



December 2019

Business Agent's Report

NALC

Consolidated Casing – Update: As I mentioned last month, the consolidated casing test will be an ongoing issue for the foreseeable future. Carriers are going above and beyond in the four test sites here in Region 5 as they endure the latest asinine experiment management has concocted. Just a few of the issues: Some carriers are starting as early as 4:45 in the morning...try and find childcare at that time of the morning; Carriers are starting as late as 10:00 and have to find two child care providers (and someone to take the children from one to another); Carriers are working well into the evening and into the dark; Overtime is out of control; Managers and clerks doing carrier work; No limit on the number of deliveries per slot on cases; and of course, safety issues abound.

The NALC had filed suit in US District Court seeking an injunction forcing the USPS to halt this test. As I was about to send this out to print, U.S. District Judge James E. Boasberg concluded that the court lacked jurisdiction to issue an injunction that would have halted the testing pending the outcome of the national level arbitration which is presently scheduled to begin on November 22, 2019. Boasberg reasoned that halting an employer action could only be justified when the employer's action would render the arbitration meaningless. Much like a company moving its factory out of state, or even out of country.

While all of us are disappointed, the NALC never stopped preparing for arbitration and as the court concluded, Arbitrator Shyam Das will have the authority (if he sustains the NALC grievance) to find the Consolidated Casing Initiative in violation of the National Agreement, order the USPS to end it and put things back as they were prior to the test.

Hero of the Year – Region 5's own Austin Rentz was named "National Hero of the Year" and honored at a ceremony at NALC headquarters. Austin is a second-generation letter carrier from Branch 512, Waterloo, IA

NALC Health Benefit Plan – The Federal Employees Health Benefits Program open season dates are November 11 thru December 9, 2018. The NALC Health Benefit Plan is union owned, union operated and a not-for-profit Plan. The Plan was created by letter carriers for letter carriers in 1950 and letter carriers have been in charge ever since. The Plan delivers for you because it is yours. Information regarding Plan options, brochures and rates are available through the NALC website.

PMG Announces Retirement – Postmaster General Megan Brennan recently announced her retirement effective January 31, 2020. Brennan began her career as a letter carrier thirty-three years ago and is the seventy fourth, and first-woman PMG. While there is some controversy as to whether she was being forced to leave, our concern as letter carriers should be focused on her replacement. Let's just hope it's not one of those number crunchers from "OPS" who couldn't find the contract if it was in their hands.



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Pre-Funding Repeal Bill – H.R. 2382, the USPS Fairness Act continues to gain co-sponsors. The current count has reached 284 legislators. Each and every carrier needs to check and make sure their member of Congress is a co-sponsor and if not, reach out to their office by phone, email or letter and encourage them to sign on.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays – Again this year, Mary, Larrissa, Dave, Charlie and I would like to take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you a Merry Christmas and joyous Holiday Season. I hope you receive all the joy you bring to others. Thank you all for being part of our family.

Michael J. Birkett
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