “The type of things that happen around the country that cause grief, that cause trauma on workroom floors and even outside workroom floors. The type of thing that the Postal Service sends the EAP folks to respond to now.”

At the rap session, the president said that the then-recent mass shooting in Lewiston, ME, where an NALC member was killed, would be the kind of situation that NALC’s ERT could be called upon to assist with. He said he hoped that peer-to-peer support can be the gateway to getting members who deal with trauma the help that they need.

“This is something that is going to be really beneficial to all of our members,” Renfroe said. **PR**



**In addition to critical incident training, the team members learned about postal-specific resources for responding to letter carriers in crisis.**