



## Region 5 NBA Report May 2026

David A. Teegarden



This month's article begins on a somber note. By now I am sure that most of you have heard of the passing of former Region 5 NBA Mike Birkett. Mike passed away on the morning of April 25<sup>th</sup> from a heart attack. This unexpected news hit the region and me hard. Lots of members were calling asking me what happened and if the news was true. I want to take this opportunity to talk about Mike and what he meant to the NALC, Region 5, his branch and me.

Mike was a letter carrier in Dubuque Iowa Branch 257. That branch was changed by vote of the members to the Mike Birkett Branch 257 Dubuque, IA years ago. Mike was an MP investigator in the Army station at Fort Hood until he was honorably discharged in 1977. He was named Honorary Colonel in the Iowa National Guard by Governor Chet Culver.

Mike began his Postal career in 1984 as a letter carrier. He quickly became active in the union and was elected as branch president in 1986. A role he served in for a decade. Mike was a local business agent from 1991-1995 and again from 1999-2009. He was President of the Iowa State Association of Letter Carriers from 2003-2009 where he was instrumental in turning around the state's financial condition. Mike was an arbitration advocate, defending the rights of Letter Carriers in Region 5. His experience and expertise resulted in being appointed as RAA for a number of years and in 2014 he was elected as NBA of Region 5 until his retirement in 2022. He is a member of the Iowa Letter Carrier Hall of Fame (2011) and the Dubuque Area Labor Hall of Fame (2023).

Mike was an active member of the Dubuque County Democrats central committee and served as a delegate at several state conventions. He participated in several "Get Out The Vote" efforts on behalf of the NALC at the state and national levels.

For most of his adult life he has been a champion for Letter Carriers in the contractual and political arenas. He was an inspiration to members at the branch state, regional and national levels.

I first met Mike when he was leading a Rap Session "computer" breakout training. I also got to know him as a fellow arbitration advocate. I interacted with him after he was appointed as RAA in the region when I was the president of KCMO Branch 30. When I was appointed RWCA in 2015 Mike was the NBA I worked for.

We often traveled together where I was subjected to the Gin Blossom tape he listened to on an endless loop, so to distract him I would bring up his family. Once that happened, he would go on about his wife, son, daughters or grandchildren. He was extremely proud of his family, his heritage and family history in his hometown of Dubuque.

By the time Mike retired in 2022 we had become good friends and I valued his leadership and advice. When I was appointed as NBA I spoke with Mike every week, sometimes to ask his advice and other times just to vent. He was always there for me when I called. I will miss being able to play golf with him, talk to him or just have a meal with him.

Please keep Mike's family in your thoughts and prayers as they go through the grieving process. We will all miss his presence.

## **Route Adjustments**

If you have route inspection whether full-blown or 271.G inspections, please notify the NBA office so that we can assign someone to investigate and grieve any contractual violations. My April article outlines the program we have created in Region 5 to address Route Count and Inspection to ensure that Letter Carriers get credit for all the work they perform and that the adjustments are done properly.

## **Region 5 Training**

I have dates for the upcoming Steward College courses we will be conducting across the region. We are attempting to schedule the year one training but are trying to secure the necessary training space in order to accomplish it. It will likely be Mid-July or after the National Convention in August. I will send out the date and place when we are confirmed.

Year 2 classes-

Des Moines June 7-10 Noon dismissal on the 10th

KCMO June 15-17 5:00pm dismissal on the 17th

Lincoln June 22-24th 5:00pm dismissal on the 24th

Year 3 classes-

Wichita June 8-10th 5:00pm dismissal

St. Louis June 15-17th 5:00pm dismissal

## **JSOV-Station Visits**

When Mike Birkett was NBA, the office provided a JSOV expert to investigate and grieve these violations. I have carried on with process, and we have assigned a number of outside stewards to do this work in branches across the region. I thought that with the change in leadership that a reminder was in order. If you have a JSOV issue that needs grieved, please reach out to us at the NBA office, as we have been very successful in stopping this behavior with our experts. No carrier should be required to put up with being treated with anything less than dignity and respect. Let's all make sure our carrier are treated right out there! In our travels we will be visiting stations and speaking to carriers on the work room floor as we normally do. If we haven't visited your office please contact us and we will do our best to get to your station. We love hearing from you and having an opportunity to resolve issues that you have on the workroom floor.

Until next time stay safe out there,

David A. Teegarden  
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