

Review park points—it could save a life



Assistant to the President for Contract Administration **Bill Bothwell**

The picture describes a scene that could have been much worse. **David Betts**, the CCA injured in this accident, was extremely lucky. Dave was at the side of his LLV locking the door, instead of at the rear of the vehicle loading his satchel, when a car slammed into the LLV, threw Dave into a tree and came to a stop on, of all things, Dave's mailbox.

There have been far too many devastating accidents recently in which carriers were struck—often while at the rear of the vehicle—while at a park point.

Of those struck by a vehicle, some recovered fully, others have long-term or lifelong consequences and, tragically, four have died.

What's bothersome about this accident is that it didn't have to happen. He parked at the location set up by the Postal Service, on a well traveled main road. However, the USPS could have just as easily set his park point on a less-traveled side street 100 feet away.

The good news is the Postal Service fixed this and other park points with the assistance of the local NALC branch. The bad

news is that it took a serious accident to address the issue and change the park points.

All letter carriers and branch leaders should consider whether the park points on their routes really are safe. Ask yourself if there's a safer way to deliver the mail. Could you park somewhere that's safer? Many carriers have delivered mail for years without incident, but it takes only one careless driver to become a statistic.

Utilize the tools available to you. Park points should be addressed at every labor/management meeting. Consider approaching local management to establish a labor/management pair to review every park point within your installation or branch. The time spent reviewing and changing dangerous park points is a worthwhile investment, and one that could save a letter carrier's life.

Be proactive. Don't let an accident be the reason to change a park point.



PostalVision 2020 sees optimism for Postal Service



Research Director **Jim Holland**

On April 10-11, **Ursa Major Associates**, a postal and delivery consulting group, hosted the fourth annual PostalVision 2020 conference. The Washington, DC, conference was attended mainly by corporations and lobbyists from the mailing industry.

Overall, the conference had a noticeably more optimistic tone about the U.S. Postal Service than the session a year ago. In comments to

the audience, both the conference host and a top manager from the Postal Service expressed optimism about the Postal Service's improving operational performance.

On Day 1 of the conference, NALC Chief of Staff **Jim Sauber** gave a well-received presentation about the value of the Postal Service network and the importance of six-day, and sometimes seven-day, delivery. He talked about the vital job letter carriers do in making connections with their customers, which often leads

to new and repeat business for the Postal Service. He made a strong case that letter carriers are the Postal Service's most valuable assets. Following on Sauber's comments, a number of other speakers went out of their way to compliment the service and the connection they had with their letter carriers.

Chairman **Ruth Goldway** of the Postal Regulatory Commission also made a powerful presentation and provided some insightful comments about USPS' management's rush to make cuts to service. Chairman Goldway stressed that the Postal Service would be most able to succeed in the future by continuing to connect with people in-person. She was critical of management's ideas of shifting to fewer delivery days and anonymous clusterboxes—actions that would depersonalize the service.

NALC will be keeping an eye out for the Postal Service's second quarter FY 2014 financial results (expected sometime during the second week of May). One can hope that the Postal Service Board of Governors' comments during the financial results conference call will also reflect the optimism of the PostalVision 2020 conference.

Playing offense and defense on postal reform



**Director of Legislative and Political Affairs
Kori Blalock Keller**

In Washington, DC, spring is budget season. The Obama administration's and the House GOP's budgets are out. Both are unlikely to get legs, but they send a terrible message by attacking letter carrier jobs and dismantling the postal network.

The best defense is a good offense, so we're talking to Congress about the Postal Service's posting of an operational profit in the first quarter of this year and about how successful partnerships with Amazon.com are positioning USPS in

the direction of seven-day delivery. This message is finding some resonance on both sides of the aisle.

With regards to postal reform, Rep. Darrell Issa's legislation in the House (H.R. 2748) doesn't have the support to get to the floor. With that recognition, Issa is now using the Obama administration's FY 2015 budget proposal, which calls for

eliminating Saturday mail delivery and shifting to centralized and curbside delivery, as a messaging piece and, possibly, as a piece of legislation that might gain more traction than H.R. 2748.

In February, the Senate legislation (S.1486), which severely undermines postal workers and our networks, was marked up. The bulk of the conversation during mark-up involved to lawmakers fighting over whether or not you can bring a firearm into a post office, instead of discussing how to make their bad bill a little more palatable. All that gun talk put S. 1486 to rest.

But with Issa on the prowl again, we could be in for a bumpy ride in the coming weeks and months.

To take the wind out of the sails of these bad bills, now is the time to discuss real reform. NALC is reeducating Congress about the invaluable postal network. The message is simple: To preserve our networks and expand opportunities with businesses, we must maintain six-day delivery and resolve this pre-funding mandate. We will continue to fight any legislation that does not address this. The NALC will work with all stakeholders to find the right proposals to innovate and grow USPS. Stay tuned.

Inspire, organize and give thanks



**Community and Membership Outreach
Coordinator Pam Donato**

We are just days away from our May 10 Letter Carriers' Food Drive and the excitement is starting to bubble to the surface. All of your work is beginning to come together. Postcards are sent, posters hung all around the community, letters you've written about the food drive are in local newspapers, proclamations have been made and food drive kick-offs are taking place. Well done, everyone!

So now it's time to turn our focus back on our team, the letter carriers and partners in our cities and branches. Like a pre-game huddle, this involves a few important components:

Inspire

First, it's important to remind ourselves that the main goal of this food drive is to help those in our communities who need it. Take a look around your route again, knowing the statistics and facts about hunger. Is it in the faces of the children at the bus stop, or those who work at low-paying jobs or are still out looking for any job, or those elderly who wait to catch a glimpse of you delivering their mail each day? These people are the reason we have planned for months and worked so hard.

What we are about to finish on May 10 will make all the difference in the world to those who need a little help. So, take time to connect the dots and then help others you work with to do the same. Rally everyone around our purpose and know that each of us has a critical role to play.

Organize

Make sure you have all the tools you will need for the day of the drive. Make sure containers and pallets are available for food that is picked up. It's still not too late to hustle up some volunteers to help, so please continue to ask (Boy/Girl Scouts, faith groups, community allies, family and friends). Communicate with volunteers who will help that day. And ensure that everyone has a contact person and phone number if there are problems or questions.

Give thanks

Make a plan to say thank you. From the customers who donated bags of food to the partners who worked by your side every step of the way, from sponsors who provided bags and signs and publicity to postal management, rural letter carriers and other union brothers and sisters who are invaluable to us in our fight to end hunger—they all deserve a thank-you. It's as simple as a word of thanks in the moment, or it can be a public acknowledgement and special food drive certificate of appreciation (available on our tool kit). Write a letter of thanks (and to report results) to that local paper that published your letter to the editor about the food drive. Plan a simple picnic or get-together for station workers or partners after the May 10 drive itself. Bask in the wonderful feeling of a job well done, celebrating the total pounds of food collected. Like the pre-game huddle I started with, it's best to finish with a post-victory celebration.

Let me say, "thank you" for everything you've done (and are about to do on May 10) to make this food drive the best ever. Your efforts are greatly appreciated and make you a community role model of goodwill.