

COLCPE enrollment is a leadership challenge



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During the last several years NALC has committed itself to achieving a voluntary payroll deduction for our political action fund, COLCPE. Recently we reached our goal. I announced at September's National Rap Session that a new program would soon enable letter carriers to donate to COLCPE through payroll deductions. That was a few months ago and NALC members are now starting to take advantage of this new program.

Given the current challenges faced by the Postal Service and all letter carriers, I expected that most of our members would have signed up by now. I regret to report that so far, fewer than 2,000 active carriers have taken advantage of this new right by contacting PostalEASE to enroll.

What we need is an effort and program to jumpstart enrollments. I now call on all of our branch presidents to join in a drive to enlist thousands of carriers in the COLCPE deduction program.

I know, of course, that many branch presidents have already heeded my call by taking the lead in PostalEASE enrollments. I have also promised our members that NALC leaders at all levels will lead by example. Our members will follow us only if our actions match our words.

We expect a substantial increase in contributions to COLCPE as we get this drive up and running. So I have decided that instead of printing contributor lists every month, NALC will publish a special edition of the *Postal Record* early next year honoring all those who have contributed during 2004. And to ensure that we recognize every contributor, from this point forward we will require that all COLCPE contributions be made either by check or through PostalEASE.

Let's make March 2004 "COLCPE Month" and put forth a real effort to add to the COLCPE deduction rolls. That will give branches enough lead time to get their campaigns in motion and produce some solid results. Some friendly competition may add moti-

vation, so we will add up the March totals and I will publish a list of the most successful branches.

In your recruiting efforts, take the time to explain the payroll deduction to members. Tell them what it is, first of all—a way to contribute to the union's political action fund on a regular basis through a payroll deduction. Let them know that even a few dollars a pay period will help to ensure that our voice is heard in Congress. And in turn, NALC's strength in Congress will help us keep our federal retirement and health benefits, and retain our right to bargain for higher wages and better working conditions.

If members are reluctant to give to COLCPE because of their party affiliation, reassure them that COLCPE is not a captive of any political party. We have always contributed to those candidates—of either party—who have shown their support for letter carriers and the Postal Service. We have congressional friends on both sides of the aisle.

Start off with the people you already know—the union activists who are probably giving to COLCPE already. Explain to these union stalwarts that a regular PostalEASE contributions will be convenient for them and will also help provide COLCPE a predictable stream of income so we can plan ahead and put those dollars to the best possible use.

A branch might run a competition for the most enrollments, say, between different stations. Shop stewards can help to identify likely donors and recruit the members they know personally. Or the branch can simply throw a party, pass around a cell phone and ask participants to call PostalEASE and enroll.

We must follow the rules in this campaign, as always. We may not solicit anybody at work or on postal property.

If NALC is to succeed in achieving the right kind of postal reform, we must convince the majority of our members to participate in our battle for postal reform. I am looking to our branch activists taking the lead in the battle for our collective future. ☒