



Region 5 NBA Report



April 2016

National Business Agent's Report

NALC Region 5

Crazy Season – Most of you have already dealt with the onslaught of mailings from political candidates this year and all of you have been subjected to the never ending array of political ads on television. An ever increasing number of these ads are negative, designed to keep their targeted audience at home and not voting. Unfortunately, they work. Low voter turnout is a bane on democracy. As most veterans, I'm severely disappointed when over forty percent (42% in 2012 & 62% in 2014) of eligible voters can't take the time to cast their ballot. Worst of all, many of those same people then spend an inordinate amount of energy complaining about their elected officials. Don't let the negative ads keep you at home this year. Take some time, study the candidates, support and vote for those candidates that support you, your job and your family. Note – several NALC State organizations are working on "Vote by Mail" legislation. Please be prepared to make some phone calls in support of Vote by Mail. Vote by Mail will not only bring income into the Postal Service, it should increase participation.

Arbitration Procedures Test – Region 5 has been part of a nationwide test developed to have grievances heard in front of a neutral arbitrator within 120 days of appeal. Within the last 6 months, our oldest cases pending arbitration has gone from over two years to 1 year and 4 months, with the majority of cases pending now under 1 year. All of the pending cases in Central Plains, Hawkeye & Mid America are under 5 months since appeal. Kudo's to NALC VP Lew Drass and RAA Charlie Sexton for their hard work.

Leadership Academy Selections – President Rolando has announced this years (1 class only) Leadership Academy Selections. Region 5 Selections are Mark Godbee from Branch 5050, Ballwin, MO., and Richard Thurman, Branch 343, St. Louis, MO. Congratulations to both. Another dozen letter carriers from Region 5 were not selected this year. Let me encourage those not selected to reapply for next year, where there will be two classes and four selections made.

Customer Connect – Customer Connect continues to be a success wherever management invests their time and energy to support it. Where they don't support it and are more concerned about chasing numbers instead of the bottom line, it continues to fail. From the NALC perspective, as we negotiate our contract with the Postal Service, our contribution of over 2 Billion dollars to the coffers will certainly be laid on the table. Special thanks to Vicki Rohrback for her constant

support and efforts on behalf of the program. Vicky is returning to her route after two years as the Gateway District NALC Customer Connect Coordinator and Judy Bitzer from Branch 343 will be replacing Vicki. I know the Gateway District carriers will show her the same support.

Plant Closings – Much like the days of DPS & FSS implementation, the Postal Service has now applied their mathematical expertise to plant closings. We all know that the service decided before DPS and FSS were implemented that it wouldn't take any extra time to carry additional bundles predicting huge savings and demand for more machinery. Apparently they forgot to carry a "1". Now the first numbers are coming in concerning the plant closings. A net spending increase of about \$66 million in fiscal year 2015. U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill has now asked PMG Brennan to answer questions. Degrading the service, over estimating the savings and under estimating the costs...haven't we been down this road before. Perhaps it's time to get rid of some of these accountants...we could always use a few carriers!

Degrading Service – For years the Postal Service has talked about commitment to customer service. Much like the old joke about politicians...how can you tell if they're lying? Their lips are moving. Closing plants, removing collections boxes, lowering service standards, changing home delivery to curb or NDCBU, has done absolutely nothing to improve service. JUST STOP IT!

Michael J. Birkett
National Business Agent
NALC Region 5 (St. Louis)