



National Association  
of Letter Carriers

William H. Young, President  
March 27, 2009 No. 09-06

# NALC Bulletin

100 Indiana Ave. NW Washington, DC 20001-2144 202.393.4695 www.nalc.org

## Young Blasts Five-Day Delivery; Would 'Undercut' Postal System Reacts Strongly After PMG Continues to Push Idea



President Young testifies at House postal subcommittee hearing March 25 against a cutback in mail delivery from six days a week and in favor of passage of H.R. 22 to ease USPS' onerous funding obligation for retirees' health benefits. At left is APWU President William Burrus. Behind Young is Jennifer Alvarez, assistant to President Young for legislative and political affairs. Photos by Joe Conway.

NALC President William H. Young told the House subcommittee that oversees the U.S. Postal Service on March 25 that USPS leaders are heading in the wrong direction if they think cutting mail delivery to five days a week would solve the Postal Service's economic problems.

In fact, he said, it could do just the opposite.

At the same time, Young emphasized that what would really help is passage of H.R. 22 to reduce the pre-funding obligation of USPS for retiree health benefits, and elimination of a requirement that the Service make pension payments to FERS employees for time spent in military service.



House postal subcommittee Chairman Stephen F. Lynch (D-MA) presides over day-long hearing on USPS financial situation which he said was "critical to the American expectation of affordable six-day mail delivery." At left is the subcommittee's ranking Republican, Jason Chaffetz of Utah.

**"This is not the time to undercut public and mailer respect for, and reliance on, the Postal Service by reducing service drastically and counterproductively to five days a week," Young said. "The nation's mailers have diverse needs and business is conducted six days a week in America. In general, they want six-day delivery - need six-day delivery - and expect six-day delivery."**

The NALC president's statements at a hearing of the House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia came after both Postmaster General John E. Potter and USPS Board of Governors Chairman Carolyn Gallagher continued to press earlier in the day for congressional authority to cutback mail delivery from six days to five days.

### Six Days Required

Currently, federal law requires the Postal Service to deliver mail on six days.

Young testified that if the Postal Service does not provide such service, "someone will demand the right to do it, and that will only add to the Service's woes."

**"We are not looking for a bailout. We are not looking for a government hand-out or a loan or a subsidy or a tax break," Young added. "We are looking for the ability to use the Postal Service's own money to get over a cash flow crunch."**

Young said 208 House members have signed on as co-sponsors of H.R. 22, authored by Reps. John McHugh (R-NY) and Danny Davis (D-IL), including 9 of the 11 members of the subcommittee.

"My members are plenty angry - the financial elite of this country, aided and abetted by misguided deregulation, have trashed our economy, and the historic recession we face threatens the jobs and well-being of 700,000 postal families across this country," Young said. "Nothing we did, nothing the Postal Service did, and nothing the postal industry did caused this crisis."

He noted that the NALC was working to aid the Postal Service even before the economic crisis hit, by speeding up route adjustments that saved hundreds of millions of dollars.

He said letter carriers know something about helping out in a crisis, about steadiness when there is panic in the air, about sharing, and about sacrifice. Letter carriers, he said, didn't panic when anthrax appeared in the mail stream.

"They continued to do their jobs in a very frightening environment," Young said. "There was no public panic and eventually things returned to normal."

He also noted that when Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast many letter carriers lost their homes and all their possessions, but it was not until letter carriers reappeared on the streets of New Orleans that public anxiety began to subside and normalcy returned. And he pointed out that when officials from the Department of Homeland Security needed a way to distribute medication if the United States came under a biological attack, letter carriers stepped up to the plate and volunteered to make those distributions under the Cities Readiness Initiative.

### 'Need Your Help'

"We do these things because we accept our role in society," he said. "We are the men and women trusted by America to deliver their mail. We come to you now because the Postal Service is in trouble and we need your help."

Young said that before Congress even considers drastic - and counterproductive - measures such as a move to five-day delivery or redefining universal service, it should take other steps to strengthen the Postal Service - starting with H.R. 22.

Americans "may not appreciate AIG traders scurrying off with multi-million dollar bonuses, using the taxpayers hard-earned dollars," Young said, "but they do appreciate their letter carrier, earning his middle class salary, paying her taxes, raising their children in their community - faithfully delivering their mail every day."



"There is no desire, and it is certainly over Congress' dead body that they'll get a five-day delivery. Mentioning those things

sucks all the oxygen out of the discussion while we are collectively fighting as hard as we can to get H.R. 22 passed." - **APWU President William Burrus**



"I think there needs to be some streamlining in middle management. We've got too many people that are not actually handling

the mail telling people that are handling the mail what they need to do and how they need to do it." - **Rural Carriers President Don Cantriel**



"One thing I caution that you should do is not go to five-day delivery. I think that would ... drive people to the Internet. The

first time ... your credit card bill goes late, they are going to say, 'The heck with this, I can go online and do all that stuff and save myself some postage.'" - **Mail Handlers President John Hegarty**

## Toth Appointed Region 11 NBA; Camilli, Jones Named as RAAs

NALC President William H. Young has appointed Daniel E. Toth, who has served since May 2005 as Regional Administrative Assistant in Region 11, as the new National Business Agent for that region, succeeding NBA William J. Cooke, who will retire May 1 after over 14 years in that position. The region includes Ohio and Upstate New York.

Toth, 51, a former president of Lorain, Ohio Branch 583, began his union career as a shop steward in 1984 and has worked on behalf of letter carriers ever since. In addition to his branch position, Toth was director of education for the Ohio State Association of Letter Carriers.

Young expressed the deep appreciation of the NALC for the years of service by Cooke as NBA in Region 11 and in other NALC positions.

**"Bill Cooke has been a dedicated leader for letter carriers throughout Ohio and Upstate New York throughout his service as NBA," Young said. "His thoughtful counsel during many contract negotiations and other activities of this union has benefitted our members not only in Region 11, but throughout the nation. We wish him the very best and many years of enjoyment in his retirement."**



Daniel Toth

Young also announced appointments to two RAA positions.

Mark S. Camilli, 40, of Northeastern New York Branch 358 was named to succeed Toth, and Coby P. Jones, 52, of Seattle, Washington Branch 79, was named as an RAA for Region 2 (Pacific Northwest) succeeding James Lumme, who recently became the new NALC director of education at NALC headquarters in Washington.

## Second 'Early Out' Includes Carriers

The Postal Service has informed President Young that city letter carriers will be included in the new Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) offer now being planned by postal headquarters. This "early out" will be offered to 150,000 postal employees and is intended to help the USPS cut costs and to overcome the ill effects of the national economic crisis. Details on the new program - including the timing for VER applications and the deadline for action - have not yet been set.

**"I am told that the 2009 'early out' will have the same terms as the program offered in 2008," Young said, "but it is important to wait until the exact details are known before making any decision."**

Last year, carriers who were at least 50 years old and had at least 20 years of service, and carriers of any age with at least 25 years of service, were eligible to retire early. Such carriers were sent an initial "annuity estimate letter," which showed how their accrued annuities would be actuarially reduced to reflect a longer period of retirement. Then, a couple weeks later, a formal letter was sent, offering the chance to apply for the "early out" and giving details on how to proceed. That 2008 program provided no financial incentives to take the VER option - and no such incentives are expected with the new program.

NALC will share the details of the new VER once they become available.

"I remind every carrier that choosing to retire early is a monumental decision, especially in the current economic environment," President Young said. "Nobody should take such an important step without careful thought about what it means for themselves and their loved ones."

## NALC Continues Battle for EFCA Passage Despite Defection by Key GOP Senator

President Young declared emphatically March 27 that the NALC's efforts along with all of organized labor to win passage of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) has not abated at all just because one frequently pro-labor Republican senator has announced his opposition.

"This decision by Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA) - who has decided to line up with Wall Street and corporate America instead of working men and women on this issue - merely increases our determination to win this struggle and give all workers a free choice to create and join a union," Young said.

**"Chisel this in stone," Young said. "We will continue the fight, and continue the fight, until this legislation is enacted into law."**

Young joined AFL-CIO President John Sweeney and other labor leaders in expressing deep disappointment at Specter's decision, apparently done in part to try to ward off a strong primary election challenge by an ultra-conservative opponent in 2010.

"Polls show that 73 percent of the American public favor passage of EFCA, and it has support from large majorities in both the House and Senate," Young said. "The only chance that Big Business and their allies have to stop EFCA passage is by a filibuster. The NALC will keep working on this until we overcome that obstacle."



## No Adjustment Yet for Fifth COLA

There is no projected accumulation yet for the fifth regular cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) period under the 2006-2011 National Agreement, nor any projected accumulation toward the 2010 retiree COLA.

The fifth contract COLA will be based on inflation as determined by the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) between January 2009 and July 2009.

As announced a month ago, there was no pay adjustment for the fourth COLA period.

**There will be no further adjustment during the 2006-2011 contract period until the CPI-W exceeds the 644.303 mark recorded last July. The CPI-W in February was 615.719.**

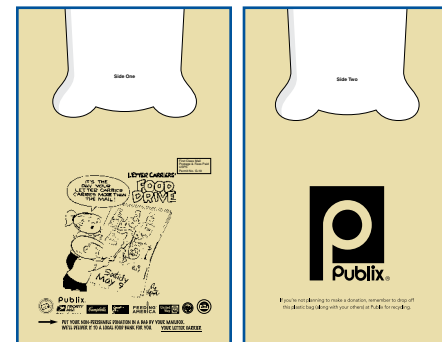
There also was no accumulation yet towards the 2010 retiree COLA following release of the February CPI-W by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The 2010 retiree COLA will be based on the increase in the average CPI-W between the third quarter of 2008 and the third quarter of 2009.

The projected accumulation toward the 2010 COLA for Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) participants stands at 0.9 percent through February. FECA COLAs are applicable only in cases where death or disability occurred more than one year prior to the adjustment's effective date.

## 107 Million Campbell Soup-Priority Mail Postcards Ordered by NALC Branches for Local Food Drives

### Publix Also Providing 10.6 Million Plastic Bags in Florida and Georgia

As the NALC Bulletin went to press, branches that have registered to participate in the May 9 Letter Carriers National Food Drive have sent in orders for more than 107 million FREE Campbell Soup-Priority Mail postcards for delivery to postal customers to remind them to leave donations by their mailboxes.



Included are about 2.6 million Spanish language cards ordered by 95 branches, and nearly 3 million special cards for New York City and Chicago, where residents are asked to bring donations to the post office because of transportation limitations on carriers.

At the same time, the Publix grocery chain has announced that it will be supplying 10.6 million plastic bags to post offices throughout Florida and most of Georgia to supplement the postcards. Publix is one of several grocery chains, food banks, newspapers and radio & television stations and other organizations that are sponsoring plastic bags for delivery to customers in addition to the postcards.

Any NALC branch that has not yet registered, but would like to participate in the drive should immediately contact NALC headquarters to sign up. Those that have registered should get their postcard and poster orders in immediately if they have not yet done so.

Questions on the drive should be directed to national food drive coordinator Drew Von Bergen at (202) 662-2489 or by email at [vonbergen@nalc.org](mailto:vonbergen@nalc.org).