

New initiatives



Brian L. Renfroe

As NALC president, I am fortunate to travel across the country year-round to be with our members at regional rap sessions, state conventions and branch events. Wherever I am, it is always a pleasure to be with our members, but little compares to bringing us all together for one occasion.

At the rap session, I was struck by the professionalism, attentiveness and dedication of all our members. The attendees were taking notes, asking questions and gathering all the information available to take back to their members. Commitment and leadership at the branch level is what makes our union strong, and I appreciate everyone who took the time to attend.

The cover story of this month's magazine includes detailed information on the topics covered during the rap session. There were extensive conversations on collective bargaining, crime issues, our workforce and more, which you can read about on page 4. I also announced some new programs and initiatives that are in the works, and I'd like to use this column to expand on those.

eLearning training platform

First is a new type of virtual training for our activists. We are developing a platform that will offer a series of comprehensive training courses in a virtual format. While this would not replace in-person training, it would expand opportunities for those who want to get involved but might be unable to make it to training in person, while providing activists the opportunity to learn and further develop their skills on their own time. This will be an excellent resource allowing more members to get trained, ultimately continuing to improve representation for our members.

Emergency response support program

Second is an emergency response support program to assist our members who have been affected by a traumatic incident

Last month, more than a thousand branch leaders from across the country gathered in New Orleans, LA, for our national rap session. It was a busy weekend full of training, education, productive conversation and camaraderie among our members. I am confident that this year's rap session attendees have returned to their branches, regions and state associations energized, motivated and eager to share what they learned.

I appreciate Branch 124 and the Louisiana State Association for welcoming everyone to their home city and state. We kicked off the rap session in true New Orleans fashion with a traditional second line band, perhaps a first in NALC history.

on or off the job. We are all aware that far too many letter carriers have been victims of crime, assault and other traumatic incidents on the job. Outside of work, some of our members have witnessed mass shootings, natural disasters and other life-altering events.

In March, we will hold our first emergency response support program training for individuals who have been selected to help their brothers and sisters in this program. This training will teach NALC members how to best support other NALC members who have suffered from a traumatic event. Our members are always willing to stand up to help each other, and we believe that there is an opportunity through a program like this to provide much-needed support and assistance for our members in need. I know this for sure—when given the knowledge and opportunity to help their brothers and sisters, they always step up to do so.

This is only the first phase of our emergency response support program. In the future, we plan to offer education on and assistance with suicide prevention, substance abuse and mental health. The goal of the program is not to replace medical or professional help, but to serve as a peer-to-peer support program that can help someone get the initial help they may need.

Women's mentoring program

It is undeniable that women who take on or wish to take on a new responsibility or leadership role face different challenges than men. We are putting together a women's mentoring program to help our current and future female leaders. It is important to ensure that we as a union do everything possible to make it easy and accessible for all of our members who want to step up in their branches, particularly those who face challenges simply as result of who they are, as many women do around the country. This program will have experienced mentors who can help other women navigate their roles as NALC leaders. With the support of other women, we hope it will result in more women serving in leadership roles at the branch level and beyond.

Standing committee on diversity and inclusion

We also are forming a standing committee on diversity and inclusion. One of our union's greatest strengths is our diversity. This committee will help us maximize the impact of that strength by embracing and celebrating the diversity of our membership. The main goal of this committee is to improve access and make it as easy as possible for anyone, regardless of their race, gender, religion, sexual orientation or anything else, to get involved and fulfill the mission of our union—to fight for city letter carriers.

I have never been more excited about the future of NALC. These new programs and initiatives will make our union stronger, allow us to better support our members, and give us leadership nationwide that reflects the diverse union that we are.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian L. Renfroe". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue background.