NALC Bulletin
Number 14-06
June 23, 2014

House proposal to rob USPS to pay for roads

On May 30, NALC received word about a plan in Congress to end Saturday mail delivery and to use the disputed cost savings from such a radical move to shore up the ailing Highway Trust Fund (HTF).

"Rather than offer Americans real solutions, the House leadership is once more seeking the easy way out," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "We can all have a strong, safe highway network without sacrificing a strong Postal Service. We shouldn't be forced to choose between the two. Our leaders need to go back to the drawing board."

The HTF pays for the repair of and maintenance of our country's roads and bridges, and money flows into the fund from taxes on gasoline. But with inflation eroding the value of the tax, along with the fact that Americans are buying more fuel-efficient cars and driving less on average, the fund is running out of money. In fact, there is not only a long-term funding need but also a short-term need that needs to be addressed before Congress breaks for its August recess—otherwise, many construction projects could come to a halt for lack of funding.

To help the HTF, Congress must either raise the gasoline tax (which hasn't been increased since 1993) or find some other source of revenue. Leaders in the House of Representatives absurdly set their sights on the USPS as that source.

"This maneuver makes no sense," President Rolando said. "The Postal Service doesn't rely on taxpayer money or Congress to fund its operations. It earns its revenue selling stamps, and it shouldn't be treated like some sort of congressional piggy bank."

Sadly, Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe recklessly endorsed this funding ploy from the House of Representatives' leadership. Worse, postal officials distributed grossly misleading "fact sheets" to Congress about the effects of eliminating Saturday delivery.

"Apparently, there is no limit to how low the postmaster general will stoop to achieve his beloved five-day delivery plan," Rolando said. "That's shameful, and Donahoe owes every postal employee and postal ratepayer an apology. Better yet, he could redeem himself by working with us to achieve real reform and end his alliance with politicians who want to dismantle the Postal Service."

Web forms back online

The online form for NALC members to sign up as members of the NALC e-Activist Network and the online form for NALC members to update their contact information are both back in service once again. Visit nalc.org to learn more.

Outcry and pushback

The NALC immediately began an aggressive lobbying campaign against this absurd House leadership strategy, including sending targeted messages to the 222 House members from both parties (at this writing) who have signed on to H.Res. 30, the "sense of the House" resolution that USPS take all appropriate measures to retain six-day mail delivery service.

Meanwhile, Reps. Gerry Connolly (D-VA) and Peter Welch (D-VT) circulated "Dear Colleague" letters urging members from both parties to oppose the leadership proposal, and Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) said in a statement that the "deeply flawed proposal" would cost taxpayers and hurt the ability of states to make infrastructure plans.

Also lining up against this plan were the AFL-CIO and its Transportation Trades Department, as well the presidents of the three other postal unions, who joined President Rolando in signing letters mailed to House and Senate members.

The combined outcry appeared to have tipped opinions on Capitol Hill in our favor. In a June 16 blog post for *Congressional Quarterly*, David Harrison reported that, following "a late barrage of opposition" from rank-and-file House members, House leaders had decided not to pursue this plan. "The proposal to end six-day [mail delivery] was not well received by a large portion of the Republican conference and appears to be dead," a senior House Republican aide told *CQ*.

Even so, President Rolando warned NALC members to remain vigilant. "This gimmick may have been defeated," he said, "but we still need every member to fight to save the Postal Service from politicians who want to dismantle it."

Appropriations language also at risk

Unfortunately, the attack on six-day delivery has not been limited to the Highway Trust Fund plan or to other pending postal legislation.

For example, the House Committee on Appropriations' Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government's draft appropriations bill omitted the long-standing appropriations language mandating that the Postal Service deliver mail six days a week. That language has been a part of every appropriations bill passed by Congress and signed into law since the early 1980s.

The subcommittee introduced a draft appropriations bill as this *NALC Bulletin* went to press, and the union's Legislative and Political Affairs Department was working hard to press friends of letter carriers in the House to have the language reinserted by the full appropriations committee.

Meanwhile, President Rolando encouraged members to stay informed by regularly visiting nalc.org to check for updates on this and other postal measures.

Successful results for 2014 Food Drive

The NALC's annual Letter Carriers' Food Drive collected almost 73 million pounds of food to help restock food banks, pantries and shelters around the country—an impressive result made all the more necessary by the slow-paced economic recovery and recent natural disasters.

"This demonstrates the value of the unique postal network, which goes to 151 million addresses six days a week," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "It also shows the strong connection between letter carriers and the communities we serve—a bond that serves the nation well."

The effort on Saturday, May 10, gathered 72.5 million pounds of food, the 11th consecutive year the drive has surpassed 70 million pounds of food collected. This year's results bring the total to more than 1.3 billion pounds since the national drive began in 1992.

The Letter Carriers' Food Drive is the nation's largest single-day food drive, held annually on the second Saturday in May in more than 10,000 cities and towns in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam. On that day, residents from major metropolitan areas to small rural towns put out by their mailboxes sacks of non-perishable food donations, which letter carriers collect as they deliver mail along their postal routes.

"Letter carriers see firsthand the needs in the communities where we work, and we're honored to be able to help people in need by leading an effort that brings out the best in so many Americans," President Rolando said.

Hunger affects about 49 million people around the country, including millions of children and senior citizens. Pantry shelves filled up through winter-holiday generosity often are bare by late spring. And, with most school meal programs suspended during summer months, millions of children must find alternate sources of nutrition.

"The Postal Service's universal network makes it possible for us to provide this critically needed assistance," NALC food drive coordinator Pam Donato said. "So, too, do the many groups who help."

Carriers brought the food to local food banks, pantries or shelters, including many affiliated with Feeding America, which was a national partner in the drive, as were United Way, AARP Drive to End Hunger, Publix, Campbell Soup Co., the U.S. Postal Service, National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, the AFL-CIO, Valpak, Valassis and Uncle Bob's Self Storage.

Among the many local volunteer groups that helped the nation's 175,000 letter carriers were the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, National Guard units, American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars, Boy/Girl Scouts, various student groups, local Rotary Clubs, local and state AARP groups and local United Way volunteers.

Fact-checking a 'Fact Checker'

In a June 16 blog post, *The Washington Post*'s "Fact Checker," Glenn Kessler, challenged the statement by NALC that the Postal Service's plan to end Saturday would eliminate 80,000 jobs.

Unfortunately, Kessler made a hash of it.

Kessler argued that the NALC's statement is misleading because the data our statement relies on is from a 2010 Postal Service presentation about a 2009 study and that many the jobs targeted for elimination are part-time jobs that would be lost through attrition rather than layoffs.

Based on these largely erroneous assertions, and based on some selective quotations, Kessler gave our statement two "Pinocchios" (on his four-Pinocchio scale of untruthfulness).

NALC was quick to refute Kessler's assertions. "While the USPS presentation is from 2010, that does not make it inaccurate," President Fredric Rolando said. "Moreover, that study is the only one that the Postal Service has made public about its five-day plan, and it is the only study that has been subjected to scrutiny and review by the Postal Regulatory Commission."

The bottom line is that tens of thousands of full- and part-time positions would be eliminated under the five-day plan, the president said, imposing hardship on those who would be laid off and on other Americans who would be denied job opportunities in the future. The Postal Service's presentation proves that the job cuts could not be achieved through normal attrition.

"To the millions of Americans who hold one or more part-time jobs, such jobs are no less real than full-time jobs," Rolando said. "They generate real income that workers need to support themselves and their families."

Even if the Postal Service could adopt its five-day plan without destroying tens of thousands of current jobs and future job opportunities for young workers and returning veterans, the president said, it would make no sense to do so as a matter of strategy. "Slashing delivery days, slowing mail service and inviting new competitors to provide service on Saturday to meet existing demand does not add up to a winning business plan," Rolando said. "It would reduce the value of mail, drive away business and threaten the Postal Service's success in the package market."

Degrading our unique, universal delivery network would drive up USPS package charges and stop in its tracks the recent financial recovery at the Postal Service, the president said.

"Congress should continue to reject the Postal Service's misguided plan," Rolando said, "and the Fact Checker should do better at getting his facts straight."

In Philadelphia July 21-25:

Convention news and updates

Accommodations for disabled attendees: Convention attendees who may require assistance due to a disability can avail themselves of the following accommodations in adherence with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

- Deaf or hearing-impaired: General session video presentations, including podium and floor action, will be open-captioned so hearing-impaired delegates can sit with their delegations.
- Wheelchair and scooter rental: Electrical mobility scooters and wheelchairs are available for rent from Scootaround.com. For advance reservations or for more information please call 888-441-7575 or visit the Scootaround website at locations.scootaround.com/rentals/n/nalc.
- Oxygen: If you require oxygen refills while in Philadelphia, you can contact The Oxygen Concentrator Store via its website, oxygenconcentratorstore.com, or at 877-774-9271. You will need the following information: prescription, diagnosis, amount of oxygen, type of equipment required, and type of payment (cash, credit card, or insurance information if insurance will be paying). It is suggested that you call a day ahead. Same-day service may be available.
- Parking: Handicapped parking is available to individuals with valid disability parking permits in surrounding ramps and lots as well as at parking meters on the street.
- Wheelchair lift vehicles: The NALC is providing free shuttle bus service between the Pennsylvania Convention Center and NALC block hotels that are not within walking distance. To comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a vehicle equipped with a wheelchair lift will be made available during all convention hours on an on-call basis. Requests for use of this service can be made directly by calling the operations manager onsite. The number will be listed on bus flyers available at the bell desks in all hotels for which shuttle service is provided.

Discount parking rates: A parking facility across from the Pennsylvania Convention Center is providing a parking discount to convention delegates. Visit the convention page at nalc.org to download the flyer.

Alternate delegates: Alternate delegates who replace registered delegates need to bring to the convention their letters of authorization signed by their branches' presidents and secretaries.

Convention grievance time-limit moratorium: On May 8, the NALC and the Postal Service agreed to Memorandum of Understanding M-01838, imposing a 31-day moratorium on time limits for the processing of all grievances at the local, regional and national levels because of the July 21-25 convention. The moratorium begins on July 13 and ends on Aug. 12.

Housing deadlines:

- June 20: Last day rooms were available to book at the NALC rate. After June 20, rooms and preferred rates are based on availability.
- July 7: Last day to change or cancel a room or book a room through Meeting Services Plus, based on availability.
- July 11: First day that delegates may contact hotels directly for all changes, cancellations and new reservation requests.

Questions or concerns: Please call Meeting Services Plus toll-free at 866-632-5095 or e-mail housingreg@meetingservicesplus.com.

Now accepting applications for the 2015 Leadership Academy

The application period for the 2015 NALC Leadership Academy has begun.

The Leadership Academy is a months-long program of intensive training on the skills necessary for union members to become effective leaders. Under the tutelage of their mentors—established NALC leaders such as branch presidents or national business agents—the students combined three separate weeks of classroom learning with take-home assignments and special projects.

Classes are held at the Conference Center at the Maritime Institute in Linthicum, MD, near BWI-Marshall Airport outside Baltimore.

Application forms are available for download from nalc.org or can be obtained from your national business agent's office. Any active NALC member may apply.

Applications must be received by Aug. 31. NALC President Fredric Rolando encourages any interested NALC member to submit an application. Rolando will select two letter carriers from each of the NALC's 15 regions. The selected students will be notified by mail by October.

Class 19 is set for Jan. 11-16, March 22-27 and May 31-June 5.

Class 20 is scheduled for July 26-31, Sept. 27-Oct. 2 and Dec. 6-11.

The application form has two main parts, one for the applicant and one for the mentor. A good mentor is someone who displays leadership skills and is willing—and able—to spend a significant amount of time interacting regularly with the student while providing guidance and encouragement.

The mentor also should be in a position to provide time and venues for the student to practice the skills he or she has been building at the Academy, to be available to observe their student's work and to provide appropriate feedback and critique. Branch presidents or other branch officers often are good choices for mentors.

Students are required to complete outside learning projects upon returning home following Weeks 1 and 2, and upon graduation the students will spend a fourth week working in their national business agents' offices.

Transportation, room, meals, lost wages and other costs involved with attending the Academy and working in the business agent's office are paid by the NALC.

National Association of Letter Carriers
100 Indiana Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20001-2144
202-393-4695 | www.nalc.org

Fredric V. Rolando, *President*

EDITORIAL STAFF:
Philip Dine, *Director of Communications and Media Relations*
Mike Shea, *Designer/Web Editor*
Joe Conway, *Internet Communications Coordinator*
Rick Hodges, *Writer/Editor*
Jenessa Kildall, *Editorial Assistant*

NALC Bulletin is published semi-regularly by the National Association of Letter Carriers. Postage paid at Washington, DC, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Membership Department, NALC, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

CHANGE of ADDRESS? Contact the Membership Department.

© 2014 by the National Association of Letter Carriers.

Circulation: 10,000. Union-printed using soy-based inks.

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube by going to NALC.org.