NALC Bulletin
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House proposal would rob USPS to pay for roads

Just before Congress broke for a week-long recess in early June, NALC received word about a behind-the-scenes plan on Capitol Hill to end Saturday mail delivery and use the disputed cost-savings from such a move to shore up the Highway Trust Fund.

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"Rather than offer Americans real solutions, House leadership is once more seeking the easy way out," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "America can 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 Highway Trust Fund pays for the repair 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, the Fund is running out of money. There is not only a long-term funding need but also a short-term need that must be addressed before Congress breaks for its August recess.

Historically, Congress has periodically raised the federal gas tax to support the Fund, but the tax hasn't been increased since 1993. If it wants to maintain our roads and bridges and it does not want to raise the tax, it must find another source of revenue. Leaders in the House of Representatives seemed to favor the latter option, setting their sights on USPS.

"This option wouldn't even work if tried," the president said. "There is not a penny of money here for the government. Lawmakers are claiming 'real savings for the general fund of the Treasury' from a future hypothetical event—a postal bailout—that no one is calling for or has proposed.

"And I don't have to tell you what eliminating Saturday delivery means for letter carrier jobs and the damage it would do to the future of the Postal Service," Rolando said. "We must do all we can to make sure this horrible backroom idea does not see the light of day when Congress returns from its recess and begins discussions about the Highway Trust Fund."

House committee abandons one bad postal bill, approves another

Since the beginning of May, Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA), chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee—the committee that has jurisdiction over the U.S. Postal Service—has drafted two separate, destructive postal bills in his ongoing attempts to end Saturday mail and door-to-door delivery.

The first bill, called the "Administration's Postal Reform Act of 2014," was scheduled for mark-up by Issa's committee on May 7. Among other things, the measure called for an end to door delivery for millions of businesses, encouraged the "voluntary" elimination of door delivery to 35 million to 40 million American households, and sought to allow USPS to move to five-day mail delivery.

"If these so-called reforms ever became law, they would damage the unique postal network that allowed the Postal Service to turn an operational profit in Fiscal Year 2013 and so far in Fiscal Year 2014," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "And they would do nothing to resolve the 2006 mandate that the Postal Service pre-fund 75 years' worth of future retiree health benefits and do so over 10 years."

This unfair mandate, required of no other government agency or private company, accounts for most of the Postal Service's reported financial losses since 2007 and all of its losses since October 2012.

In the days before this bill's scheduled mark-up, President Rolando urged thousands of NALC e-Activist Network members to call their House representatives and tell them to vote "no" on this destructive measure. The NALC president also joined with the presidents of the other three postal unions to send a letter to the Oversight Committee's leaders, expressing our united opposition to the bill—a measure that shared many similarities with Issa's earlier bill, H.R. 2748. (That bill was approved by the committee last July but it has seen no action in the House since then, and none was scheduled when this *NALC Bulletin* was being prepared.)

This intensive combined lobbying effort against the bill, boosted by a clear lack of congressional support for the bill from either Republicans or Democrats, paid off: Just hours before the May 7 mark-up meeting was set to take place, NALC received word that the meeting had been canceled and that consideration of the bill had been put on hold indefinitely.

But letter carriers didn't have to wait long for Issa's next move. The California congressman quickly put on the agenda of his committee's May 21 business meeting the mark-up of yet another postal bill, the so-called "Secure Delivery for America Act." This time, Issa's focus was on inconveniencing customers by forcing 15 million American households and businesses over the next 10 years to give up the door delivery to which they had become accustomed, in favor of remote cluster boxes or curb-line mailboxes—under the guise of increasing mail and package security.

In a May 19 e-Activist alert, Rolando noted that Issa again was choosing to ignore the devastating impact the pre-funding mandate continues to have on USPS' finances. Unfortunately, the Oversight Committee approved H.R. 4670 at the conclusion of its May 21 meeting, along a predictably party-line vote. But the measure is a long way from becoming law—no House consideration for H.R. 4670 had been scheduled as this *NALC Bulletin* was being prepared and the Senate has no plans to consider a similar legislative proposal.

"This irresponsible bill is bad for the American public, bad for businesses, bad for the economy and bad for the U.S. Postal Service," President Rolando said in a statement following the vote. "We are confident that a majority of lawmakers will come to understand that degrading a now-profitable postal network not only makes no sense, it would stop the postal turnaround by driving mail—and revenue—out of the system."

Retirement savings plan for CCAs now available

City carrier assistants (CCAs) now have access to a new plan designed specifically to help them save money for retirement.

The retirement savings plan (RSP) for CCAs who are members of the NALC was created by the union's Mutual Benefit Association (MBA) to give CCAs a tax-deferred way to save for retirement. The plan was organized as a traditional individual retirement account (IRA), which means contributions to the plan may be tax-deductible and its earnings and principal can be tax-deferred.

As provided by the 2013 Das interest arbitration award, the RSP was specially created for CCAs who are not yet eligible to earn pension benefits under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) or to participate in the federal Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). "CCAs can begin saving now," Rolando said, "and once you are converted to full-time, you can easily transfer your funds into TSP, or leave them in the RSP until you retire."

Download the brochure from the MBA page at nalc.org to learn about the plan's rules and tax regulations, then download and fill out the application. The MBA will take care of the rest, starting with notifying the Postal Service to begin the payroll deductions you authorize.

"The MBA has earned the trust of generations of letter carriers and it will earn yours as well," Rolando said.

2014 Food Drive:

Day of action to help feed America's hungry

Asheville, NC Br. 248 member Sonja Blanton shows off some of her Food Drive collections on Saturday, May 10.

On Saturday, May 10, NALC members across the United States once again put the U.S. Postal Service's universal delivery network to use to help feed the country's hungry, by taking part in the 22nd annual Letter Carriers' Food Drive.

In more than 10,000 cities and towns in all 50 states and U.S. jurisdictions, letter carriers collected sacks of non-perishable food items left near customers' mailboxes. Volunteers, including members of the other postal crafts and from postal management, as well as family members and friends, helped retrieve the heavy bags from loaded-down postal vehicles and transport the much-needed food to the organizations that serve the hungry.

NALC President Fredric Rolando congratulated all those who helped out on food drive day.

"Year after year, it's tremendously impressive to see so many NALC members go the extra mile and lift the extra pounds to help ensure that America's largest one-day food collection effort is a success," Rolando said. "I'm sure our customers who struggle with hunger every day appreciate our efforts."

Rolando thanked the union's national partners in the drive: the U.S. Postal Service, the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, Campbell Soup Co., Uncle Bob's Self Storage, AARP Foundation and its Drive to End Hunger campaign, Publix grocery stores, Feeding America, Valpak, the AFL-CIO, United Way, and the Valassis marketing firm. He also thanked "Family Circus" cartoonist Jeff Keane, who again provided special Food Drive artwork this year.

As reports rolled in to NALC Headquarters in Washington, it seemed that good weather over most of the country had helped make for a successful food drive, with only a handful of locations reporting truly soggy conditions.

Collection results still were being tabulated at NALC Headquarters as this *NALC Bulletin* was being prepared. A final national total for the drive is scheduled to be announced later this month, and a complete report on the drive, including branch-by-branch results, will appear in the August issue of *The Postal Record*.

Staying safe in the summer heat

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration has announced the launching of its annual Campaign to Prevent Heat Illness in Outdoor Workers.

Labor-intensive activities in hot weather can raise body temperatures beyond the level that normally can be cooled by sweating. Heat illness initially may manifest itself as heat rash or heat cramps, but can quickly escalate to heat exhaustion and then heat stroke if simple preventative measures are not followed. Heat illness is a particular risk for new and temporary workers.

OSHA has developed heat illness educational materials, as well as a web page that provides information and resources for workers on heat illness—how to prevent it and what to do in case of an emergency: osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness.

OSHA also has released a free application for mobile devices that enables workers to monitor the heat index at their work sites. The app displays a risk level for workers based on the heat index, as well as reminders about protective measures that should be taken at that risk level. Available for Android and iPhone, the app can be downloaded by visiting osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/heat_index/heat_app.html.

From PIN to password

USPS changes web access requirement

The U.S. Postal Service recently changed the access requirement for a number of human resources web applications for postal employees from a four-digit personal identification number (PIN) to a password. This change, designed to enhance the protection of postal employees' personal information by strengthening password security, affects employees who access several human resources web applications, including LiteBlue, PostalEASE, eOPF, eReassign and eIDEAS.

USPS mailed postcards to employees, telling them to watch for a letter that explained the upcoming changes. This letter contained a temporary password that was randomly assigned to each employee and was designed to allow access to a new "Self-Service Profile" (SSP) website that was built for postal employees to let them set up and manage a newly created self-service password.

After you receive the temporary password, follow these instructions to set up your permanent password:

- Go to the SSP site at https://ssp.usps.qov. (Note that it is *https*, not *http*.)
- Click "Enter SSP." The SSP login screen will display.
- Enter your Employee Identification Number (EIN).
- Enter your temporary password from the letter, which was printed in the top right-hand corner of the letter sent to you from the Postal Service.
- Create a new password by typing it in the "New Password" box, and then type that same new password again into the "Confirm Password" box. General information and password rules will be displayed. Click "Next."
- Select two "Security Challenge Questions" and enter your answers to each question. These questions will help you regain access if you forget your new password. Click "Next."
- The next prompt will ask you to enter your e-mail address and to confirm it. It's optional, but NALC strongly suggests that you enter your e-mail address here because it will make password recovery much easier if you ever forget your password. Your e-mail address also will be used to notify you of changes that you make to your profile. The e-mail address you enter will not be used for any purpose other than human resources web applications.
- Click "Submit My Profile" and the SSP main page will display.

If you opted to enter your e-mail address, a confirmation e-mail will immediately be sent to you validating your successful profile set-up.

USPS has a help line for assistance with setting up a new password or for anyone who did not receive a temporary password in the mail. Call 877-477-3273, Option 5. It's available Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Eastern Time.

Note: The change in access requirements to the web-based applications discussed here does not alter any of the current transactions you can perform using the telephone Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. Your current four-digit USPS PIN will still be used for those telephone-based transactions.

In Philadelphia July 21-25

Convention news and updates

Registration: Registration for the convention ended May 21.

Retiring officers' dinner: The retiring officers' dinner will be held on Thursday, July 24, at the Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown Hotel. Tickets are $80.

Those who have announced their retirement at the end of their terms are **Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel** and **Region 5 National Business Agent Dan Pittman**. **Former Director of Retired Members Ernie Kirkland** retired last year.

Download the ticket order form from the convention page at nalc.org, then mail it along with a check or money order made payable to "Secretary-Treasurer, NALC" for the total amount, to: Retiring Officers' Dinner; NALC Secretary-Treasurer; 100 Indiana Ave. NW; Washington, DC 20001-2144. Guests wishing to be seated at the same table must submit their ticket orders and payment together in the same envelope (maximum eight guests per table). Order form and payment must be received by June 21. The tickets will be held for pickup at the Retiring Officers' Dinner ticket booth located in the convention registration area.

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 due to NALC's 69th Biennial Convention in Philadelphia July 21-25. The moratorium commences on July 13 and concludes on Aug. 12.

***Postal Record* delayed:** Please note that the June 2014 edition of *The Postal Record* will be delayed slightly to accommodate a number of deadlines related to the NALC's biennial national convention in Philadelphia in July. Members can expect to begin receiving the magazine in their mailboxes in mid-June.

Still looking for blood donors: The American Red Cross will hold a blood drive on Tuesday, July 22, and Wednesday, July 23 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. The hours have been extended, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day. A goal of 150 donors per day has been set. Sign up in advance using the online scheduler at redcrossblood.org. Use sponsor code NALC. You also may schedule your appointment by calling 800-RED-CROSS (800-733-2767, option 2) and give your sponsor code: NALC. On-site appointments may be made based on availability.

Tours: Visit TourSignUp.com/NALC for information about tours of the greater Philadelphia area. Note that many tours sell out in advance. Subject to availability, tours can be purchased on-site at the tour desk inside the Pennsylvania Convention Center.

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*

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