



March 2021

Business Agent's Report

NALC

Covid Vaccine – As I write this article, letter carriers have begun to receive the vaccine in a few locations within Region 5. I urge each of you to check your local health department's website and register if possible. Veterans may also want to contact their local VA Hospital to see if they are administering the vaccine.

Contract Ratification – Based upon the phone calls this office received as well as the calls to headquarters by carriers who had not received their ballots timely, President Rolando extended the date for ballots to be returned until March 1, 2021.

H.R. 695, Repeal of Prefunding - Last week, the USPS Fairness Act “repealing the prefunding mandate” was introduced in the House (HR 695) and Senate (S. 145) as Bills. To date, the prefunding mandate has been responsible for 84 % of the USPS losses since 2007. In the last Congress, the repeal passed the House, with large bipartisan support by a vote of 309 to 106. The issue was that the Senate would not take that Bill up, and so it sat in the Senate without any movement. HR 695 was introduced with over half of the House supporting the Bill, and currently has 231 co-sponsors. So far in Region 5: **Iowa:** Rep. Miller-Meeks (R-IA-2nd) and Rep. Axne (D-IA-3rd), **Kansas:** Rep. Mann (R-KS-1st) and Rep. Davids (D-KS-3rd), **Missouri:** Rep. Hartzler (R-MO-4th) and Rep. Cleaver (D-MO-5th) and **Nebraska:** Rep. Fortenberry (R-NE-1st) and Rep. Bacon (R-NE-2nd) have signed on as co-sponsors. If your M.O.C. is not signed on, please contact their office and ask for support of HR 695, repeal of the Prefunding Mandate. It looks as if the Senate is awaiting final action from the House of Representatives before they move forward, so be prepared to reach out to your Senators once they move forward with a bill of their own.

Branch Presidents – If you are the current president of your branch and are not receiving emails concerning upcoming Region 5 training, please contact our office immediately. Branch Presidents should also notify NALC Headquarters and Region 5 when new officers are elected within your branch. Please notify us of the branch office, name, cell number and email address.

Disorganization – As I write this article, PMG Dejoy is on the verge of another phase of his reorganization of the Postal Service. Rumors abound on the possibilities and the Managers I speak to are nervous to say the least. Whatever the results, I hope that service to our customers is not a victim. The delays over the Holiday Season and continued delay in 1st class mail needs to stop. Stories of mail not getting delivered on routes for weeks is horrific and unacceptable. Part of the next round of “changes” needs to address the mess created in the last phase. Districts have been split up with each department reporting to different areas. Parts of districts are now reporting to different areas. The result of those changes have left certain departments with no one responsible for anything and no one to call.



March 2021

Business Agent's Report

NALC

Retirement Training – It's been well over a year since we conducted a Retirement Training Seminar. Retired NBA Mike Weir has graciously agreed to conduct a Virtual Seminar on April 11, 2021. In order to attend, you will need to receive an email invitation (normally sent out the week before). Please contact your branch president who will submit your name and email address to me. You may also call the Region 5 office.

Covid Update – Before reporting the positive letter carrier cases within Region 5, it should be noted that there have been approximately 7,400 postal employees within the Region that either tested positive or have been quarantined by local health officials, the postal service, their own physicians, or on their own because of exposure. Many tested negative. Within Region 5, 772 letter carriers have tested positive and 3,975 postal employees, including management. For Letter Carriers within the region: Central Plains – 201; Gateway – 205; Hawkeye – 156; Mid America – 210. Of those carriers who have tested positive, the majority have returned to work at this time. Be safe and be careful.

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