

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Calvin Brookins

To start with I want to thank the branch for allowing me to attend the Contract Training Conference in Las Vegas in November. I am going to try and keep my article brief this month while giving you a brief update on what we learned. The class the interest me the most was the Work Methods and Automation class given by Dale Hart (Director of City Delivery) and Jane Broendel (Secretary of Treasurer).

In this class they talked about how fortunate we were that United Auto Workers had not negotiated a contract prior to us negotiating our new contract. They stated that if this had been done while we were in contract negotiation the Postal Service surely would have used this against us during negotiations.

There are some trends we need to be aware of, with the decline of first class mail; standard mail growth became the largest class of mail in 2005. This had an adverse impact on the USPS; it takes three pieces of standard mail to replace one piece of first class mail, which relates to revenue hit by the Postal Service despite postal rate increases.

The bottom line is the Postal Service's revenue per delivery is not keeping up with inflation. In 2006, revenue per delivery has declined by 9.2%; the USPS must cut cost or raise productivity.

You may ask why we are concern with these trends. Well these trends could be a threat to City Carriers down the road. Let look at what has happened recently in the world or labor.

United Auto Workers concessions;

- Partially funded retiree health care, Administered by UAW.
- No wage increases, only lump sums
- Two-tiered wages, non production workers

Airline Concessions;

- United used Bankruptcy to shed pensions and lower pay.
- Northwest followed with 11-24% pay cuts, following the pilot's 15% cut prior and outsourced some baggage handling. We could be facing an up hill battle during the next contract negotiation.

What are the Postal Service's options? Well let's see, there is Customer Connect, Vote by Mail, New Revenue in NetFilx and of course Delivery Confirmation. All of which we the letter carriers can play a role in, we have to continue to be involved in Customer Connect even though it may seem as if

your local management team is not as serious as they should be about it, we must not give up. The NALC and other unions are starting to really push the idea of voting by mail, this would actually put more mail in the postal system during every election nationwide. Del-Con and Netfilx remember we want to make doubly sure that we scan and deliver all Delivery Confirmation parcels.

The Postal has other options such as raising postage rates, which has practical and legal constraints, and growth management, which undermines public's trust and damages labor relations with the NALC and NRLCA by attempting to use Centralize Delivery and Contract Delivery Services.

The NALC has put together a road map, which includes ways to create new revenue, such as Customer Connect, Vote by Mail, and Mailing Industries Coalitions and Automation of flats with the union having a role in negotiated implementation.

Flat Sequencing System (FSS)

The deployment schedule for FSS implementation for the offices represented by Branch 2462 start anytime from September of 2009 to December of 2009. The Postal Service has a target of 20-30% volume as a savings target, FSS Phase 1 deployment is schedule to start in mid 2008, with 100 FSS machines each sorting 280,000 pieces per day to a 125,000 addresses. This could affect 33,493 routes out of a total of 163,400 routes, and 1,540 facilities out of 32, 875 totals.

The true test for FSS will be in Virginia in February of 2008, the test in Indiana was on a much smaller machine this machine in Virginia is supposed to be the actual size that will be used for sorting your flats. FSS will not be fully implemented during our current contract; it will be an issue for years to come and in future contract negotiations.

In closing this last article of the year 2007, I would like to thank all of the members of Branch 2462 for their support through-out the year. I would like to also wish everyone and their families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I would ask that we all remember why we celebrate this time of the year. God made a promise to all of us, he kept that promise when Jesus Christ were born on December 25th the day we call Christmas the day we celebrate the birth of Christ.

Remember Jesus is the reason for the season.

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ATTENDANCE CHART BRANCH MEETINGS

MONTH	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N
MAIN OFFICE	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	1	3
ENCINO	5	6	5	5	5	6	4	5	6	6	6
CIVIC CENTER	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
PANORAMA CITY	1	10	6	3	10	3	3	7	3	3	2
SHERMAN OAKS	3	9	5	3	6	4	5	6	5	6	5
SUN VALLEY	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
TARZANA	1	2	3	2	2	2	1	4	1	2	1
RETIREE'S	4	5	4	4	2	5	7	6	6	6	6
TOTAL	16	35	26	20	28	22	23	33	24	26	24

MEETING PLACE OF BRANCH 2462, NALC
6910 HAYVENHURST AVE., SUITE 101
VAN NUYS, CALIFORNIA

NEXT MEETING

6:30 PM

JANUARY
8th
"2008"

DEADLINE DATE FOR THE NEXT
ISSUE OF "THE MAIL CALL" IS

Jan 8, 2008

BRANCH OFFICE.....818-786-8505
O P C PERSONNEL OFFICE....818-374-5600
E-Mail.....NALCBRANCH2462@sbcglobal.net

"RETIREE CORNER"

Our Free Breakfast Meeting will be held at Denny's Restaurant, Corner of De Celis and Sherman Way. It will begin at 09:00 AM. The next date will be January 26th. (4th Saturday) We hope to see you there.

Thank
You

Frank Brach

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

ART BOCEK

National Rehabilitation Program

On 12-17-07 both the NALC and USPS will be in arbitration for a decision determining if management's NRP actions are proper and consistent to all Postal regulations.

Communicating with OWCP

When communicating with OWCP, be sure to include the claim number on **EVERY** page you send you need to send all mail and bills to:

U.S. Department of Labor DFEC Central Mailroom
PO Box 8300 London, KY 40742-8300

OWCP has recently enhanced our computer system to ensure that the care the injured worker is receiving is relevant to the condition(s) for which the case was accepted. These enhancements were made in accordance with the Federal Employees' Compensation Act which mandates OWCP to furnish an injured worker with services, appliances, and supplies prescribed by a qualified physician which OWCP deems likely "to cure, give relief, reduce the degree or the period of disability, or aid in lessening the amount of monthly compensation." While OWCP has always had a processes in place to help assure that OWCP authorizes and pays only for services, treatments, medications, and durable medical equipment related to the accepted conditions on a claim, our recent computer enhancements provide more rigor to these processes.

As a result of this, some injured workers may find that treatment or medications previously allowed are no longer available to them. If an injured worker's physician believes a treatment, procedure, or medication is necessary for the treatment of the injured worker's accepted conditions, the provider needs to submit medical documentation for review by the claims examiner. As is the case, **anything sent to OWCP**, please be sure to include **your claim/case number on every page.**

Injured Workers, Providers, and Employing Agencies can check on the status of medical authorizations at <http://owcp.dol.acs-inc.com>. Having this information on the web is beneficial since authorization information is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week without calling for an authorization number or waiting for the receipt of an authorization letter in the mail. Claimant eligibility, bill status, and medical authorization inquiry functionality is also available 24 hours a day via our Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. To access the IVR, call 866-335-8319. To speak with a Customer Service Representative regarding an authorization, you may call 850-558-1818 which will be a toll call. This number is available Monday – Friday, 8am – 8pm, EST.

Injured Workers, Doctors, and Employing Agencies can check on the status of bills and reimbursements at <http://owcp.dol.acs-inc.com>. Claimant eligibility, bill status, and medical authorization inquiry functionality is also available 24 hours a day via our Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system.

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National Training Conference
NALC's Health Care Strategy Class
by
HBR Janette Dolabson

There is a Health care crisis in this country. 20% of the population account for 80% of the health care expenses. Health plans that attract those with acute illnesses will have to have higher premiums. Health plans need to have a representative sample of the population to keep them balanced.

The census estimates that 63% of people under 65 have health care through employers. 1/3(<65) are not covered by employer provided health care. Medicaid and SCHIP fill the void and about 5% buy private insurance so that leaves about 16% uninsured.

The annual cost for a family of 4 for health care is over \$11,000. In comparison that is about 2,000 hours of working a minimum wage job. We spend more on health care then we do on food. Current cost levels override incentives that historically led employers to provide coverage. Providing generous coverage leads to payroll costs far above the going rate. 16% of the GDP goes to health care so the pressure to either reduce coverage, eliminate coverage or share more costs with the employees are a growing. No other industrialized nation pays that much towards health care. The USPS pre-funded retiree health care obligations some 5 billion dollars worth.

Our NALC Health Benefit Plan only encompasses about 15% of the membership of this union and most of those are retirees. On the average letter carriers are healthy. Carriers have 25% less medical claims then the rest of the federal workforce. This health plan needs get the younger healthier members to join for it to continue to be the number one rated plan that is offered by the federal government. Each year this plan continues to gear its coverage towards its younger members to make it benefit by benefit a mirror of what is offered by "Big Blue." By the next contract we may be seeing this health plan as the only one offered to letter carriers at the discounted rate of 80% while all the other plans will be only paid at the average rate of 72%. That is where this union plan is headed for the next negotiations and by then there will be no major difference from the coverage of the other plan of choice. With the partnership of the CIGNA network there is no stopping this Health Plan from taking on any other plan. The one big difference between the NALC HBP and "Big Blue" is our plan is not for profit. All the money goes back in to the plan. It's a union health plan. "Big Blue" is a business and their business is making money on your health care. More then 45 benefits have been added in the last 2 years to our union plan and all of them geared towards getting our members to coverage they need.

You have the next few years to join this plan before the next contract is negotiated. It might be too late this year but really take a look at this plan and make the right decision for you and your family and your union. Health care should not be shopped by what is the cheapest it should be looked at as what is the best for you and your family if something happens to your health or theirs. Benefit by benefit this is the plan to have and this is the future for you as a letter carrier and your health care needs.

ART BOCEK

(Continued from Page 2)

To access the IVR, please dial 866-335-8319. To speak with a Customer Service Representative regarding a bill or reimbursement, you may call 850-558-1818 which will be a toll call. This number is available Monday – Friday, 8am – 8pm, EST.

While your initial acceptance letter includes this information, claims are often updated to include other conditions. This information is now available online at <http://owcp.dol.acs-inc.com> – click on the "Eligibility and Accepted Conditions" link. You can help your doctor by giving her/him the list of accepted conditions for your claim and by telling her/him how to access this information online.

If you believe that additional or different conditions warrant acceptance on your claim, please provide OWCP with medical documentation supporting the claim's expansion for review by the claims examiner. As is the case with anything sent to OWCP, this medical documentation **must include the claim/case number on every page.**

You need to complete the form OWCP-957 "Medical Travel Refund Request" form to request reimbursement for your transportation/mileage expenses. This form is available online at <http://owcp.dol.acs-inc.com> – click on the "Forms and Links" link. Write your OWCP claim number on the top right side of the form. You may record 3 trips on each form. The section requiring a Doctor's signature for each trip does not apply to OWCP claimants.

Reimbursement for pharmacy expenses/medications, medical appliances and supplies, and medical, surgical, and dental services can be claimed using Form OWCP-915 "Claimant Medical Reimbursement Form". This form is available online at <http://owcp.dol.acs-inc.com> – click on the "Forms and Links" link. Put each date of service on a separate line. If you are requesting reimbursement for a co-pay, write "Co-Pay" in the "Description of Charge" field. Use a separate form for each provider you paid. Don't mix prescriptions and office visits on the same form.

A reimbursement claim for medical services, surgical services, medical appliances, or medical supplies must be accompanied by a copy of the OWCP-1500/HCFA-1500 "Health Insurance Claim Form" showing individual charges and signed by the medical Provider. A reimbursement claim for dental services may be accompanied by a dental version of the HCFA-1500 called the ADA 515 instead. While both of these forms are available online (<http://owcp.dol.acs-inc.com> – click on the "Forms and Links" link), your medical Provider is very familiar with them and maintains a supply. Your medical Provider must complete and sign these forms. A reimbursement claim for pharmacy expenses/medications must be accompanied by a copy of the Universal Claim Form or other pharmacy statement showing the name of the drug, NDC code, quantity provided, cost, prescribing physician, and date the prescription was filled. All reimbursement requests must be accompanied by proof of payment such as a cash receipt, cancelled check, or credit card receipt.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

"THE MAIL CALL" BRANCH 2462, NALC

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Van Nuys, CA 91406

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TE TIDBITS

by

Trustee Tracy Mullinax

Transitional Employees are non-career, bargaining-unit employees who have been hired to assist in the implementation of the Flat Sequencing System to be up and running on 9-11-09 (tentatively).

1. TE's are initially appointed for a no more than a 360 day period, then are given a 6 day break, and then possibly another 360 day appointment.
2. TE's are guaranteed 4 hours when they are either called into or are scheduled into work on any given day.
3. TE's have no seniority dates.
4. TE's can be moved from city to city.
5. TE's cannot opt or bid on vacant carrier positions.
6. TE's have a 90 day probationary period, just as PTF's do.
7. TE's are eligible to take the PTF exam 180 days after their first day of hire as a TE. Scores will then be merged in with the existing letter carrier register at that time.
8. TE's do not go on the Annual Leave board. Their leave is handled separately.
9. TE's earn 1 hour of annual leave for every 20 hours worked in a week, earning no more than 4 hours for every 80 hours worked in any given pay period. A maximum of 13 days of leave can be earned in any 360 day appointment. This leave can be used for vacation, sick or for emergency leave.
10. TE's receive all general wage increases and COLA's or as long as they are TE's in the carrier craft under the existing contract thru November 2011.
11. TE's receive no health care benefits for their first 360 day appointment, but are entitled to health insurance upon a second 360 day appointment. The total cost of health insurance is the responsibility of the TE when electing to participate in the (FEHB) Federal Health Benefits Program on a pre-tax basis.

12. TE's have the ability to join our union as of their 1st day of appointment. SIGN THEM UP!!!
13. Letter Carrier Casual craft will be fully eliminated by December 10, 2007 in the USPS.
14. Stay Tuned!!! USPS management and the NALC President will be signing off on a TE Question and Answer Memorandum on the other do's and don'ts and rights of the TE letter carrier by the middle of December. We will get that out to the shop stewards and the TE carriers themselves.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!!!!

California State Association Training Conference

by

Ramon Mola
Shop Steward - Encino

First of all, I would like to thank President Brookins for allowing me to participate in this training conference and for Vice President Bocek's recommendation. Also, I would like to extend my gratitude to all my fellow brothers and sisters who supported all of us which attended the training conference.

This is the third time that I have had the opportunity to hear National President Young speak. The previous time I heard him speak, he laid the groundwork for where our contract negotiations were headed. This was a tough speech about tough times. A year later, we (thanks to Bill) came away with a great contract while union density among U.S. workers has fallen 12% and weakening UAW contracts, as well as airline bankruptcies hurting existing unions; we have fared extremely well with our new contract. Important victories with DOIS and third bundle settlements were discussed as well as outlining our objectives for our next pending contract.

I wish all of you could have the opportunity to hear President Young speak. Listening to him makes you aware how strong we are as a union and how truly are brothers and sisters in union. I feel privileged to have served you and I am eager to answer any questions you may have on these matters.