



## President Young encourages joint efforts with APWU

**P**resident William H. Young, reciprocating on his invitation to APWU President William Burrus to speak at NALC's convention in July, became the first NALC leader to address an American Postal Workers Union convention on August 18 when he told the delegates that letter carriers are ready to "stand shoulder to shoulder" with APWU members to get America headed back in the right direction.

The exchange of speaking appearances this summer was an historic first for the two unions. Never before had either of the unions' presidents appeared at the other's convention.

Young proved popular at the APWU meeting in Las Vegas, receiving several standing ovations, especially when he stressed that the members of both unions can accomplish more by working together on major issues than they can achieve separately.

"Something's got to change, and we've got make it happen," Young said, referring to both the national balance of political power and the future of the Postal Service. "The men and women of the NALC are ready to stand shoulder to shoulder with the men and women of the APWU to make sure that it does."

Emphasizing the need to work together to restore the middle class, Young cited a recent report by the Center for Economic Policy and Research about the plight of American workers. It concluded that fewer than one-quarter of all U.S. jobs are "good jobs," which it defined as those paying at least \$35,000 annually, offering "some sort of" health benefits, and any kind of

employer-sponsored retirement plan. The significance for all postal employees is that both the APWU and the NALC have to negotiate against a "standard of comparability" for private-sector jobs, he said.

"We cannot withstand this assault unless we join hands, today, this minute, and return this country to working men and women," he said, noting that the NALC convention had endorsed Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL) for president. The APWU also has endorsed Obama.

Young told the delegates about NALC's Carrier Corps of political activist volunteers and said 30,000 members had already signed up. In addition, he said 30 letter carriers were already working full-time in the field on the AFL-CIO's get-out-the-vote campaign. Another 100 were set to be added in September, and he said he is prepared to add a further 100 in October "to return this country to working men and women."

"The little things that divided us in the past don't mean diddly-squat," Young said of NALC-APWU history. "We will work together and we will succeed."

Following Young's address, Burrus delivered his "State of the Union" message in which he cautioned against reading too much into the exchange of presidential appearances. "They are not a sign that merger is near," he said, adding, "We have not discussed merger. We have not discussed the thought of merger. What we have done is taken the first step in a long journey that could lead to an improved relationship." ✉



Photos courtesy of APWU

**Top:** NALC President William H. Young addresses the APWU convention in Las Vegas.

**Above:** APWU President William Burrus and Young have worked to build better relations between the two unions.