



Executive Council meets as USPS woes deepen



Top (l-r): Director of City Delivery Dale Hart, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine and Vice President George Mignosi.

Above (l-r): President Fred Rolando and Executive Vice President Gary Mullins.

The treacherous economic and political landscape surrounding carriers and the Postal Service led the agenda when the NALC Executive Council met at union headquarters in Washington July 20-22, the first such gathering of the 28 union leaders since President Fredric V. Rolando took office.

President Rolando and the NALC staff briefed the Council on the Postal Service's flagging finances, underscored by the deficit that is being swollen by a precipitous drop in mail volume. The Council got a full update on NALC's efforts to persuade Congress to enact immediate financial relief to offset the effects of the recession and on discussions with the White House and key House and Senate leaders on long-term solutions to the Postal Service's systemic problems.

Council members compared notes on the union's response to the crisis, particularly implementation of the Modified Interim Alternate Route Adjustment Process, and discussed how best to combat management's scheming to cut back delivery service to five days a week. The Council is made up of the 10 resident national officers based in Washington, 15 regional national business agents and the three national trustees.

The Council also received reports on the NALC's efforts to win enactment of

the Employee Free Choice Act and comprehensive health care reform legislation. Both are major labor priorities, with health care reform currently holding the national spotlight.

"It won't be enough to simply survive the Great Recession," Rolando told the council, gathered around a large table in the Vincent R. Sombrotto Building at the foot of Capitol Hill. "We have to rebuild the middle class to create a prosperous economy in which the Postal Service can thrive. Giving other workers the right to organize and access to affordable health care will help us at the bargaining table and cut our costs for health insurance."

Shifting terrain

The fast-changing nature of the political terrain the union is navigating was underlined less than 48 hours after the Council meeting ended, when President Rolando went to the White House to highlight for Obama administration officials the critical need for speedy legislative action. The NALC leader was also called on to testify at two congressional hearings in mid-August.

The White House session included officials from the Office of Management and Budget and Deputy Chief of Staff Jim Messina. Rolando and the presidents



Above (l-r): NALC Trustees Mike Gill, Chairman Larry Brown and Randy Keller.

Right (at table, l-r): Region 8 National Business Agent Lew Drass; Reg. 13 NBA Tim Dowdy; Reg. 12 NBA Bill Lucini; Reg. 15 NBA Larry Cirelli; Reg. 1 NBA Manny Peralta; Reg. 11 NBA Dan Toth; Director, Health Benefit Plan Tim O'Malley and Reg. 4 NBA Roger Bledsoe. Also pictured (back l): Reg. 3 NBA Neal Tisdale.



Philadelphia chosen for 2014 convention

During its July meeting, the NALC Executive Council selected Philadelphia as the site for the union's 69th Biennial National Convention in 2014.

The convention host will be Philadelphia Branch 157. Business sessions will be held July 21-25, 2014, at the Pennsylvania Convention Center, near Philadelphia's landmark city hall. The 63rd Convention in 2002 also was held in Philadelphia.

"The City of Brotherly Love has been good to the NALC in the past and I expect our 69th Convention will be even better," NALC President Fred Rolando said, noting

that delegates will convene in modern, union-operated convention facilities, with an extensive selection of unionized hotels close by.

The Council vote followed a report from the Convention Site Committee headed by Secretary-Treasurer Jane E. Broendel, which reviewed possible sites based on the geographic rotation established by the *NALC Constitution*.

Next summer's 67th Convention will be in Anaheim, California, from August 9-13, and the 68th Convention will be in Minneapolis, Minnesota, July 23-27, 2012. ✉



of the three other major postal unions pressed for quick action on financial relief legislation—and within a week, S. 1507, a bill designed to provide virtually the same level of relief as the NALC-backed H.R. 22, was introduced in the Senate. That measure, however, was sabotaged by the insertion of an anti-union "poison pill" amendment by Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK), which would cause NALC to oppose the bill (*see story, page 10*).

The severe impact on the Postal Service of the worst economic contraction since the Great Depression is painfully clear. Mail volume has declined by 13 percent this fiscal year through May. Despite the elimination of 36,000 career jobs over the past year, the USPS still could lose \$7 billion this year due to the economic meltdown—and the onerous cost of pre-funding retiree health benefits, which this year will cost USPS \$5.4 billion.

H.R. 22, now awaiting House action, would reduce the amount USPS must set aside over the next eight years for future retiree health costs by spreading out the pre-funding required by the 2006 postal reform law. It also would allow USPS to pay its share of current retiree insurance premiums from the \$32 billion it has already banked in the

Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund.

Retiree benefits secure

The proposed change would have no effect on retiree health benefits—either now or in the future. Rather, the legislation would save USPS an average of \$3.5 billion per year through 2016, while the Service continues to build up the retiree health fund on a much more reasonable and affordable schedule.

President Rolando stressed that the bipartisan House legislation—which had 339 co-sponsors at press time—"won't affect our retired members."

"I want you all to go out and spread that message," he told the Council.

The Council welcomed five new members at the session: Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine, and four new National Business Agents—Roger Bledsoe, Region 4; Chris Wittenburg, Region 7; Kathy Baldwin, Region 10; and Dan Toth, Region 11. ✉

Above (l-r): Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel, Director of Safety and Health Brian Hellman, Director of Life Insurance Myra Warren and Director of Retired Members Ernie Kirkland.

Below (l-r): Reg. 6 NBA Pat Carroll, Reg. 14 NBA John Casciano, Reg. 5 NBA Mike Weir, Reg. 7 NBA Chris Wittenburg, Reg. 2 NBA Paul Price, Reg. 9 NBA Judy Willoughby and Reg. 10 NBA Kathy Baldwin.

