

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

The NALC Communications and Media Relations Department is the hub for the union's official communications efforts, striving to provide a consistent and effective message that resonates with audiences—both internal and external. The department has a challenging mission, one that is central to the future of NALC, of the letter carrier craft and of the U.S. Postal Service: informing active and retired NALC members alike, while also helping to develop and get the union's message out to the public and to the public's political representatives. Increasing the understanding of postal issues in the public and political arenas is crucial to NALC's ability to succeed in everything else it does.

In delivering our message, we have two spheres of activity—internal communication (to NALC members) and external communication (largely through the news media), with a good deal of interaction between the two.

For members, our aims are to inform them about the postal situation, tell them what's at stake for them and inspire them to take action, whether through political activity or by spreading the message.

The chief forms of communication with members are *The Postal Record*, NALC's monthly magazine that is sent to our 282,000 members, and NALC's website, nalc.org. Also central to our efforts are the *NALC Bulletin* (a periodic publication that is posted in branch halls and post offices), the NALC Member App for smartphones and our outreach through various social media channels.

We seek to influence the public by getting our message out through the news media on the national, regional and local levels. That involves responding to requests for comments by reporters seeking basic information on postal issues, comments from NALC on postal issues, and interviews with national officers or local letter carriers. It also includes getting our message across directly in the media in our own voices by writing commentary pieces and letters to the editor.

Also critical in the process, given the amount of misleading conventional wis-

dom that exists, is the department's effort to inform journalists about USPS finances and other postal matters.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Postal Record is, as previously mentioned, NALC's chief communications vehicle with the membership. It is a unique resource, without peer in the U.S. labor movement in focus and quality. The official journal of NALC, *The Postal Record* is two years older than the union itself, having been founded in 1887. Its pages address the concerns of letter carriers in the workplace, legislative and political spheres; when relevant, it places topics in the context of the broader labor movement. The magazine's emphasis is on straightforward information so members can make their own informed decisions. *The Postal Record* also explains how members can help make NALC stronger. We provide thorough and up-to-date reports on the letter carrier craft, the Postal Service, public policy issues and the many notable efforts of our members to improve the communities in which they work—or through the annual food drive or the Muscular Dystrophy Association. We also write feature stories relevant to letter carriers.

In planning magazine articles, the staff works directly with resident national officers and coordinates with other NALC Headquarters departments. Most of the articles are written by Communications Department staffers, but staff members from other departments provide essential material for many items.

Meanwhile, because it is not on a set publication schedule, the *NALC Bulletin* provides a timely way to address issues such as legislation, contract negotiations and various union campaigns, as events warrant. Further, the *Bulletin* is available to all postal employees, because it's posted on union bulletin boards in the work areas of post offices as well as in branch halls. Nearly 13,000 copies of the *Bulletin* are mailed to branch officials and shop stewards.

Along with these publications, the department maintains the NALC website, which aims to be attractive, content-rich, focused and current. While the website's

primary goal is to provide information to members, it also serves as a public relations tool by communicating to a wider audience the value of the universal network and the important contributions letter carriers make to their communities every day. The level of interest is reflected in the tens of thousands of visits a month to NALC's website. Contract-related PDFs account for the majority of downloads from the website. Its seven main sections—About NALC, News & Research, Government Affairs, Workplace Issues, Union Administration, Community Service and Member Benefits—contain subsections with hundreds of pages of information and thousands of supporting documents, with much of the material formatted as PDFs.

The Communications and Media Relations staffers also work closely with other Headquarters departments to post important information to the website in timely fashion.

The department delivers vital information to members quickly through the NALC Member App for iPhone and Android smartphones, a tool that uses today's technology to put the most up-to-date information and resources into the hands of our stewards and members. The app was developed at NALC Headquarters with the needs of all members in mind. It contains links to workplace resources, including the National Agreement, the *Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM)*, the Materials Reference System, city carrier assistant resources and more. It also includes legislative tools such as a bill tracker, an individualized list of your congressional representatives and information on the Letter Carrier Political Fund. And one of the most useful features for all letter carriers: an interactive non-scheduled days calendar. Members can sign up for notifications based on their interests and where they live. The app is available in the App Store or Google Play.

The Communications and Media Relations Department provides frequent updates on web-based social media sites, including Facebook (facebook.com/nalc.national), Twitter (@NALC_National) and Instagram (LetterCarriers). The staff employs means such as these to

spread NALC's message and to generate enthusiasm among the rank and file for the union's agenda. We also use YouTube ([youtube.com/ThePostalRecord](https://www.youtube.com/ThePostalRecord)) to post NALC-made videos.

Additionally, the department provides creative, editorial and publishing support for other departments, and prepares materials for national conventions and rap sessions. The expertise and experience gathered in the department gives other NALC Headquarters operations the ability to create professional-quality publications in-house at a substantial savings over contracting with outside vendors, to produce items ranging from greeting cards and invitations to major works such as *Carriers in a Common Cause* and the *JCAM*.

For national conventions, the department produces the *Officers' Reports* book, the *Financial Reports* book and the Pocket Guide, and helps produce specialty items such as CDs and DVDs. It also works with video vendors during the convention to quickly isolate key events for posting to NALC's website as well as to its YouTube account.

When the convention is in session, the department writes and produces a daily summary, the *Convention Chronicle*, with department staffers monitoring the proceedings, taking notes, writing, taking photographs, editing, doing layout and proofreading from morning well into the evening. The *Chronicle* is produced completely on-site and printed overnight at a union printer for distribution of about 8,000 copies the next morning to delegates.

Following the convention, the department produces a special convention edition of *The Postal Record* to share convention business with the full membership. Later, the staff assembles the *Convention Proceedings*, a verbatim account mailed to every NALC branch represented at the event.

Department members also participate in training and developing the union's future leaders at the NALC Leadership Academy—from reviewing students' project reports, to explaining how to create effective branch publications and websites, to leading workshops on developing and communicating a message.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

The department's communications efforts focus on getting information out through the news media that will influence the public and political conversation about postal matters in constructive ways. That requires educating journalists by debunking the large amount of misleading conventional wisdom and explaining the actual financial situation at USPS as well as the value of the Postal Service and letter carriers. Much progress has been made in these areas in the past several years, with reporters now routinely including—for example—the pre-funding mandate in their news stories and often mentioning the operating profits being realized by USPS; much remains to be done.

When media outlets publish, air or broadcast accurate reports, it informs the public while influencing the political discussion in two ways—lawmakers consume media reports, and their constituents let politicians know of the value they place on the Postal Service.

The department also helps to publicize and generate news coverage for the many important things that letter carriers do beyond their jobs to serve their customers, their communities and the country.

Our overall goal: to inform the press, public and policymakers in ways that will lead to public policies that will ensure a stable and prosperous future for the Postal Service and for letter carriers, one that will allow us to continue to offer all of this country's residential and business customers the world's most-affordable delivery service.

To get there, members of the Communications and Media Relations Department interact daily with news reporters, editors and producers all over the country. We provide information for journalists working on stories, so NALC's voice—and the facts—will be part of the public discussion. That includes facilitating interviews with NALC officers and members by media outlets ranging from the most prominent television and radio networks (National Public Radio and MSNBC among them) and print publications to the smallest—but often highly trusted—local media outlets. It also involves providing extensive in-

formation to key reporters and outlets before events such as the USPS quarterly financial reports in an effort to help frame the way those events are covered—which has led to much-improved reporting at key outlets such as the Associated Press and Wall Street Journal.

Additionally, our letters to the editor and our op-ed/commentary pieces have been published in major newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Washington Post* and *Los Angeles Times*, as well as in hundreds of regional newspapers throughout the country and community dailies or weeklies. Our internal communications efforts help inform letter carriers so they can carry this out—and they deliver the message far more successfully than members of any other union.

The department regularly converses with journalists—in Washington, DC, around the country, and occasionally around the globe—to help them better understand postal issues, to explain where the common narratives about USPS fall short, and to show them why postal issues matter to readers, viewers or listeners—and thus are worth reporting or commenting on. A key element here is to explain that while the internet has led many people to communicate or pay bills online, it also has sparked a jump in package deliveries as a result of e-commerce. That means that red ink is not the result of technological progress but rather of public policy (including the pre-funding mandate)—policy that readers, listeners and viewers can weigh in on with their political representatives.

The Communications and Media Relations Department also helps write speeches for national officers, and we assist rank-and-file members as they deal with the media. We provide advice for our political and legislative efforts in terms of effective communications strategies and practices. We work on NALC advertising campaigns that spread our message in print or in broadcast media. And we work with our allies, whether individuals or groups, to help them get the message out.

There remains much to do, but these efforts—helped tremendously by the willingness of President Rolando, the

members of our Executive Council, our state association presidents, our branch officers and rank-and-file letter carriers to engage with the media and the public—are clearly influencing the national debate. The simplistic and misleading narrative of a Postal Service losing tens

of billions of dollars a year because everyone is on the internet, thus putting taxpayers on the hook and requiring sharp cuts in postal services, is increasingly being challenged as more and more reports provide a fuller context.

Journalists who were simply reciting

the conventional wisdom about the Postal Service often now display the knowledge—and willingness—to delve, beyond press releases and special-interest statements and get at the actual financial situation, while frequently including NALC's perspective and comments.

PUBLICATION AWARDS

The following are the winners for the Branch Publication awards that would have been presented at the 2020 National Convention. The awards will be presented in person at the 2022 National Convention in Chicago.

GENERAL EXCELLENCE

LARGE BRANCH OR STATE ASSOCIATION PUBLICATION

- **FIRST-PLACE AWARD** for General Excellence Large Branch or State Association Publication: The Union Carrier, Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100
- **FIRST-PLACE AWARD** for General Excellence Large Branch or State Association Publication to Mound City Carrier, St. Louis, MO Branch 343
- **SECOND-PLACE AWARD** for General Excellence Large Branch or State Association Publication to The NHSALC Convention Book, New Hampshire State Association of Letter Carriers
- **THIRD-PLACE AWARD** for General Excellence Large Branch or State Association Publication to The Mail Bag News, Tri-Valley, CA Branch 2902
- **THIRD-PLACE AWARD** for General Excellence Large Branch or State Association Publication to The Carrier, Phoenix, AZ Branch 576
- **HONORABLE MENTION** for General Excellence Large Branch or State Association Publication to Greater East Bay Branch 1111 News, Greater East Bay, CA Branch 1111
- **HONORABLE MENTION** for General Excellence Large Branch or State Association Publication to South Florida Letter Carrier, South Florida Branch 1071

SMALL BRANCH PUBLICATION

- **FIRST-PLACE AWARD** for General Excellence Small Branch Publication to New Vision, Royal Oak, MI Branch 3126
- **SECOND-PLACE AWARD** for General Excellence Small Branch Publication to 849 Express, Fort Collins, CO Branch 849
- **THIRD-PLACE AWARD** for General Excellence Small Branch Publication to Suncoast Letter Carrier's Update, Clearwater, FL Branch 2008
- **HONORABLE MENTION** for General Excellence Small Branch Publication to The 44 Magnum, New Hampshire Merged Branch 44

BEST NEWS OR FEATURE STORY

- **FIRST-PLACE AWARD** for Best News or Feature Story to Greater East Bay Branch 1111 News, Greater East Bay, CA Branch 1111: "50 Years Ago and Not So Far Away..." by Julie McCormick
- **FIRST-PLACE AWARD** for Best News or Feature Story to New Vision, Royal Oak, MI Branch 3126: "Dicktation: Hello everyone, are you excited to be here today?" by John T. Dick
- **SECOND-PLACE AWARD** for Best News or Feature Story to The North Carolina Letter Carrier, North Carolina State Association of Letter Carriers: "Eight Days That Forever Changed America's Postal Service" by Richard Thayer
- **SECOND-PLACE AWARD** for Best News or Feature Story to South Florida Letter Carrier, South Florida Branch 1071: "Breaking Ground" by Javier Rodriguez
- **THIRD-PLACE AWARD** for Best News or Feature Story to The Beast of Burden, Santa Barbara, CA Branch 290: "Remembering Cesar Chavez" by Neal Couey
- **THIRD-PLACE AWARD** for Best News or Feature Story to Branch Nine News, Minneapolis, MN Branch 9: "That's Your Money" by JoAnn Gilbaugh
- **HONORABLE MENTION** for Best News or Feature Story to The 44 Magnum, New Hampshire Merged Branch 44: "Let's Help Out Lily Ortiz" by Pete Prunier
- **HONORABLE MENTION** for Best News or Feature Story to New Vision, Royal Oak, MI Branch 3126: "The View...From the Veep" by John T. Dick

PROMOTING UNIONISM

- FIRST-PLACE AWARD for Promoting Unionism to South Florida Letter Carrier, South Florida Branch 1071: “Inspired by wave of powerful strikes NALC adopts Branch 1071 resolution in support of our nation’s teachers” by Bill Rayson
- FIRST-PLACE AWARD for Promoting Unionism to Front Lines, South Macomb, MI Branch 4374: “H.R. 2382” by Beki Serwach
- SECOND-PLACE AWARD for Promoting Unionism to New Vision, Royal Oak, MI Branch 3126: “Dicktation: I am appointing you an alternate steward in Royal Oak” by John T. Dick
- SECOND-PLACE AWARD for Promoting Unionism to The North Carolina Letter Carrier, North Carolina State Association of Letter Carriers: “Anatomy of a Non-Union Company” by Bill Heidt
- THIRD-PLACE AWARD for Promoting Unionism to Mound City Carrier, St. Louis, MO Branch 343: “Unions thrive when membership participates” by Tom Schulte
- THIRD-PLACE AWARD for Promoting Unionism to Greater East Bay Branch 1111 News, Greater East Bay, CA Branch 1111: “Why Politics Matter” by Verle Craven
- HONORABLE MENTION for Promoting Unionism to Suncoast Letter Carrier’s Update, Clearwater, FL Branch 2008: “I Walk the Line” by Jerry Lonergan
- HONORABLE MENTION for Promoting Unionism to The 44 Magnum, New Hampshire Merged Branch 44: “Please Do Not Forget!” by Les Lambert

BEST EDITORIAL OR COLUMN

- FIRST-PLACE AWARD for Best Editorial or Column to South Florida Letter Carrier, South Florida Branch 1071: “President’s ‘Fake News’” by Javier Rodriguez
- FIRST-PLACE AWARD for Best Editorial or Column to Mound City Carrier, St. Louis, MO Branch 343: “High CCA Turnover” by John McLaughlin
- SECOND-PLACE AWARD for Best Editorial or Column to The Union Carrier, Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100: “Managing Your Manager” by Darrell Jefferies
- SECOND-PLACE AWARD for Best Editorial or Column to The Union Carrier, Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100: “Meet and Greet” by Linda Kakalia
- THIRD-PLACE AWARD for Best Editorial or Column to South Florida Letter Carrier, South Florida Branch 1071: “White House plot to privatize U.S. Postal Service in the works” by Javier Rodriguez
- THIRD-PLACE AWARD for Best Editorial or Column to NHSALC Convention Book, New Hampshire State Association of Letter Carriers: “A Little History and More” by Terry Gesel
- HONORABLE MENTION for Best Editorial or Column to NHSALC Convention Book, New Hampshire State Association of Letter Carriers: “This Year’s Yearbook is Dedicated to Past State President Wayne Alterisio” by Lew Henry
- HONORABLE MENTION for Best Editorial or Column to The Voice, San Francisco, CA Branch 214: “Public perception of post office” by Ivars Lauersons

BEST WEBSITE

- FIRST-PLACE AWARD for Best Website to facebook.com/nalcbranch114, Duluth, MN Branch 114
- SECOND-PLACE AWARD for Best Website to nalcbranch25.com, Massachusetts Northeast Merged Branch 25
- THIRD-PLACE AWARD for Best Website to branch769.com, Cherry Hill/Haddonfield Merged, NJ Branch 769
- HONORABLE MENTION for Best Website to branch343.org, St. Louis, MO Branch 343

BEST CARTOON OR PHOTO

- FIRST-PLACE AWARD for Best Cartoon or Photo to New Vision, Royal Oak, MI Branch 3126, Cartoon by William Stinson
- SECOND-PLACE AWARD for Best Cartoon or Photo to E.A. Baker Union Update, Bakersfield, CA Branch 782, Cartoon by Fred Acedo
- THIRD-PLACE AWARD for Best Cartoon or Photo to Wake Up, Mass. Northeast Merged Branch 25, Cartoon by Kenny Bonin
- HONORABLE MENTION for Best Cartoon or Photo to Violetta Possanza, Scranton, PA Branch 17
- HONORABLE MENTION for Best Cartoon or Photo to The North Carolina Letter Carrier, North Carolina State Association of Letter Carriers, Cartoon by Fred Vance