Vincent R. Sombrotto, 89, a towering figure in the history of the National Association of Letter Carriers and one of the most significant U.S. labor leaders of recent decades, died Jan. 10.

As a rank-and-file letter carrier at Grand Central Station in New York City, Sombrotto assumed leadership of the pivotal 1970 wildcat postal strike that led directly to the creation of the modern United States Postal Service.

The following year, he was elected president of NALC Branch 36 in New York City. Seven years later, he was elected as NALC’s 16th national president, a position he held from 1979 to 2002.

His seven-term tenure atop the union was marked by extraordinary changes in the letter carrier craft and by remarkable progress for letter carriers. He also served as a vice president of the AFL-CIO.

“Vince’s long tenure and tireless work for this union, at both the local and national levels, has left a lasting, positive impact on all the men and women who have carried the mail since the Great Postal Strike, and on those who will do so in the decades yet to come,” NALC President Fredric V. Rolando said.

“The deep sadness we all feel at his passing mixes with the fond and happy memories of him that those of us he touched will carry with us for the rest of our lives,” Rolando said.

Sombrotto was born in New York City on June 15, 1923. He joined what was then the Post Office Department in 1947 as a part-time letter carrier after serving with distinction in the U.S. Navy in World War II.

In 1970, New York City letter carriers walked off their federal jobs—risking arrest in what was effectively a strike against the U.S. government—to protest dismal working conditions and poverty-level wages that entailed some of the most difficult assistance programs. Within hours, carriers and other postal employees in one city after another across the country joined the strike.

President Richard Nixon called in the troops to deliver the mail, but they proved unable to carry out the task in an effective manner. The walkout eventually resulted in the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 with full collective-bargaining rights for all postal employees.

Though he held no union office at the time, Sombrotto’s personal charisma, street smarts and military background led to his taking charge and to other carriers following his lead.

His seven-term tenure atop the union was marked by extraordinary changes in the letter carrier craft and by remarkable progress for letter carriers. As national president and chief contract negotiator, Sombrotto led the NALC in seven highly productive rounds of collective bargaining that provided basic wage increases in every contract, preserved uncapped cost-of-living adjustments and improved letter carrier working conditions. His efforts made the carrier’s job a more rewarding and satisfying one, and they made the NALC a stronger, more united union, well-equipped to meet the challenges it faced.

Sombrotto’s many achievements as NALC president included turning the union’s political action fund, the Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education (COLCPE), into one of the largest and most effective political action committees in the labor movement and dramatically improving the union’s political and legislative operations. Under his leadership in 1993, the NALC played a critical role in winning reform of the Hatch Act, breaking the political shoddy that made letter carriers and other federal employees second-class citizens for more than 50 years.

A firm believer in civic responsibility, Sombrotto tirelessly promoted the letter carrier tradition of assisting those in need. His active support of the Muscular Dystrophy Association helped raise tens of millions of dollars to fight the ravages of neuromuscular diseases.

In 1992, he began the NALC Food Drive, which has developed into the country’s largest one-day food drive. Held the second Saturday every May, it has to date provided more than 1.2 billion pounds of food for food banks in communities throughout the nation, with letter carriers collecting non-perishable food postal patrons leave near their mailboxes.

Knowing that carriers are both familiar with and dedicated to the communities they serve, Sombrotto and the NALC joined forces with the U.S. Postal Service, local United Ways and emergency services organizations to establish Carrier Alert, a nationwide program where carriers can watch over elderly or housebound postal customers. A great many of these letter carriers perform heroic and humanitarian deeds on their routes, saving lives, putting out fires, finding missing children and stopping crimes, something that Sombrotto and every NALC president since have recognized annually with the NALC Heroes of the Year awards.

Sombrotto retired from national office in 2002. Since then, he had remained engaged in the service of his beloved union, taking part in many national conventions as well as in a special video commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Great Postal Strike. His last appearance at a national NALC gathering was at the National Postal Worker Day at the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C., in 2012.

Sombrotto, who passed away after a long illness, is survived by his wife Rae, by seven grown children and by 14 grandchildren. Condolences can be sent to Mrs. Sombrotto and family at: 24 Soundview Drive, Port Washington, NY 11050. Donations in lieu of flowers to the National Kidney Foundation.
Arbitration board issues award

Sets terms of the 2011-2016 National Agreement; ‘NALC achieves its major goals,’ Rolando says

The three-person board of arbitrators has issued a final and binding award that sets the terms of a four-and-a-half year collective bargaining agreement between the National Association of Letter Carriers and the U.S. Postal Service, NALC President Fredric Rolando announced on Jan. 11.

“NALC had three primary objectives in this critical round of collective bargaining,” Rolando said. “First, to protect the jobs and living standards and working conditions of the nation’s 180,000 city letter carriers. Second, to protect the integrity of our historic institution—the United States Postal Service. And third, to work cooperatively with all stakeholders to enable the USPS to continue to serve the American public, in the internet age, by strengthening our unequalled ‘last-mile’ delivery capacity.”

“This agreement meets all three of those objectives,” he said.

The arbitration board was chaired by Shyam Das, a member of the American Arbitration Association’s labor panel who has been a full-time labor arbitrator since 1977. NALC’s member of the arbitration board was General Counsel Bruce Simon of New York-based Cohen, Weiss & Simon. USPS counsel Robert Dufek was the Postal Service’s attorney.

The award follows months of work by the NALC, including its officers, staff, consultants and expert witnesses who diligently assembled the union’s case in the interest arbitration proceeding.

“Although we would have preferred to reach a negotiated settlement in November 2011,” Rolando said, “the process worked as intended to resolve all outstanding issues and to address both sides’ key concerns while laying the groundwork for a productively innovative Postal Service in the years to come.

“I thank all the members of the NALC for their patience during this long process and for the hard work they do every day to make USPS the most affordable and efficient postal service in the world,” he said. “This agreement rewards city carriers for these contributions and sets the stage for a major comeback for the Postal Service, provided that Congress does its part to enact real reforms that will allow us to serve the American people and the U.S. economy for decades to come.”

Here are some highlights of the contract, which covers the period from Nov. 20, 2011, to May 20, 2016:

**Wage provisions:**
- **No two-tier pay scale**
- **Three general wage increases and seven COLAs awarded**

The Das board rejected the Postal Service’s proposals to freeze pay, eliminate cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) and implement a two-tier wage schedule for career city carriers. Instead, the new contract provides three general wage increases between now and the end of the contract: 1 percent in November 2013, 1.5 percent in November 2014, and 1 percent in November 2015. It also provides for the payment of seven COLAs between now and 2016, though the two COLAs calculated in 2013 will be deferred and paid in 2014. These wage and COLA provisions follow the pattern established by the negotiated American Postal Workers Union (APWU) contract and the arbitrated National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association (NRLCA) contract.

However, the award lowered the entry wage for new career letter carriers (appointed on or after Jan. 12, 2013) and created a new step progression that ends at the existing Step O in both Grades 1 and 2 of the current NALC pay charts. Moreover, this new step progression (labeled Table 2 of the City Carrier Schedule) will reach the top step pay of the existing pay chart (now called Table 1 of the City Carrier Wage Schedule) in exactly 444 weeks, the same 12.4 years that applies to career carriers appointed before Jan. 12, 2013.

New career letter carriers hired under Table 2 will initially earn $16.71 per hour at Step A. They will earn step increases worth 2.75 percent of top step pay every 46 weeks until they reach Step O of Table 2 ($22.17 per hour)—the same top step grade of Table 1.

Any carrier appointed at Grade 2 of Table 2 will be paid $27.06 per hour and carriers will earn step increases worth 2.75 percent of top step pay every 46 weeks until reaching Step O ($27.74 per hour)—the same top step grade of Table 2.

NALC successfully argued that reducing the top step pay of city carriers was not justified given the extension of street times in recent years and the increased physical demands of our jobs.

**Workforce structure:**
- **New non-career category with career path replaces TEs**
- **All part-time flexible (PTFs) converted**

Over the course of the collective bargaining, the parties worked hard to create a win-win agreement on the workforce structure of the city carrier craft. The Postal Service sought the cost savings and flexibility of a larger non-career workforce, while the union has been deeply dissatisfied with the structure of the transitional employee (TE) workforce, where TEs had no right of reappointment and no path to career employment. Meanwhile, we also sought to convert thousands of part-time flexible (PTF) carriers to full-time regular.

The Das award creates a new category of non-career employees called city carrier assistants (CCAs) to replace TEs. Like TEs, CCAs will be members of the NALC bargaining unit and will be appointed for 360-day terms. But unlike TEs, CCAs will earn a pre-career appointment version of seniority (called “relative standing”) that will give them preference for career job openings in their installations. All career carrier vacancies will be filled by converting CCAs to full-time regular status in order of their relative standing in the installation.

This new path to career status will be extended to existing TEs as well. All TEs will be given an opportunity to take the city carrier entrance test and to accept an appointment as a CCA within 90 days, and they will be given credit for time served as a TE for purposes of “relative standing.”

The new contract will limit the number of CCAs to 15 percent of the total number of full-time carriers in each District and will allow the Postal Service to hire an additional 8,000 CCAs to facilitate the development of new products and services (such as evening or Sunday e-commerce delivery).

The initial pay of CCAs will be set at Steps BB and AA of Table 2 of the City Carrier Schedule. New CCAs will be paid $15 per hour (Step BB) and current TEs who become CCAs will be paid $16.25 per hour (Step AA). In lieu of COLAs prior to their career appointments, the CCAs will receive additional general wage increases of 1 percent in November 2013, 1 percent in November 2014 and 1.5 percent in November 2015 (in addition to those provided to all bargaining unit employees indicated above).

Although we fought hard for better CCA pay rates, CCAs will be eligible for health insurance after one year and the Postal Service will contribute toward their premiums and offer coverage beyond that required by the Affordable Care Act starting in 2014. They also will qualify for regular carrier uniform allowances and will be covered by the opting provisions of Article 41. And NALC will investigate the establishment of a non-contributory 401(k) plan for CCAs that would allow non-career carriers to save for retirement, with provisions to transfer such savings to the Thrift Savings Plan once they obtain career positions.

Part-time flexible carriers also will benefit from the Das award, as it calls for the conversion of all PTFs to full-time regular status and for the elimination of the PIT category over the term of the contract.

**Job security:**
- **Ban on sub-contracting continued, strengthened**

NALC’s approach to improving job security did not involve the workforce structure issues outlined above, which will help us capture a growing share of the booming package and competitive products market. Our approach also included efforts to strengthen our contractual protections on sub-contracting and to maintain our no-layoff protections. We succeeded on these fronts in the contract awarded by the Das panel.

By retaining the historic ban on sub-contracting achieved in the 2006 round of bargaining and by adding a new Memorandum of Understanding on the Delivery and Collection of Competitive Products, the new contract strengthens the job security of all letter carriers. The new MOU ensures the assignment in city delivery areas to the city carrier craft the delivery and collection work involving competitive products (during or outside regular business hours). All of the MOUs restricting sub-contracting were retained.

Management’s demand for the elimination of the no-layoff clause for carriers with at least six years of service also was rejected; the existing provision is retained.

**Health benefits:**
- **Task force offers alternative to cost shift pattern**

The pattern set by the most recent contracts reached with the APWU and NRLCA calls for the continued shift of health insurance premium costs from the USPS to postal employees, as occurred in the NALC’s 2006 contract. The Das award applies the pattern to city carriers in the new contract, calling for a reduction in the Postal Service’s share of weighted average health premiums in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHB)—from 80 percent in 2012 to 78 percent in 2014 (with no change in 2013), and then to 77 percent in 2015 and 76 percent in 2016 for all current and future employees. For carriers appointed on or after Jan. 12, 2013, the USPS share will be set at 77 percent between 2013 and 2015 and fall to 76 percent in 2016.

NALC resisted this continued cost shift and sought an alternative approach. In fact, the NALC and the Postal Service conducted intensive and productive negotiations over the possible creation of a separate USPS set of health plans for city carriers. The talks faltered on a number of difficult issues that could not be resolved by the arbitration deadline, including whether the USPS plans would be offered through FEHB or outside of FEHB. Nevertheless, both parties believe further work on this issue is worth the effort and the Das award includes an MOU on the Resolution of Health Benefit Issues that calls for a task force to resume discussions in this area. Should the task force reach agreement, the cost shift called for by Article 21 might be reversed or otherwise revised.

Representatives from NALC and USPS were on hand Jan. 10 for the signing of the arbitration award that sets the terms of the 2011-2016 National Agreement between the two parties. Pictured (clockwise from upper left) NALC Chief of Staff Jim Sauber, NALC President Fredric Rolando, Arbitration Board Chairman Shyam Das, USPS Vice President for Labor Relations Doug Tulino, and USPS General Counsel Robert Dufek.

Local bargaining and other notable MOUs:

- The period for negotiating new Local Memoranda of Understanding has been set by the new contract from April 1, 2013, to March 31, 2014.
- Unless otherwise addressed in the Das Award, most of the MOUs in the 2006 National Agreement will be continued in the 2011 contract. In addition, there were more than a dozen new MOUs awarded in this contract and eight existing MOUs were updated. Some highlights of the new or amended memos include:
  - A new MOU creates an Article 8 Task Force to develop and test improvements in the process for assigning overtime hours.
  - A new MOU creates a joint task force to explore and test possible improvements to the Dispute Resolution Process.
  - A new MOU regarding a City Delivery Task Force will seek to improve the work climate while investigating ways to raise operational efficiency. The parties will focus specifically on ways to address factors that create workplace conflict over daily work times.
  - An updated MOU on Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process revises the joint exploration of improvements to the route inspection methods.

A complete copy of the Das Award, including updated contract language, the new wage schedules and a full set of new and amended MOUs can be found on the NALC’s website. The March issue of The Postal Record will offer more information about the award.

President Rolando and the members of the Executive Council will be available to answer questions from branch leaders at a just-announced 2013 national Rap Session in Las Vegas. Check nalc.org for dates and registration information. In addition, members will receive a letter from President Rolando about the new contract in the weeks to come.

The NALC Contract Administration Unit will work with the Postal Service in the weeks ahead to assemble and publish an official version of the 2011-2016 contract, and NALC Headquarters will distribute copies of the contract to branch presidents when it is ready.

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USPS future, new contract will be hot topics at Feb. 9 rap session

NALC President Fredric Rolando has announced that the 2013 national "rap session" will be held on Saturday, Feb. 9, at the Aria Resort & Casino in Las Vegas.

The main topics on the rap session agenda will be the future of the Postal Service and the final and binding award issued Jan. 10 by the three-person board of arbitrators that sets the terms of the 2011-2016 collective-bargaining agreement between the NALC and the U.S. Postal Service.

"This rap session will be a great opportunity for us to talk about the challenges ahead and to answer members’ questions about the provisions of our new agreement," Rolando said.

A reception will take place at the Aria on Friday night, Feb. 8, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. The session itself will run all day on Saturday, Feb. 9, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with a break for lunch.

The Aria Resort & Casino is located about 3.5 miles from McCarran International Airport. The deadline for room reservation was Jan. 25, although reservations still might be accepted by the hotel based on availability and hotel rate. Call the Aria’s reservation department at 702-590-7757 or toll-free at 866-359-7757. Make sure you identify yourself as being with the National Association of Letter Carriers.

Visit nalc.org for more information.

Notice for transitional employees

If you are a transitional employee (TE), by now you should have received a letter from NALC President Fredric Rolando concerning the process for applying for a career-track city carrier assistant (CCA) position.

In addition, you should have received a booklet offering advice on taking the postal exam as well as practice exams.

Please note: The Postal Service has now confirmed that past exam scores are good for six years, not three years as indicated in the booklet.

If you have not yet received the letter or the booklet, contact the national business agent’s office for your region immediately. Visit nalc.org to find your NBA’s telephone number.

"Applying for the CCA position is the first step toward securing a career city carrier job," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "And as expected, implementing the TE application process is complicated and subject to bureaucratic obstacles and misinformation.

"We understand the frustration many TEs are feeling and we want to help," Rolando said. If you have any questions about the process or if you are experiencing any problems applying, immediately contact your NBA and provide details to him or her.

Space still available for Cleveland secretary-treasurer seminar

Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broedel has announced that some spaces still are available for the second of two educational training sessions tailored to assist new branch secretary-treasurers and other local and state officers who are chiefly responsible for financial administration.

This second session will take place in Cleveland, OH, April 22-24, and the deadline to register for it is March 27. These seminars are intended primarily for branch secretary-treasurers, although other branch and state officers who deal directly with branch finances also are invited.

Training will cover the basics for financial officers: taxes, including payroll withholding requirements; accounting systems and maintenance of proper controls; reporting to the Department of Labor, including LM-2, LM-3 and LM-30 forms; fiduciary duties under the Landrum-Griffin Act; bonding of branch officers; NALC dues; legal limits on certain types of union spending; and IRS reporting requirements, including Forms 990 and 990-T.

Sessions will begin at 8 a.m. on the first day and conclude by noon on the third day.

Priority will be given to first-time attendees. The session is limited to 150 participants.

A form to request registration for the Cleveland seminar can be found online at nalc.org. One person per form, please. Registration forms must be received at NALC Headquarters in Washington by March 27.

Branches will be responsible for transportation and lodging. The Cleveland seminar room rate is $99 single/double, plus tax. Please do not make airline reservations before receiving confirmation from the secretary-treasurer’s office. Hotel information will be included with your letter of acceptance.

What we can expect from Congress in 2013

A new Congress was sworn in on Jan. 3, giving letter carriers a chance to fight for reform that actually will address the main problems the Postal Service faces: unaffordable and unreasonable retiree health-pre-funding mandates, grossly unfair pension allocations, an outdated business model and an inadequate USPS governance structure.

"The last Congress was the least productive Congress in modern American history," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "But one piece of good news resulting from all that gridlock was that deeply flawed postal reform legislation that had emerged over the past two years did not pass."

Broader legislative battles also remain, Rolando said, and letter carriers have a stake in several of them.

"Congress may have agreed to raise the debt limit for a few weeks," Rolando said, "but if it refuses to allow a more permanent raise in March, it could plunge the country—and the world—into a deep economic recession that would cripple the Postal Service."

Scheduled spending cuts under sequestration would not directly affect letter carriers, he said, but some proposed Republican alternatives to those cuts would target federal employee pay and benefits—such as a proposal to raise federal and postal employee contributions for FEBS and CSRS pensions to 5 percent of pay.

"In other words, despite the fact that our postal pensions are over-funded, our take-home pay as federal workers still could be cut by 5 percent," Rolando said.

The president also reminded letter carriers that the requirement to deliver mail on Saturdays has been included in annual appropriation bills for more than 30 years, so letter carriers will need to let legislators know that this provision must be part of any continuing resolution to fund the government for the rest of the fiscal year.

"We have our work cut out for us," Rolando said. "We will have to be better than ever as legislative activists in 2013. The crisis at the Postal Service is real and it is not going away. The federal budget crisis is real and it is not going away, either. Blocking bad legislation won’t be good enough this year. We must fight and win the enactment of meaningful postal reform this year, even as we fight to defend our benefits in the midst of the budget wars around us."

New artwork revealed as Food Drive preparations kick into high gear

Preparations continue to pick up speed for the 21st annual NALC National Food Drive on Saturday, May 11.

"In too many of the communities we serve six days a week, hunger remains a huge challenge," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "That’s why each year on the second Saturday in May, thousands of letter carriers enlist the help of family members, friends, co-workers, and managers to participate in the largest one-day food collection drive in America—a sincere effort to make a real difference."

The deadline for branches to register for this year’s drive was Jan. 31. Resource guides and other materials continue to be mailed out to branch food drive coordinators in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"Family Circus" cartoonist Jeff Keane has created new artwork for this year’s drive, suitable for use on postcards, T-shirts, banners and more. The artwork, along with numerous other useful resources, is available for download via the food drive’s page at nalc.org.

Questions regarding the food drive should be directed to NALC Director of Community Services Pam Donato at 202-662-2489 or at donato@nalc.org.

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Next moves
Rolando announced that, before the current continuing resolution expires on March 27, the NALC is planning talks with the White House and postal management, and that will begin further negotiations in December—following the end of that initial timeframe—for a new continuing resolution that would last through the end of Fiscal Year 2013, which covers October, November and December of 2012. The Postal Service showed a net loss of $5.6 billion for the quarter of Fiscal Year 2013, which covers October, November and December of 2012, including during the lame-duck session. But in 2013, playing defense will not be good enough.” Warburton added that he is concerned about the potential for new legislation, which will provide the NALC with leverage to advance our legislative agenda and to have a seat at the table when changes are made.”

Organizing prevention
Rolando promised the rap session attendees that “we will spare no expense and use every available resource to prevent such legislation,” he added. “We are not here to justify anything. We are here to make our case. We must make the public aware of the facts.”

Budget
The U.S. Office of Management and Budget released its annual budget for Fiscal Year 2014 on February 14, 2013. The budget includes a request for $35.3 billion for the Postal Service, which is a $6.9 billion decrease from the fiscal year 2013. The budget also includes provisions to accelerate the electronic substitution of mail accelerated.”

Financial and legislative updates
A full day
Rolando called a national meeting of the union’s Executive Council on Saturday, February 16, 2013. The meeting, which was held at the National Postal Museum in Washington, DC, included a full agenda of discussions on the union’s legislative and organizing efforts.

A strategy for reform
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Next on stage at the rap session was NALC Chief of Staff Jim Sauber, who provided members with a recent history of the union’s efforts to protect our job security and our health and retirement benefits. He said that the union has been successful in protecting our job security, but that there is still work to be done to ensure that our health and retirement benefits are protected.

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The U.S. Office of Management and Budget released its annual budget for Fiscal Year 2014 on February 14, 2013. The budget includes a request for $35.3 billion for the Postal Service, which is a $6.9 billion decrease from the fiscal year 2013. The budget also includes provisions to accelerate the electronic substitution of mail accelerated.”

Financial and legislative updates
A full day
Rolando called a national meeting of the union’s Executive Council on Saturday, February 16, 2013. The meeting, which was held at the National Postal Museum in Washington, DC, included a full agenda of discussions on the union’s legislative and organizing efforts.

A strategy for reform
Rolando began by saying that the union’s strategy for reform is based on two key principles: the protection of our job security and the protection of our health and retirement benefits. He added that the union will also be working to ensure that the Postal Service is managed in a way that is fair and just to all of its employees.

Next moves
Rolando announced that, before the current continuing resolution expires on March 27, the NALC is planning talks with the White House and postal management, and that will begin further negotiations in December—following the end of that initial timeframe—for a new continuing resolution that would last through the end of Fiscal Year 2013, which covers October, November and December of 2012. The Postal Service showed a net loss of $5.6 billion for the quarter of Fiscal Year 2013, which covers October, November and December of 2012, including during the lame-duck session. But in 2013, playing defense will not be good enough.” Warburton added that he is concerned about the potential for new legislation, which will provide the NALC with leverage to advance our legislative agenda and to have a seat at the table when changes are made.”

Organizing prevention
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On Sunday, March 24, letter carriers will lead the charge across America in sending a message to Congress and the postmaster general that they cannot “fix” the USPS by reducing services such as six-day delivery.

"The postmaster general, Patrick Donahoe, announced his 11-point plan to deliver Saturday letter mail delivery, in violation of the law and in flagrant defiance of Congress, is a direct threat to the very existence of the Postal Service,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “What’s needed, instead, is a plan that will strengthen the Postal Service, not slowly dismantle it.”

To support this message, NALC members, alongside other unions, small business owners, civic organizations and faith groups—must mention our families, friends and neighbors—will gather on Sunday, March 24, at prominent post offices in all 50 states. They’ll be joined by thousands of postal employees who have never known what it’s like to go hungry or wonder when their next meal will be eaten.

NALC members who have signed up to receive an e-Activist Network e-mail messages have also been getting special notices via Delivering for America (D4A), our web-based coalition of Postal Service supporters. These e-D4A e-mails have asked members to participate in readily available events to support Saturday mail service and a plan for growth. The D4A website (DeliveringForAmerica.com) will provide supporters with the necessary tools and information to make sure our voice is heard, on March 24 and beyond.

"It’s true for, now, six-day delivery service proved to be preserved in the law through Sept. 30 (the end of the Postal Service fiscal year), which is going to strike a blow to our families, who have been thrown the sword of this drop Saturday mail beginning in August.

"Donahoe’s so- on your plans and the will of Congress," Rolando said, "and it sets us up for a move to four-day and three-day delivery in the years ahead.

"And to call it a plan is laughable," he said. "Donahoe and the Board of Governors simply don’t have anyone— or enough resources and infrastructure—to deliver their only plan to cut service, reduce headcounts and continue to shred. They have simply thrown in the towel," the president said, "because we know that eliminating a day of mail delivery will hit senior citizens, rural communities and small businesses the hardest.

"But we promise to fight the service cut to the 33 percent of American business that they say they want Saturday service will deliver mail volume out of the system and invite new competition into our business to provide Saturday service.

"And we know that these competition emerge on Satur-

days, they will agitate to get access to America’s mailboxes every day of the week.

"We have a responsible obligation to send our representatives in Congress this clear message," Rolando said. "They cannot let Donahoe get away with this destructive, unilateral service cut.

"So on March 24th," he said, "I am asking you to do something, to communicate, to elect the public and educate the public, to let the voices really, loud, clearly and with a message of action—the latest iteration of our ongoing campaign to halt the systematic destruction of America’s only truly universal delivery network. We must protect this, 237-year-old institution that has its roots in the U.S. Constitution and that supports millions of private-sector jobs in a $1.3 trillion postal industry.”

Please note that letter carriers should not wear their uniforms for this event.

Special thanks from Sombrotto family

"It was the thoughtfulness and letters, the many generous donations to the National Kidney Foundation, to the moving tribute posted this past February, the outpouring of support from the members of the NALC who has been overwhelming. You and your support have been so strong in a very difficult time. Just knowing what an impact "Vince" had on so many of you makes him even more special to us. We are forever grateful.”

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John Riestra, 61, of Tamarac, was killed in a car crash

On the afternoon of March 19, 2013, Mike Shea, Designer/Web Editor, Joe Conway, Membership Department.

Preparations for the 2013 NALC Food Drive continue to pick up steam as May is drawn closer. The letter carriers across the country are excited about the largest national one-day drive designed to help out community food banks and pantries. Last year we set a new record of 2.5 million pounds of nonperishable food donations.

"We are Fortunately," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "Most of us have never known what it is like to go hungry or wonder when our next meal is coming. But millions of our fellow citizens face this challenge every single day.

Our dedication and hard work each year on the second Saturday in May may help save the hungriest of families.

Joining NALC as supporters of the letter carrier effort this year is the "Stomp Out Hunger" the National Rural Letter Carrier Association. And many of our friends at the US COPE, the BCCS, the COPE, the ACU LA, the letter carriers of the Maples Gardens chain of plastic grocery bags used in many areas of the county, the Public grocery store chain and Wal-mart.

Visit nalc.org for Food Drive resources and information.

Next Postal Record to be delayed

Please note that production of the April 2013 Postal Bulletin is delayed for delivery to allow for proper in-depth review of the March 24 national day of action. Members. Bulletin will receive the April magazine sometime mid-month. Also, this temporary shift in our production schedule might result in our copy of the May 2013 edition of the magazine arriving a few days later than expected.

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Common bandstand in Massachusetts.

for 6-Day" rally Sunday, March 24, at the Boston USA for 6-Day!

ways that hurt the public, businesses and the USPS itself." cutting a day of mail delivery is part of an irrational busi-

Changes the most, because residents there rely on USPS and often cannot afford to pay their bills or do business online. It is a way to help solve the financial problems facing the Postal Service, but unless pensioners and the USPS on a path to destruction. Ending Saturday delivery, which is indis-

pensable to many rural residents, the elderly, small businesses, and others, would be the beginning of the end.

The early spring date for the day of action meant that some rainy days on the East Coast and in the Midwest had to be followed by somewhat less fertile white_paths in places like Boise and Los Angeles helipad 240s and chicken slos

letters while wearing short-sleeve shirts and shorts. But while the weather might have varied wildly from one region to the next, the letter carrier message on rainy day remained strong, focused and consistent.

The Postal Service is itself in the hub of a $60 trillion national mailing industry, with 75 million private sector jobs,” said Rolando later. “Ending Saturday delivery—17 percent reduction in service—would save taxpayers nothing, because the Postal Service funds itself solely through the sale of stamps and other postal products.”

Judging from the bundles of news reports about the event that continue to pour in to NALC Headquarters in Washington, letter carriers succeeded in demonstrating the notion that eliminating Saturday mail delivery would help solve the financial problems facing the USPS and improve its service.

A letter carriers rally nationwide to support USPS, 6 day mail

“Don’t dismantle the Postal Service, keep 6-day mail delivery!” That’s the main message that came through for thousands of letter carriers across America on Sunday, March 24, as they chanted in the streets and gathered on sidewalks throughout the country, at demonstrations and rallies in dozens of cities.

That’s the main message that was conveyed by thousands of letter carriers around the country on March 24. The message was part of a nationwide rally to support Saturday mail delivery and to protest plans by the Postal Service to end Saturday mail.

But while the day was rained out in one area, the union carriers still found a way to make their voices heard in the rain.

“Dear USPS customers:

Customer relations are a top priority in the Postal Service, and we are committed to ensuring the highest level of service for our customers. We value the trust and confidence you place in us and are dedicated to providing the best possible service. If you have any concerns or feedback, please do not hesitate to contact us at 202-393-4695 or via email at nalc.org. We are always here to help you.

We appreciate your patience and understanding during these challenging times, and we are committed to providing dependable and reliable postal services to our valued customers.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

[Name]
ROLANDO

NALC President Fredric Rolando testified on April 10 before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee about the Postal Service’s financial situation.

The hearing began with several representatives accusing Postal Service Board of Governors Chairman Mickey Barnett of backing away from USPS’s plan to provide NALC with an updated list daily, and the list on the NALC website will be updated in real-time. This first COLA was based on the increase in the CPI between July 2012 and January 2013. It amounts to 7.5 percent.

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But under closer questioning from lawmakers, Barnett and the Government Accountability Office Comptroller General Gene Dodaro made it clear that the decision not to unilaterally reduce the delivery schedule resulted from the need to follow the law, which calls for a six-day delivery schedule.

During his testimony, Rolando said that the merits, elimi- nation of the continued resolution mandating six-day mail is the law.”

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No! NALC rejects recommitting new contract

NACL President Fredric Rolando responded to Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe’s April 16 request to recommit to the 2006-2010 contract that was issued by the Arbitrator panel earlier this year. On April 18, 2013, he wrote a letter dated May 3, 2013, to the Postmaster General’s regional offices, requesting that the USPS not recommit to the contract. Rolando stated that the USPS Service Board of Governors, which suffers from too many vacancies and possesses too little business expertise, would have to act to save the Postal Service and save American jobs by preserving delivery standards and ending the unfair and disruptive shutdowns. Rolando urged Donahoe to work with us to reform “all aspects of the Postal Service, including its management, corporate structure and Board of Governors.” As he made a case against eliminating Saturday delivery, he told Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe, “It’s imperative that the Senate move on this package of nominations quickly, so that the NLRB can continue its mission to protect workers’ rights.”

Latest financial report shows uptick for USPS

On May 1, 2013, the Postal Service released its financial report for the second quarter of fiscal 2013, which covers the three months of April. The report included the President’s request to Congress for approval of negotiating a voluntary employee buyout, offering a reprofiling financial picture as the economy gradually improves. Operating revenue in the second quarter was $12 billion higher than it was in the second quarter of the previous year, while expenses were $1 billion lower. Rolando said, “This positive trend underscores the dual goal of increasing service quality while reining in costs.”

The financial report also showed that the USPS is competitive against its private sector competitors in over 95% of the country. At approximately 95% of retail locations, the USPS is the lowest-priced competitor. In the remaining 5%, the USPS is the second-lowest-priced competitor. Rolando said, “This is good news for our letter carriers, some of whom had to face long hours, hungry families in our community. We’ll see how many additional letters our strong financial performance will allow us to deliver.”

Vacancies list posted on NALC website

On March 19, 2013, NACL President Fredric Rolando signed the memorandum of understanding (MOU) “The Part-Time Flexible Opportunities (PTFO) Program that establishes a national-level workgroup to develop and implement a plan for providing delivery opportunities to letter carriers by converting part-time flexible (PTFO) and full-time letter carriers to transfers into vacanices in installations where there are no PTFO to convert. This MOU is intended to reduce the number of NALC members by providing an opportunity for PTFO and full-time letter carriers to transfer into installations that have no PTFO and have residual vacancies not under a specific Article 12; Article 33-34, or PTFO program. The MOU would not preclude the installation from converting eligible full-time carriers to PTFO positions. This MOU was set to expire on April 30, 2013, but was extended to May 30, 2013, by a separate NALC resolution.

The latest financial report shows that the USPS has a lot more work to do if it wants to produce a profit in the coming years. Rolando said, “Our letter carriers and our retirees are ready to work with NALC and with our friends and national sponsors to get this job done.”

DeFazio petition asks White House to save U.S. Postal Service, jobs

On May 13, 2013, Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) introduced a new bill to the House of Representatives, the Postal Worker White House Petition Act (HR 1657). The bill directs the President to use his authority under the Constitution to order the USPS to seek out new employment opportunities for employees who are no longer needed by the USPS. If the President is not able to act, the bill would require the USPS to seek out new employment opportunities for employees who are no longer needed by the USPS. The bill would also require the USPS to seek out new employment opportunities for employees who are no longer needed by the USPS.

Gridlock threatens NLRB’s effectiveness

Thanks to legislation introduced by NACL’s recent nominees to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), a full package of board member nominations was pending in the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. But as is so commonly the case in Washington, DC, partisan squabbling could scuttle the nominations and severely threaten the Board’s value.

The Senate Judiciary Committee this week released a report that highlights the Senate’s reluctance to confirm nominations quickly, so that the NLRB can continue its mission to protect workers’ rights. “NALC President Fredric Rolando said, “The Senate must act promptly to confirm the nominations,” said Rolando. He said, “The Senate must act promptly to confirm the nominations, so that the NLRB can continue its mission to protect workers’ rights.”

If the Senate does not confirm the nominations by the end of August, the NLRB will fall below a legal quorum, preventing it from issuing decisions that workers and employers need to run their businesses.

The Senate Committee on Education, Health, Labor and Pensions conducted a hearing on all five nominations from the NALC nominees, but did not hold hearings for the two remaining nominees, so that the NLRB would be fully functional. But in both instances the longer the Senate takes to confirm these nominations, the longer the NLRB will be underfunded.

The Senate leadership has made an explicit commitment to confirm all five nominees, so that the NLRB can continue its mission to protect workers’ rights.

According to NALC President Fredric Rolando, the NLRB is a fair and efficient way of helping workers and employers. The NLRB’s role is to protect workers’ rights and ensure that employers are treated fairly.

The Senate Majority Leader and the Senate Minority Leader need to work together to confirm the NLRB nominations as soon as possible.

Although many Democrats have spoken out in support of the NLRB, there are some members of the Senate who have been slow to act. NALC President Fredric Rolando said, “The Senate leadership has an explicit commitment to confirm all five nominees, so that the NLRB can continue its mission to protect workers’ rights.”

On May 10, 2013, NALC President Fredric Rolando signed an executive order to require the President to report to the Senate on the status of the nominees.

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In time of struggling economy, natural disasters
Near-record results for 2013 Food Drive

The 11th annual National Association of Letter Carriers Food Drive on Saturday, May 11, collected more than 7.5 million pounds of food to help local food banks, pantries and shelters around the country—an excessive result rendered all the more difficult by the struggling economy and the multiple recent natural disasters.

“This demonstrates in a real way 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 remarkable connec-
tion between letter carriers and the communities they serve—an bond that serves the nation well.”

In fact, the May 11 effort garnered 7.4 million pounds of food, an increase of about 5 percent over last year’s drive. And the total food collected this year was the second most in the drive’s 21 years, the only year it topped the record 2012 total.

In 10,000 cities and towns in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam, residents put out non-
perishable food donations on the drive’s traditional second Saturday in May. Letter carriers then collected the food as they delivered 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,” Rolando said.

The effort by 4,000 NALC branches around the country would not have been possible without the contributions of the national partners: Feeding America, Campbell Soup Co., AMP, Valpak Direct Marketing Systems, Valisala/Red Plumb, U.S. Postal Service, United Way Worldwide, AFL-CIO, Uncle Bob’s Self-Storage, GLS Companies, Source Direct, Plum, U.S. Postal Service, United Way Worldwide, AFL-CIO, Uncle Bob’s Self-Storage, GLS Companies, Source Direct and many others.

The natural disasters the country has recently endured—including the tornadoes in Oklahoma and Super Storm Sandy along the East Coast—magnified the needs. “These events show the good will of people, good will that in the heat can help prevent heat illness, and to include these prevention steps in worksite training and plans,” the OSHA campaign encourages employers to make sure each employee understands the steps they can take to prevent heat illness. The campaign features a heat stress detection tool, a heat index guide to help employers develop a prevention plan, a variety of training resources and a smartphone app. This year, outreach also will use Twitter and Face-
book, along with worker safety precautions included in Reading a Day Helps

Ricin threat causes concern
Five letters suspected of containing the poison ricin entered the mail stream in May, prompting the Postal Service to hold a number of stand-up talks on employee safety.

Two letters, postmarked in Spokane and discovered on May 4, were addressed to the Spokane Post Office and to a federal judge in Spokane. Stand-up talks the following day stated that it was no reason to believe postal employees are at risk from handling these letters.

A second stand-up talk in May disclosed the discovery of a third letter, also bearing a May 4 Spokane postmark, this one addressed to President Barack Obama.

KRE-TV reported that authorities had arrested Spokane resident Matthew Buquet, 32, on May 22, and charged him with at least one count of mailing a threatening communication. A bail hearing was held on May 28.

The Postal Service held additional stand-up talks on May 28 after it was determined that two more letters suspected of containing ricin and bearing Stewport, LA, postmarks had been mailed on May 20—one to New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and one to his gun-control group in Washington. On June 3, police arrested 35-year-old Shannon Richardson of Texarkana, TX, in connection with this case.

According to the stand-up talks, the suspected substance was not in a form that could be ingested or other-

wise ingested. Each talk also briefly outlined the symptoms of ricin infection and directed postal workers to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website, cdc.gov, for further information.

The three letters in Spokane, which also reportedly contained physical threats, are being investigated by postal inspectors and the Federal Protective Service.

All five letters are undergoing forensic tests, and inspectors are keeping an eye out for any additional letters. NALC members who have further questions may call Director of Safety and Health Michael L. Pevara Jr. at NALC Headquarters in Washington, DC.
On July 17, Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA), Chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, held a full committee hearing to discuss the Postal Service’s financial status and the prospects for reform. The opening remarks were delivered by United States Postal Service (USPS) Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe. The hearing was held to discuss the annual financial outlook for the Postal Service.

Issa announced a model of improvements in his proposed bill indicating an incursion into his Rep. Stephen Lynch’s (D-MA) 2008 proposal to restructure postal service benefits. The USPS’s proposed legislation would not allow the Postal Service to eliminate a singleferior service. A model of improvements in his proposed bill indicates an incursion into his Rep. Stephen Lynch’s (D-MA) 2008 proposal to restructure postal service benefits. The USPS’s proposed legislation would not allow the Postal Service to eliminate a single

NALC President Fredric Rolando said in his written testimony to the committee that USPS should fund the reformed Postal Service to pay for its own needs.

Downsizing USPS

Following the hearing, Rolando introduced his draft bill H.R. 2825, The Postal Reform Act of 2013. The bill targets the elimination of more than 100,000 postal jobs and would dramatically cut service.

"This legislation is crucial, because it proceeds from a false premise—that the Postal Service is irreversibly failing."

The president addressed that many of the Postal Service’s losses in recent years have nothing to do with postal business. They are the result of the 2001 presidential mandate to phase out first-class mail. The result is that many of the postal losses are not due to渎职 or inefficiencies.

With the Supreme Court ruling that part of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) is unconstitutional, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has decided to extend marriage-based federal benefits to same-sex couples. However, it currently costs the Federal Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) $12.5 billion to cover these benefits.

NALP President Lisa Rindfleisch encourages all active and retired letter carriers who have not yet done so to visit the carrier link and sign up to receive alerts via the NALC’s Wireless Alert System (WAS). The system delivers alerts to your cell phone when the NALC posts important information.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRERS

We're working hard for you.

Visit the NALC’s National Website at nalc.org to download a PDF that provides more detailed explanation of the policy changes.

Leadership Academy reminder

The deadline for applications for the 2014 Leadership Academy is April 1. Application forms are available for download from nalc.org, and can be obtained from your national business agent's office.

For information contact:

ALP Coordinator

Philip Dine

502-585-3030

P.O. Box 10541

Louisville, KY 40201

ALP is a year-long leadership development program at the NALC National Headquarters in Washington, DC.

NALC members who have questions about, or need assistance with, their own job injury claims may contact their local NALC Health and Wellness representative for information.

The NALC remains committed to helping its members that are not adversely affected by USPS' controversies to access the claims information.
Quarterly report:
USPS finesses rebounding strongly as economy improves

That’s quite the opposite of the doom-and-gloom spin put on the third quarter numbers released by the Postal Service on Aug. 9.

But NALC did dive deep into the USPS financial report for the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2013 and discovered that postal finances have improved significantly and that USPS has made a profit.

Credit for this small but important revenue uptick goes to an improving economy as well as to the rise of package-delivery volume, powered largely by goods ordered over the Internet.

“The real news in the third quarter report is that the Postal Service is in much better financial shape than advocates of a slash-and-shrink approach to postal reform ‘care to admit,’” NALC President Fredric Rolando said following the financial report release.

What continues to hurt the Postal Service’s bottom line, of course, is pre-funding—the part of the 2006 postal reform law that requires USPS to set aside billions each year to pre-fund the health benefits of future retirees. This mandate—borne by no other federal agency or private enterprise—accounts for all of the so-called losses reported for this year.

“Pre-funding—and not the diversion of first-class mail to the Internet—is by far the main cause of the Postal Service’s financial challenges,” Rolando said.

Focusing just on revenues, one finds that USPS operating revenue in the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2013 (covering April, May and June) was $31.2 billion, an increase of 3.6 percent over the same period last year.

Revenue for the first nine months of this Fiscal year—April 1 to June 30—was $92.2 billion, or 11.3 percent over the same period in Fiscal Year 2012.

“Nearly all of these increases were driven by continued growth in shipping and package services, as well as by modest increases in first-class and standard mail revenue,” Rolando said. He added that the explosive growth of e-commerce continues to bolster USPS’ shipping business: Shipping and package-delivery revenue was up 8.8 percent in the third quarter over the same period last year, fueled by a 28.6 percent increase in revenue for parcels and a 1.4 percent rise in Express and Priority Express revenue.

“The solution is obvious,” Rolando said. “Congress needs to eliminate the pre-funding requirement and free the Postal Service to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the digital era.”

2nd Contract COLA: $541

The second cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for most letter carriers under the 2013-2016 National Agreement is $541 annually.

This COLA is based on the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) between January 2013 and July 2013. That translates into 2.6 cents per hour, $210.80 per pay period and $541 annually for City Carriers paid under Table 1 of the Pay Schedule, in both Grades 1 and 2.

Under the terms of the 2013-2016 contract, payment of this second COLA will be deferred for one year and will take effect in the second full pay period after the release of the July 2014 CPI.

The first COLA, $366 annually, was announced previously. Under the terms of our agreement, payment of this first COLA will be deferred for one year and will take effect in the second full pay period after the release of the January 2014 CPI.

Note that next year, both of the deferred 2013 COLAs, $146 annually and $541 annually, will be added to the Step O pay rates in Table 2 of the Pay Schedule, which applies to city carriers hired in career positions on or after January 1, 2013.

The pay rates of Steps A through H of Table 2 will be adjusted proportionally, as provided by the contract. For example, Step A is set at 65.5 percent of Step O, so the first COLA for Step A is $290 annually, and the second COLA is $351 annually.

Harmful bills introduced in the Senate, House

On Aug. 1, just before Congress broke for its five-week summer recess, Sens. Tom Carper (D-DE) and Tom Coburn (R-OK) introduced a postal bill that not only continues pre-funding, but seeks to implement major downsizing measures to pay for it.

“The Postal Service already has pre-funded decades of retiree health premiums, more than any other enterprise in America,” President Rolando said. “Indeed, it has already set aside nearly $50 billion for such premiums, about half of the total expected cost of the next 11 years, under a revised pre-funding schedule.

“The problem is, Congress has already approved $1.45 billion in cuts to the Postal Service this year—cuts that will reduce the retiree health and pension policies that have crippled the Postal Service in recent years.

“The massive downsizing and assault on postal employees’ benefits contended in the Carper-Coburn bill are completely unnecessary,” Rolando said. “They are being driven by this irrational belief that the Postal Service can and should be managed as if it were a private business in its right mind would adopt.”

No further action was set on S. 1485 as this NALC Bulletin was being prepared. Already introduced in the Senate is a much more sensible reform bill that the NALC fully supports: Sen. Bernie Sanders’ (I-VT) S. 316. This bill would strengthen the Postal Service, promote innovation and, most importantly, resolve the health and pension problems that have crippled the Postal Service in recent years.

S. 366 also contains, among other things, a call to shore up USPS finances by implementing the results of a 2010 private-sector audit of the postal account in the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). That audit found a surplus of $4 billion to $5 billion, using modern accounting methods that have already led to budget surpluses in the CSRS.

“Whether or not you agree with the audit or its conclusions, the Sanders bill had 30 co-sponsors going into Congress’ recess. Its House of Representatives counterpart, Rep. Peter DeFazio’s (D-OR) H.R. 356, had 167 co-sponsors.

Meanwhile, Rep. D. Tammy Duckworth, (D-IL), Chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, has introduced his own postal bill, H.R. 2748.

6-day mail status

The House Appropriations Committee on July 17 approved the financial services appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2014. The Senate Appropriations Committee approved its own financial services bill on July 31.

The language mandating that the Postal Service maintain six-day mail delivery service was included in both measures. If the bill is approved by Congress, it would then go to President Obama for his consideration. However, given the general budget stalemate in Washington, it is more likely that the bill would be rolled into a continuing resolution (CR) to fund the government next fiscal year.

Hotels for 2014 NALC convention

The NALC has made special arrangements with 23 hotels to accommodate letter carrier delegates attending the 69th Biennial NALC convention in Philadelphia, July 21-25, 2014. The list of hotels is available in the September issue of The Postal Record. Most NALC/hotel blocks are union hotels, and all are within one mile of the Pennsylvania Convention Center.

The room rates have been set so that no changes will be needed to begin budgeting for the convention. Please do not contact the hotels. All room reservations will be made through the NALC official housing company.

(August 2013 NALC Bulletin)

The Postal Service is on track to nearly break even delivering the mail this year.

There’s little in this new bill that distinguishes it from the one introduced in 2013,” President Rolando said, “and there is very little difference between it and the Carper-Coburn bill in the Senate.”

H.R. 2748 repeals issuers’ previous calls for massive service cuts that, if implemented, would drastically diminish the quality and value of the mail by eliminating Saturday mail delivery service and phasing out door-to-door delivery to 30 million American households.

It also leaves in place the onerous mandate to pre-fund the health benefits of future retirees—and in fact, under H.R. 2748, the USPS could wind up on the hook for an extra $5.8 billion over the next 15 years, under a revised pre-funding schedule.

“Congress needs to inscribe the Postal Service through needless service cuts,” Rolando said. “It falls far short of what the Postal Service desperately needs, and it could be destructive because it proceeds from a false premise—that the Postal Service is irreversibly failing—and would indeed spur failure by driving mail and revenue out of the system.”

H.R. 2748 has only two co-sponsors so far. As of this Bulletin’s deadline, no consideration by the full House had been scheduled.

Visit NALC HQ during March on Washington commemoration

A commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the historic 1963 March on Washington and Dr. Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech will take place on Saturday, Aug. 3, in Washington at the Lincoln Memorial.

NALC members from branches all over the country are finalizing their plans to attend this event, and the Vincent R. Sombrotto NALC Headquarters building will be open that day from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. to provide refreshments to attendees.

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As part of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech, NALC hosted a celebration on Aug. 26 with author and playwright Calvin A. Ramsey. Ramsey recently brought the story of the Green Book to the national stage, further emphasizing its importance for providing information and reassurance to African-Americans on their travels. The Green Book was the creation of Victor H. Green, a native of New York who, in 1913 at age 21, was living in Hackensack, NJ, and went to work at the local post office. Green, who had never been down South before, asked Ramsey where he should go to find businesses open to them.

That’s where Calvin Ramsey comes in. The author and playwright, Fascinated, Ramsey researched the history of the Green Book, which inspired him to write a play and a children’s book about it. To this day, people who used the guide speak about its importance for providing information and reassurance to African-Americans from far and wide. To this day, people who used the guide speak about its importance for providing information and reassurance to African-Americans from far and wide. In both cases, what the PMG did not do was severe, but it also was not a good move for the Postal Service or its employees. Both would pay for that mandate by slashing service and jobs.

“NALC is committed to working with the Postal Service on reducing health care costs for both employees and the agency,” Rolando said. “But we are insisting that any legislative changes in this area be proposed as part of a broader reform package to be offered as an alternative to the destructive bills now before the House and Senate.”

“NALC is opposed to the passage of either of these bills,” Rolando added. “In both cases, what the PMG did not do was severe, but it also was not a good move for the Postal Service or its employees. Both would pay for that mandate by slashing service and jobs. Both would also fail by that mandate by slashing service and jobs. Both would also fail by that mandate by slashing service and jobs.

NALC responds to PMG's workroom floor video

MOU onouling residual vacancies

NALC and the Postal Service have entered into the Memorandum of Understanding on Residual Vacancies - City Letter Carrier Craft (M-01824), which establishes a process for filling residual vacancies not under a proper Article of Arbitration Award. The MOU is now available for download and will be sent to NALC branches shortly.

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Rolando explains why S. 1486 would damage Postal Service

On Sept. 26, NALC President Fredric Rolando testified before the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, which has Postal Service oversight. This was the second of two hearings to focus on S. 1486, a postal bill introduced this summer by Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE), the committee chairman, and Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK), the ranking member.

"We appreciate very much your hard work in putting together S. 1486," Rolando told the committee, "but we feel that the bill fails to permanently address the primary cause of the Postal Service’s current financial crisis—the inadequate mandate to pre-fund future retiree health costs."

This unique mandate, required of no other federal agency or private enterprise, is responsible not just for an overwhelming percentage of USPS’ losses incurred since 2007, but for about 90 percent. The committee’s record loss for the fiscal year 2013.

In fact, according to the Postal Service’s own financial reports, USPS would have reported a $660 million profit for the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2013 if it weren’t for the pre-funding payments.

But there are many other problems with the bill besides its so-called pre-funding reforms, Rolando said.

"That inadequate pre-funding proposal, combined with the elimination of Sunday mail delivery and business day delivery to rural addresses, the phasing-out of household door delivery and the removal of a moratorium on one-tier postal work-as-we-drive would drive the Postal Service into a death spiral," he said.

"Even in the President’s own version has cut the number of Rural Carrier classes from 13 to 9 as well as reduced the allowance on door delivery, thus, you have to pay 8 percent of your revenue into "X" fund, that would be a huge burden that would jeopardize even their solvency. So I think we have to recognize that."

Much of the focus of the second panel, in fact, was on how the Postal Service’s financial picture is gradually improving—that the bill will destroy the Internet commerce and package delivery are not just offsets the decline in First Class Mail, they’re generating an operating profit. Most of those who testified alongside President Rolando agreed with him that S. 1486 represents a destructive approach to postal reform that, if passed, will devalue the Postal Service and that meaningful reform requires either the repeal or the massive reduction of the pre-funding mandate.

Postmaster General Donahoe was a witness on the first panel, along with representatives from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

At one point during the hearing, Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT) asked Donahoe to clarify something the postmaster general had said in his testimony during the hearing a week earlier.

"You stated that if you believe that the current [law], an arbitrator cannot consider the financial health of the United States Postal Service," Tester said.

"I misspoke," Donahoe replied. "What I should’ve said was, they can consider it but they’re not required by law…"

"Because I think the last three arbitrations there was a lot of financial information brought forth by the Postal Service," Tester said.

In fact, arbitrators are required to consider every exhibit and piece of evidence presented during proceedings before rendering a decision, and the financial situation of the USPS is almost always presented during proceedings. Sen. Carper admitted that S. 1486 is not perfect. "It’s not the finish line," he said, "but it can be improved." Carper did leave the door open for finding a way to preserve six-day mail delivery. "If there’s a true interest on the part of the House and Senate to continue to preserve six day service, I’d do it and not it at a loss."

"I know that you all have tried to do that before," the senator said. "I would just ask you that you look at that again as you go forward. I know there’s good spirit involved in those negotiations; I’d just urge you to keep it up."

And keep at it, Rolando said later. "This is an opportunity for NALC’s activities to get in the game now, while the committee is still working on the measure," he said. "All of us have a stake in what will happen with this bill over the next few months."

Few surprises in the first hearing

The Senate committee held its first hearing on S. 1486 a week earlier, in a session that focused mainly on rates and revenue. Among those called to testify on Sept. 19 were Donahoe, Postal Regulatory Commission Chairman Ruth Goldway, USPS Inspector General David Williams, American Postal Workers Union President Cliff Guffey and National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association President Jennae Dwyer.

During that hearing, the postmaster general told the committee that the Postal Service’s package business continues to grow dramatically and substantially even as first-class mail revenue has declined.

But it’s probably no surprise that even armed with this information, Donahoe said he still fully supports S. 1486. On the question of whether the Postal Service should be allowed to reduce the number of days of delivery as called for by S. 1486, Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-MO), a staunch supporter of the Postal Service, strongly disagreed with such a notion, saying that she believes six-day delivery is USPS’ competitive advantage.

PRC Chairman Goldway noted that the Postal Service is the address-master for America, with a database relied upon by first-responders as well as online retailers.

"It’s a vital network," she said, one committed to providing universal service to all Americans, especially the one-third of postal customers who lack access to broadband Internet.

"That was the hearing," Sen. Coburn, who hasn’t been seen as the biggest fan of the Postal Service’s employee unions, said. "We can make USPS viable, but we can’t do it on the backs of the people who work for USPS."

"The Postal Service can’t shrink to survive," he added. A fact sheet and talking points that outline the provisions of S. 1486, and why they are so damaging, are available on the Legislation and Politics page at nalc.org.

Rolando re-elected vice president

At the 2013 AFL-CIO convention

Speaking to the delegates of the quadrennial AFL-CIO convention, NALC President Fredric Rolando informed those gathered inside the Los Angeles Convention Center about the truth behind the Postal Service’s recent financial reports.

"Don’t believe what you read in the papers," Rolando said on Sept. 11. "The Postal Service is not losing $15 billion a year delivering the mail. In fact, it’s earning a profit delivering the mail, bringing in $50 billion so far this fiscal year."

"The president also warned the delegates about congressional proposals to eliminate Saturday mail and door delivery of the mail."

"Every day, our members are out delivering the mail in rain, snow and sleet," Rolando said. "But if Congress has its way, your grandmother will be forced to walk in all kinds of weather to get the mail herself."

Rolando was speaking in support of a convention resolution calling for the AFL-CIO and its affiliated unions to help the postal unions win reform legislation from Congress that will help the Postal Service innovate and grow, and to help defeat measures that call for slashing jobs and services.

"Any reform bill that fails to fix the pre-funding burden will pave the way for a continued attack on the 400,000 postal employee members of the AFL-CIO and the vital services they provide for the country," he said.

The convention resolution was drafted by NALC along with the National Postal Mail Handlers Union and the American Postal Workers Union.

Growing the labor movement

The role that the NALC and the larger labor movement will play in reversing high unemployment, wage stagnation and income inequality was the main theme of this year’s AFL-CIO convention, held Sept. 8-11.

"It’s not enough to push for the reform of our terrible laws on organizing," Rolando said later. "We also have to focus on issues that affect every one of us, organized and non-organized alike, and we have to support new forms of representation for workers even before we organize them into traditional unions."

While the AFL-CIO still represents more than 12 million workers and has 17 million members, it must do more to stem the flow of middle-class jobs and benefits, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka told the convention.

"We cannot win economic justice only for ourselves, for union members alone," Trumka said. "It would not be right, and it’s not possible. All working people will rise together, or we will fall together."

To that end, the convention adopted resolutions to boost AFL-CIO membership by allowing millions of non-union workers to join the labor federation, and by forming permanent partnerships with environmental, and other progressive advocacy groups.

By virtue of his offices, Rolando and Secretary-Treasurer Jane Brodenfeld represented NALC at this year’s conven- tion. NALC received strong support from the Minneapolis convention in 2012, also on hand were NALC President Rolando was as a vice president of the AFL-CIO’s Executive Council and National Postal Mail Handlers Union President John Hegarty, National Association of Postmasters President Robert Rapoza, and economists Douglas Holtz-Eakin and Dean Baker.

Baker also noted that pre-funding accounts for about 8 percent of the Postal Service’s revenue. "If you were to tax any thriving business—an Apple or an Amazon—and say, ‘OK, we’re an accounting mistake, you have to pay 8 percent of your revenue into “X” fund,’ that would be a huge burden that would jeopardize even their solvency. So I think we have to recognize that."

Mark-up? A mark-up session on S. 1586 was scheduled to take place the week of Oct. 7, but might be moved as a result of the government shut-down. Check nalc.org and our Facebook and Twitter accounts for the latest updates.

Arbitration DVD update available

The third quarterly update to the 2013 NALC Arbitration Program DVD is now available for download. The NALC Arbitration Program enables contract researchers to search quickly through a database of thousands of NALC arbitration awards, complete with full-text searching through all of the latest released decisions.

Branches and contract arbitrators who bought the DVD can get the latest update by launching the program and clicking the “Download Updates” button.

This latest update takes about 20 minutes to download over a broadband Internet connection. It’s a comprehensive archive and will be the latest collection of arbitration decisions as of home.

Branches can buy the program DVD for $50 from the NALC’s Supply Department. For Visa or MasterCard orders, call 202-682-2875. To order by mail, send a check or money order, along with your mailing information, to NALC Supply Department, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

NALC President Fredric Rolando testifies at a Senate committee hearing on Sept. 26. (Ravel Sanders/Page One)

NALC Number 13-12 Oct. 5, 2013

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Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan

Open Season is Nov. 11–Dec. 9

Like the High Option plan, these choices include a range of benefits for you and your family, including 100 percent coverage of preventive care. But unlike the High Option, both the Value Option and CDHP offer a personal care account (PCA) for each enrollee, a great way to control your personal medical costs while enjoying the protections of an affordable health plan that will cover major medical costs if they arise.

The Health Benefit Plan adds money to each enrollee’s PCA each calendar year to pay for medical costs, including medication. For example, if you enroll in an in-network doctor who charges $60 for the visit, the doctor will submit your claim to the plan and we will pay $60 to the doctor from your PCA. You pay nothing if there is money left over in your PCA, it carries over to the next year (subject to certain limits).

The out-of-pocket maximum added to the PCA is $5,000 for Self Only enrollment or $10,000 for Self and Family enrollment. For those enrolled in the Value Plan, the amounts are $5,000 for Self Only and $10,000 for Self and Family.

If you use all of the money in the PCA for the year, further medical costs will be fully covered. The annual limits for the year are covered under your traditional insurance plan, first, a deductibles applies. For both the CDHP and the Value Plan, the out-of-pocket limit is $12,000 for Self Only and $24,000 for Self and Family.

The in-network, out-of-pocket limit is $3,000 for Self Only and $6,000 for Self and Family. For carriers on Medicare, the rates are $161.22 per month for Self Only and $327.27 for Self and Family. Differ-
 Let letter carriers deliver, even on Sunday

You might have seen the news—and as some of you may have experienced firsthand—letter carriers have begun delivering Parcel Select packages on Sundays. The expansion is a result of the recent agreement signed by the NALC and USPS. It means that letter carriers are delivering, even on Sunday, the two steps for CCAs. Below are both the current hourly rates and the new ones effective Nov. 16:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Current Hourly Rate</th>
<th>Nov. 16 Hourly Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BB</td>
<td>$15.60</td>
<td>$16.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>$16.20</td>
<td>$16.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB</td>
<td>$17.80</td>
<td>$18.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>$18.40</td>
<td>$18.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
<td>$20.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are being paid incorrectly, or if you are being paid less than the new BB rate, you should contact your HR office. Also, you may discuss it with your NALC shop steward or local branch officer and local union representative.

NALC President Fredric Rolando said, “As legislative threats remain

While the NALC Bulletin was being prepared, there were still concerns that the Senate committee with Postal Service oversight might take up for consideration the Cooper-Coburn postal bill, S. 1460, before the end of the year. But with other matters holding senatorial attention, and with many members of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee looking for a nameless post office reform before the end of the year, the Senate committee appears to be delaying the Cooper-Coburn bill.

While the Senate committee is delaying the Cooper-Coburn bill, there is no reason for active and retired letter carriers to keep their contact information at NALC Headquarters up-to-date, in case President Fredric Rolando needs to contact members at a moment’s notice.

To help make it easier for more members to update their contact information, NALC Executive Vice President Timothy J. O’Neill has announced two new forms have been added to the website to help you state that you are being paid incorrectly, or that you are being paid less than the new BB rate. Also, you may discuss it with your NALC shop steward or local branch officer and local union representative. Both forms are filled out in full advantage of the latest web security and encryption software.

“Your last update should help simplify the process for everyone,” O’Neill said.

USDPS made $600M delivering mail in 2015

On Dec. 13, the Postal Service Board of Governors announced that USPS reported an operating profit of $600 million for Postal Fiscal Year 2015. That is the largest profit in 15 years, according to the board.

While the 2014 congressional mandate to maximize any future federal retiree health benefits—a political requirement—remains in place, the NALC and other agencies continue to discuss and explore options to make this benefit more meaningful. The NALC’s new health plan, which will be implemented at the start of Postal Fiscal Year 2016, will include a 1 percent increase in the retiree cost of living adjustment (COLA) for all retirees who qualify for them.

NALC President Fredric Rolando said: “The Carper-Coburn bill prioritizes

NALC President Fredric Rolando said, “We believe that there are better solutions to the Postal Service’s current problems than the Cooper-Coburn bill. The Cooper-Coburn bill places too much power in the hands of the Senate committee with Postal Service oversight, and one that does not have oversight over the Senate committee with Postal Service oversight.”

The NALC Constitution provides for a series of actions that will be taken in the event of a U.S. Postal Service default, and one of those actions is that the NALC will submit a petition to the state governors of the states whose postal premium is paid to the state. The states will then have 30 days to submit a plan that will ensure that all postal premium payments are paid to the state. If the states fail to submit a plan, the NALC will then submit a petition to the state legislature to ensure that all postal premium payments are paid to the state.

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S. 1486 mark-up postponed

The Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, which has Postal Service oversight, has postponed until sometime in the 2014 mark-up of S. 1486. On behalf of all NALC members, I thank the committee’s leaders—Senators Tom Carper and Tom Coburn—for their efforts to make sure we press forward towardensible postal reform, NALC President Fredric Rolando said. The NALC and the other postal employees’ associations and managers in rental areas may also control the mode of delivery. The relevant language from the Postal Service may not arbitrarily change the mode of delivery when a residence is sold. There are common causes of some problems, the causes often differ from office to office, such as customers have to go to the closer box to retrieve their mail. As letter carriers know, these changes have, minimal impact on customers, or the security of the mail. The relevant language from the PMA makes clear that property owners must sign indicating that their agreement with the conversion, if confirmed by the Federal Financial Participation ratio, the Federal Financial Participation ratio, the Federal Financial Participation ratio, the Federal Financial Participation ratio, the Federal Financial Participation.