

National Business Agent's Report

Mike Weir

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There is an old saying that the only constant in life is change. As with most traditional adages, there is more than just a grain of truth at the core of this observation. Certainly, we are currently experiencing many changes in our jobs and our lives, and can expect to see more changes in the coming months and years. While I expect the economy to begin to recover in 2010, I do not believe we can reasonably expect it to be what it once was. Companies will be downsized, jobs will be restructured, new industries will emerge and new jobs will be created. As one example, the potential for growth in "green" jobs associated with the environment is enormous. As I have stated previously, the Postal Service does not exist in a vacuum from the rest of society; and, in fact, we have been significantly impacted by the economic downturn's effect on the private sector. Again, while I expect a resurgence in our business as the economy recovers, I do not know to what extent that will occur; and, regardless, we have to find new sources of revenue to bridge the gap between now and that expected recovery. As a result, our jobs may change. Certainly, with volume losses, corresponding route adjustments and FSS implementation, our routes will change. We cannot stick our heads in the sand or pull the covers over our heads and expect that, somehow, everything will be all better. True leadership requires that we assess the situation, confront reality and chart a course to deal effectively and realistically with the challenges we face. I can assure you that two things will not change: NALC's commitment to ensuring that the jobs, benefits and rights of letter carriers are protected, and our determination to preserve the Postal Service for current and future generations of letter carriers and their families.

At the national level, the union has experienced changes. Last month, I addressed President Young's retirement and extolled his distinguished career. This month, I want to congratulate Fred Rolando on his appointment as our national president. President Rolando is the perfect choice to lead this union during these challenging times. His career as a union activist and leader clearly demonstrates his ability to find workable solutions to difficult problems. Since he arrived on the national scene, Fred has been involved in and/or spearheaded numerous initiatives aimed at addressing the preservation of the Postal Service, the protection of letter carrier jobs and the enforcement of the National Agreement. I have been fortunate enough to work with President Rolando on occasion; so I can personally attest to his understanding of the issues and his commitment to protecting the jobs and benefits of letter carriers. He has a vision for how we need to proceed during these difficult times; and he has the ability to articulate his ideas as well as the knowledge and intelligence to turn them into concrete results.



National Association of
Letter Carriers

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I am also pleased to offer my congratulations to Gary Mullins and George Mignosi on their new positions as Executive Vice-President and Vice President, respectively. Both of these gentlemen bring considerable experience and expertise to the table. We are all well served to have them in these important leadership roles as we navigate our way through the unchartered waters of today's economic, political and legislative arenas.

As I began to write this month's article, I received the news that Region 5 RAA Nicole Rhine had been appointed to the position of NALC Assistant Secretary-Treasurer. In my opinion, no one is more deserving of this appointment. Nicole has served in a variety of positions at the local, state and regional level. She has distinguished herself as a knowledgeable steward, an aggressive advocate, an accomplished negotiator, a compassionate leader and a good friend. Nicole has been an integral part of any success we have achieved in the regional office. She will be sorely missed, particularly by me and Danny. But as I have been fond of telling Nebraska letter carriers over the past few years, our loss is the national's gain. All letter carriers will now benefit from Nicole's knowledge and experience as have the letter carriers in Region 5 ever since she first became a union activist so many years ago. Congratulations and best wishes, Nicole, from all of us! And be sure to come back and visit from time to time.

While we are on the subject of leaders, applications for the 2010 Leadership Academy classes are now being accepted. The most recent graduates for Region 5, Dawn Trotter (Council Bluffs, IA) and Kevin Boyer (Columbia, MO), just spent a week at the regional office. As with our previous graduates, they are fine union leaders who will, I am sure, make important contributions to the betterment of letter carriers in their own branches and beyond. This is an excellent program for preparing a new generation of NALC leaders. If you have a desire to serve your fellow letter carriers, be sure to fill out an application and postmark it by the September 30 deadline. Applications are available on the NALC's website or through the regional office. Previous applicants must reapply and include any updated information along with a renewed commitment from your mentor. I encourage local branch officers to develop new activists and serve as mentors for them. Let's carry on the legacy of quality NALC representation at all levels so that the next generation of letter carriers is as well served as the current and past generations have been.

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