

USPS Transformation—Your Role!

During his installation speech, President Young articulated his vision of the future of the Postal Service as well as the role that the NALC would play. He said:

“The future, brothers and sisters will be shaped by the bold.

The future will be shaped by the National Association of Letter Carriers.

The future will be shaped by the members of the National Association of Letter Carriers.”

He went on to say that “if the members of the union are not actively involved in championing change – pushing for a new 21st century Postal Service that will serve the American people for decades to come – then it’s simply not going to happen.”

In keeping with those statements, the NALC has committed to do everything possible to change the Service’s legal and regulatory framework – to free the Service so it can compete successfully. To this end, the NALC and the Postal Service agreed to a memorandum of understanding to study how we can reconfigure and reorganize our jobs in order to make the Postal Service more competitive. This Memorandum, known as the “Transformation Memorandum” committed both parties to explore opportunities for potential changes in delivery services that would enhance opportunities for revenue generation and provide flexibility to keep pace with changing business needs.

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The Postal Biz: 2003 Results

Record surplus masks continued weakness

The Postal Service is expected to report a profit of \$4.2 billion for fiscal year 2003, the largest surplus in its history. The positive results halted a three-year run of financial losses totaling \$2.5 billion. But the record net income does not mean the Postal Service has emerged from the structural weaknesses that have plagued it in recent years. Much of the surplus reflects

reform of Postal Service’s CSRS pension funding formula; a reform that cut USPS expenses by \$3.3 billion in 2003. These savings, continued employment cutbacks, which topped 25,000 jobs in 2003, and new revenues from last July’s 7.7 percent rate increase pushed the Postal Service back into the black for the first time since 1999. However, the underlying business remains weak.

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Special points of interest:

- This issue of the Activist focuses on just what the NALC is doing internally to support the commitment made in the Transformation Memorandum of Understanding, as well as what activities are being undertaken jointly with the Postal Service.

Transformation Memorandum of Understanding

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
AND THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS, AFL-CIO**

Re: Transformation

The parties recognize that the delivery, business, and regulatory model established by the 1971 Postal Reorganization Act does not allow the Postal Service to compete in today's economic environment.

Significant and steady changes in technology, business practices, and the erosion of mail volume since 1997 prompt the parties to join in the exploration of new delivery, business, and regulatory models to ensure that the Postal Service continues to provide a valuable service to the public and a safe, secure and meaningful place for employment for city letter carriers into the 21st century.

To this end, the parties agree to the establishment of a joint task force to explore alternate delivery models that will successfully position the Postal Service as the premier provider of delivery services to every home and business in the nation. The joint task force is chartered to analyze the impact that the changing business and technical environment will have on both delivery services and city letter carriers. With that impact in mind, the task force will explore opportunities for potential changes in delivery services that will enhance opportunities for revenue generation and provide flexibility to keep pace with changing business needs.

It is understood that in exploring opportunities and options for change, the parties will seek to minimize the adverse impact on city letter carriers and enhance opportunities for a creative and meaningful letter carrier work experience.

The task force is to begin its work no later than sixty (60) days from the signing of this memorandum. Recommended changes by the joint task force will be submitted to the NALC President and the USPS Vice President, Labor Relations no later than one (1) year after the initial meeting of the task force.

Neither failure of the joint task force to reach agreement on recommendations, nor the failure of the parties to implement any recommendations of the joint task force, will be subject to arbitration.

This memorandum expires at the end of the term of the current collective bargaining agreement.



Anthony J. Vegliante
Vice President
Labor Relations
U.S. Postal Service



Vincent R. Sombrotto
President
National Association of Letter
Carriers, AFL-CIO

Date: 8/7/02

RECEIVED

Customer Connect—Expanded to go Nationwide

Prior to his installation, President Young set in motion a plan to utilize the skills and reputation of letter carriers to take business away from our competitors in the small parcel arena.

FedEx and UPS have for years, through the efforts of their drivers, been essentially stealing business from the Postal Service by identifying small and medium size parcel shippers as targets for their marketing efforts. It is estimated that our competitors have taken over \$1/4 billion from the Postal Service coffers through these efforts.

The NALC's goal was to see if it was possible that the letter carrier could be the conduit through which small and medium size businesses could be identified and the tables turned on our competitors by having account representatives from the Postal Service use those leads to secure increased volumes of small parcels.

Beginning in Albany, New York, letter carriers were tasked with coming up with two leads per month which would be turned over to Postal Service account representatives for the actual sale of these lines of products. Once the leads had been provided, a call or visit would be made in an attempt to sell the postal patron with the idea that

the Postal Service could provide these services at a better price with similar or improved service.

After the initial test district was brought on line, the test was expanded to four other Districts: Baltimore, MD; Long Island, NY; New Orleans, LA and San Diego, CA.

Although the initial pilot was met with certain difficulties, the parties have identified and attempted to address each one. The success of these 5 Districts has accounted for over \$3 million in sales. This success has caused the parties to decide to roll out Customer Connect nationwide, with some exceptions, in the latter part of this year and into 2004.

A teleconference was held on October 1, 2003 for all NALC's resident officers and National Business Agents, to go over the program in detail and enlist the assistance and support of the NBAs in this roll-out.

The Postal Service has designated district coordinators who will work with the NBAs and their designees to implement the process in a systematic and well-planned way. Our NBAs, after discussing the plans with their district counterparts, will expand this process in 15 to 20 of-

fices in each district where we believe we have the best chance for success.

While we have high hopes for the potential results, we know there have been problems in the past, specifically, with managers at the local level not giving letter carriers the time to have a few minutes for discussion with their patrons. We have been assured that this will not be a problem in the future. Additionally, the program requires that letter carriers who have provided leads be told about the results of those contacts. Letter carriers will not only be given copies of documents indicating the results of their leads, but there will be a posting in each office weekly, on a station-by-station basis.

As everyone who has read the Presidential Commission Report knows, almost all the recommendations made by the Commission deal with cost-cutting measures. The NALC is committed to pursuing opportunities for revenue generation which must occur if the Postal Service is to survive in an environment of falling First Class volume. Customer Connect is just one of those pursuits.

Even now, NALC officers are meeting with other mailers to discuss other ways in which to generate additional revenue for the Postal Service. As letter carriers, we are in a most important position. We know a great deal about

Federal Express and UPS have been stealing business from the Postal Service through the efforts of their drivers.

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Route Inspection Task Force

As part of the NALC message to letter carriers and their families, President Young has outlined NALC's agenda in the workplace. An important part of that agenda involves the establishment of a Joint Task Force whose mission is to explore new methods of inspecting and adjusting routes.

The myriad of rules and regulations currently involved in the inspection and adjustment of city carrier routes does not appear to benefit either party. There is no reason why a union official, a management official,

and the regular letter carrier cannot collectively decide what constitutes an eight hour route. The need for the resulting reduction in overhead is obvious while we are addressing the serious revenue losses confronting the Postal Service.

President Young has appointed Director of City Delivery Fred Rolando to lead the NALC members of the Route Inspection Task Force. Serving with Rolando are National Business Agents John Casciano (Region 14) and Paul Price (Region 2), Regional Administrative Assis-

tant Joan Hurst (Region 1), Branch 1 Treasurer Mike Slavin (Detroit), and Branch 9 Recording Secretary Julie Waldemar (Minneapolis).

So far during the sensitive discussions of the task force, the parties have exchanged thoughts and concepts, agreed on many of the problems with the current system, and have identified several possible approaches to creating a new process for inspecting and adjusting routes. They will be discussing their common interests to determine which concepts warrant testing in the field.

Customer Connect — Expanded Nationwide

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the businesses on our routes because we care about them and the Postal Service.

Some of the ideas discussed to date have revolved around an increased use of scanners so that First Class value added mail can replace lost revenues. While some carriers are concerned about scanners being used to discipline workers, we know that they are the tool through which additional revenue can be gained.

The NALC has been very successful in those cases where discipline has occurred. Our message to the Postal Service has been clear. Don't use the scanner as a tool for negativity when the increased use of it is a key to increasing revenue.

You will be reading in the future about additional efforts by this union to do even more. We recognize that the Postal Service cannot do it alone and that letter carriers are the heart of this organization and the good will and knowledge of letter carriers will be necessary if the Postal Service is to survive. Customer Connect is a tremendous opportunity for letter carriers to prove exactly that.

A major reason that the NALC has taken such an active role in this process revolves around the fact that we all know that when the Postal Service faces financial hardships, they turn to letter carriers; wanting us to work harder, faster, and with less of an eye to safety.

By becoming involved in this process, we hope to relieve the every day pressures faced by letter carriers in the performance of their duties.

If the Postal Service is to survive, Customer Connect and the knowledge of Letter Carriers will be key!

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A look at postal volume numbers reveals this weakness. Despite a modest recovery in the national economy, total mail volume remained flat in 2003 at 202 billion pieces. Although Standard (advertising) Mail staged a moderate comeback in 2003 by growing 3.3 percent over last year, First-Class Mail volume fell 2.8 percent. (The 2.9 billion piece increase in Standard volume was effectively offset by a 3.0 billion piece decline in First-Class Mail.) Meanwhile, Priority Mail and Express Mail volumes declined by more than 10 percent.

The USPS blames rising postage rates and continued electronic diversion (e-mail and e-bill payments) for the decline in First-Class and credits a strengthening economy for the rebound in Standard Mail. However, since First Class Mail generates 37.4 cents per piece (and pays nearly 70% of USPS overhead costs) compared to 19.1 cents per piece by Standard Mail, the changing mail mix poses a long-term threat to the financial health of the USPS. This is evident in the Postal Service's average revenue per piece: It increased by just 4.4 percent in 2003 even though the USPS raised rates by 7.7 percent in 2002.

Despite the continued structural weakness, 2003 was a good year for the USPS in financial terms. The CSRS pension funding reform has allowed the USPS to reduce its outstanding debt from \$11.1 billion to \$7.3 billion and has bought the postal community time to pursue comprehensive postal reform.

Postal employment: How low can it go?

Postal management continued to slash work hours and postal employment in 2003. Another 25,000 jobs were eliminated during the year. Some 22,000 of these jobs were craft positions. Career employment in the USPS stood at 730,000 at the end of September, down some 74,000 from 1999 and very close to the 728,000 workers employed by the USPS at the time the Postal Service was created in 1971. The ability of the USPS to cut employment to such low levels is extraordinary given that it now delivers 130 percent more mail to 60 percent more addresses today than it did at the time of Postal Reorganization.

City carrier employment fell by approximately 4,300 carriers to 229,530 during PFY 2003 B a decline of 1.8 percent B to reach the lowest level since 1992. Over the same period clerk employment plunged by 15,000 to 254,000 B a decline of 5.6 percent during the year and a fall of 17.5 percent from its peak in 1998. Mail Handler employment dropped 3.9% during the year. The only craft to grow at all was the rural carrier craft, which increased by less than one percent (or 650 jobs).

The outlook for 2004 is for continued retrenchment. The USPS expects to slash work hours by another 25 million hours next year, the equivalent of approximately 15,000 jobs. The immediate target will once again be mail processing jobs as the USPS seeks to implement a network rationalization plan aimed at streamlining the number of postal

processing and distribution plants. But continued minor route adjustments may continue to reduce the overall number of city carrier routes and city carrier jobs as well.

Whether the USPS can continue to slash workers without adversely affecting the quality of service is an open question. External measures of service quality have actually improved in recent years and the Postal Service aims to raise its targets for on-time delivery next year to help minimize the loss of mail volume to electronic technologies.

Outlook: CSRS savings legislation is the key

The Postal Service is forecasting a \$2.1 billion surplus and total mail volume growth of 1.3 percent in 2004 (even though the decline in core First-Class volume is expected to continue). The USPS expects to be able to reduce its outstanding debt further to \$2.6 to \$3.1 billion. But the financial outlook for the USPS in the medium term will depend in large part on Congressional action later this year on legislation related to CSRS benefits.

The law reforming USPS funding of its CSRS liabilities calls on the Postal Service to place all post-2005 savings from the law into an escrow account. It also transferred some \$27 billion in costs for military pension benefits payable to postal employees from the Treasury to the USPS. Congress must pass new legislation on how the funds in the account are to be used after 2005.

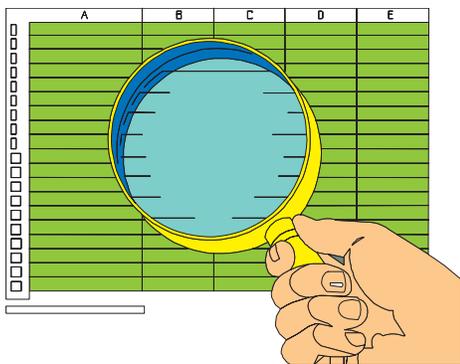
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The Postal Biz: 2003 Results

As the federal budget swells toward \$500 billion annually, the danger is that funds in the escrow account will be diverted from the USPS for deficit reduction.

Congress requested proposals from the USPS, the Office of Personnel Management and the Treasury Department on how to use the savings and how to reallocate military pension costs between taxpayers and postal ratepayers. Those proposals are now being analyzed by the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress. Hearings on the proposals will be held in November. The legislation that emerges from those hearings will have a major impact on postal finances for years to come. **NALC will take** an active role in the debate over this legislation and will call on union activists to help protect the letter carrier interests in the law.



USPS By The Numbers

Chg from	Number	SPLY*
USPS Operations- PFY 2003		
Total mail volume year-to-date (YTD)		
(Billions of pieces)	202.4	0.0%
Mail volume by class (YTD in billions)		
First-Class	99.5	-2.8%
Priority Mail	0.9	-13.2%
Express	0.1	-9.5%
Periodicals	9.3	-4.0%
Standard (bulk mail)	90.1	3.3%
Packages	1.1	6.4%
International	0.9	2.1%
Daily delivery points	141.2 mil.	1.3%
Percent city	74.0%	-
Percent rural	26.0%	-
City carrier routes	164,882	-0.8%
Rural carrier routes	69,509	+0.3%
Estimated Net Income (\$mil.)	\$4,200	-
Total Revenue	\$68,900	+3.6%
Total Expense	\$64,700	-3.7%
USPS OperationsCAP13-2003		
City carrier employment	229,530	-1.8%
Percent union members	92.7%	-
Percent career employees	100.0%	-
City carrier casual/TE employment		
Casuals	5,939	-4.5%
Percent of bargaining unit	2.5%	-
Transitional	7	-93.0%
Percent of bargaining unit	0.0%	---
City carrier per delivery supervisor	17.9	-2.8%
Career USPS employment	730,430	+3.5%
City carrier avg. straight-time wage	\$20.56/hour	2.5%
City carrier overtime ratio (OT hrs/total work hours)	12.4%	-
Ratio SPLY	11.4%	-

*SPLY = Same Period Last Year. This information compiled by the NALC Research Department from USPS Reports.

Intervention Process

When national negotiations for the current collective bargaining agreement were being completed, NALC representatives, including National President Bill Young, concluded that incorporating the Dispute Resolution process into Article 15 was not enough. The final piece, necessary to begin to deal with the underlying reasons for disputes, was to create and implement a plan to attempt to cause the local parties to solve problems at the lowest step. If they were unsuccessful, a review by a joint team with the will and authority to make the required changes would be put in place.

The result was the memo at page 181 of the National Agreement. A joint task force named by NALC President Bill Young, working with the designees of the Postal Service has been meeting for months and has crafted a process that we think will meet our needs. Those five test districts will be put on line by the end of January 2004 and will be observed for six months to determine the effectiveness of the process and what changes will need to be made to improve it. A national roll out will follow.

Some may question why the long time-frame. The answer is simple. It has taken many years for the Postal Service to get in its present state of workroom floor unrest. To put into place a plan to change it will take great resolve on both sides and any misstep along the way could do more harm than good. Letter carriers have had a long history of seeing programs come and

go with little change. This process is too important to let that happen.

For those who attended the NALC Rap Session held in Bloomington, MN in September an Intervention Task Force Workshop was presented at two different sessions. During the two and half hour session Executive Vice President, Jim Williams, Director of Safety and Health, Al Ferranto, NBA's Matty Rose and Jim Korolowicz, who comprise the task force for the NALC, presented an intervention outline based on the results of those numerous meetings between the NALC and the USPS. Participants received a packet of material that included the new MOUs which offer guidelines for application of the intervention process. To view the MOUs in their entirety look in the October 2003 Postal Record pages 26 through 28.

The presentation in Minneapolis described the results of the Task Force's work by beginning with the original memo establishing the alternative dispute resolution. The memo had language committing the parties to resolve the underlying causes of disputes, but did not have specific plans to do so. The newest memo cited above is the parties answer to that missing piece.

Cincinnati, San Diego, Kentuckiana, Houston and Suncoast have been identified as the five pilot sites. The national business agents and regional administrative assistants for the pilot districts will be trained January 14 -16, 2004 at the Bolger Academy in Potomac, MD. As of this writing it is un-

known which specific counterparts to the NALC, the Postal Service will be sending to be trained. The task force members at the national level will be responsible for monitoring the test sites.

Specifically, the test districts will act as pilot sites where we will use six factors to determine whether a site will be a candidate for intervention. NBA's and RAA's will be NALC's representative and the Area Labor Relation manger and other individuals named by them will work jointly to use these fac-

The six factors are:

1. A steady increase in grievance activity
 - Formal Step A
 - Step B
2. Grievance processing delays
 - Formal Step A
 - Step B
3. Reoccurring Grievances
 - Formal Step A
 - Step B
4. Step A files not properly prepared
5. Step B resolution rate below 80%
6. Arbitration cases not scheduled within 120 days of impasse

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Coalition Building is the Key to Legislative Success

It has often been said that politics makes for strange bedfellows. That could not be more true in the world of postal reform. If we are to be successful in our efforts to enact meaningful reform legislation, we need to look past the things that divide us, and come together with one voice on those areas where we agree.

Who are we talking about here? Just as postal reform will not happen without the NALC's involvement, it is certain that the Postal Service, mailers (some of whom have a reputation for strong ties to labor unions, and even those who do not) and Members of Congress, regardless of their party affiliation, will all be key players.

As union leaders, you are on the front line, taking on postal management when that is in the best interest of the membership. No one is asking you to stop representing letter carriers. But do not forget that the future of our jobs is closely tied to the future of the Postal Service. So as we look to Congress to enact

legislative change, coming together with postal management is crucial.

Sometimes, our day to day battles can make this message even stronger. Imagine a branch leader saying to a member of Congress, "you know that the letter carriers wouldn't shy away from speaking up when postal management is wrong, but postal reform is an issue on which we all can agree."

On the other hand, if the Postal Service and its employees cannot come together on postal reform, elected officials are less likely to get involved. And if we fall into the trap of bringing our workroom floor issues before members of Congress, it could harm our cause. At best, they will tell us to get our act together and come back when we can speak with a unified voice. At worst, they could introduce legislation (even if it is well intentioned) that could undermine our collective bargaining rights, by injecting Congress into the labor-management relationship.

This is not unique to postal management. Our customers B not just the people and businesses to whom we deliver each day, but major mailers such as financial institutions, publishers and retailers B also have a big stake in postal reform. While some of these companies may have less than stellar records when it comes to organized labor, they realize that comprehensive postal reform cannot happen unless postal employees play a role. Does that mean they are going to change their positions when it comes to unions? Probably not. But these companies also recognize that their future could be in jeopardy without postal reform, and that means that it is in their best interest to work with us. In fact, we won our collective bargaining rights in 1970 by working together with a Republican administration and the business community. That is why President Young has embarked on an unprecedented campaign to reach out to the mailing community; because focusing on that which binds us to-

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Intervention Process

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tors and decide if intervention is warranted.

The decision to intervene in a site will be made by the NBA or Area Labor Relations manager or their designees. The intervention may be as simple as a training session, or as in depth as necessary to correct the underlying issue. The commitment at the headquarters level is to not let

serious problems continue without fixing the underlying causes. While the factors listed above are not an exhaustive list of what may trigger in intervention, we believe that they are illustrative of what issues cause an incredible number of workplace disputes.

While no one can guarantee success, President Young and the Executive Council are committed to

putting forth all our effort to make an impact on the workroom floor. The Postal Service to this point is committed to the same. Only time will tell. One thing at least is true. The NALC will do all in our power, as we have always done to protect our members. We will keep our credibility along the way.

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Coalition Building

gether is going to do far more good than highlighting the issues that divide us.

Finally, many branch leaders are leaders in their community and are intimately involved with the political process. That often means that they have ties to elected officials of a particular political party. Postal reform will not happen unless we work with representatives from both sides of the aisle. The key to our

success is to cast as wide a net as we can. While you may not be accustomed to reaching out to someone from a different political party, our future could well be dependent on your making that contact. We have the benefit of representing one of the most popular government institutions. Elected officials, regardless of party, recognize this and have expressed widespread support for the Postal Service. Our challenge is to convert that good will into support for our legislative

priority.

An institution as large as the Postal Service cannot be reformed unless there is cooperation among all of the stakeholders. What we cannot accomplish alone, we may be able to achieve through a coalition of those who seek to preserve and promote the Postal Service. That means reaching out to the Postal Service, postal customers and our elected representatives. Now is the time to start building these bridges.

COLCPE—Leveling the Playing Field

The upcoming election cycle may be one of the most important we have faced in many years. We will be approaching our Members of Congress and asking them to vote favorably on issues relating to postal reform, as well as the repeal of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Premium Conversion bills. The issue of postal reform will shape the future of the Postal Service as well as all of us who have worked, or are still working, as postal employees. What will come out of postal reform will be the Postal Service of the future. The people we elect to Congress are going to be the ones making the decisions that will shape that future. We need to have representatives that are familiar with our goals, and who will stand up for the ideals of our Union and the issues we present on behalf of our membership. We cannot afford to let our competitors get the edge, as the results could be disastrous.

To make our voice stronger, President Young announced the rollout of the COLCPE payroll deduction program for active letter carriers. Members of the NALC may now make voluntary contributions to COLCPE by making an allotment request via PostalEASE. (Note: An allotment is a sum of money withheld from an individual's paycheck by the Postal Service and sent directly to a financial institution. Sums of money sent elsewhere --to charities, courts (garnishment, child support), Thrift Savings Plan--are not considered allotments.)

The procurement of this process has not been a simple task. Officers and staff at National Headquarters have toiled for a long time to make this a reality. I cannot stress enough the importance of making a voluntary contribution to COLCPE, the NALC's political action fund. In order for the NALC to stay competitive in the legislative arena, we must be able to keep up with the

likes of Fed-Ex and UPS. Those two organizations alone contribute millions of dollars to the campaigns of those supportive of their cause. In order to maintain a level playing field, and not get left in the dust, the NALC must be able to make considerable donations to the campaigns of representatives supportive of our goals.

COLCPE has played a major role in the campaigns of many Senators and Congressional representatives regardless of their party affiliation throughout the years. The contributions made from COLCPE during the 2000-2002 election cycle were impressive. Over \$1.5 million was distributed by COLCPE.

In comparison, however, FedEx was able to distribute over \$2.9 million, while UPS distributed over \$3.5 million! In reviewing the comparison chart, you can see we have a LOT of work to do. Being

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COLCPE

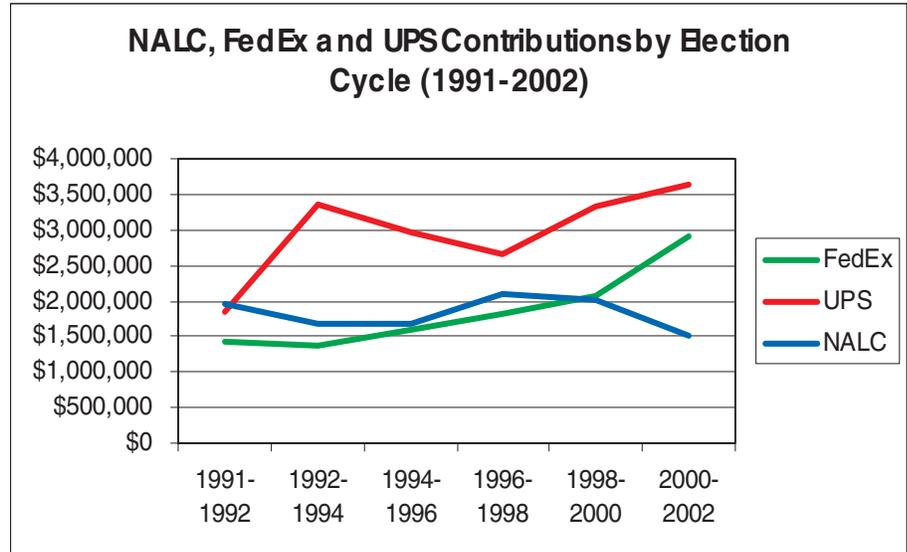
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outspent by a 2-1 margin is just the tip of the iceberg. The PAC funds from these very wealthy organizations continue to raise money at incredible speeds, allowing their lobbying efforts to pay huge dividends.

Signing up for COLCPE through payroll deduction is now just a phone call away. Call toll-free at 1-877-4PS-EASE (1-877-477-3273). Instructions on how to use PostalEASE were mailed to all active NALC members in early September and were also printed in the September Postal Record (page 9) and on the inside back cover of the October Postal Record.

To contribute to COLCPE via the PostalEASE system, active members must have a recent issue of the Postal Record handy so they can enter the first seven digits of the identification number that appears on the mailing label. If the member does not have a Postal Record label which contains their ID number, a call may be made to the National Business Agent for their Region (see inside front cover of your Postal Record for contact info) or the office of the Director of Retired Members to obtain the number.

Our work is not done! At this time the maximum number of allotments allowed is two, however, the NALC is attempting to increase the number of allotments allowed. Any member who already has two allotments



may wish to cancel one allotment and substitute his/her COLCPE contribution.

We are also currently engaged in a process to secure a COLCPE deduction program for our retired members as well. We hope to announce in the near future that our retired members will be able to make voluntary donations to COLCPE by having the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) make the deduction from their monthly annuity check. Details will be forthcoming as soon as we are able to finalize the process with representatives from the OPM.

It is preferable to use PostalEASE if you are eligible to do so. If a member wishes to contribute directly to COLCPE, he can still send a check or money order.

Retired NALC members not eligible to use the payroll deduction system at this time may contribute to COLCPE by writing a check or sending a money order to NALC headquarters at 100 Indiana Avenue, N.W., Washington, D. C., 20001-2144. Retirees should be sure their Social Security number and current address are on the check/money order.



The NALC Wants You...!

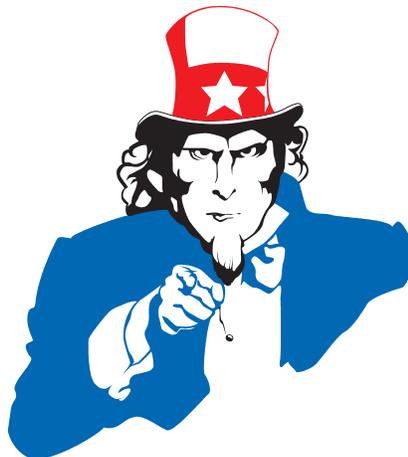
... To Join the NALC e-Activist Network

If you have Internet Access, an e-mail address and a few minutes, you can make a real difference in NALC's efforts to help save the Postal Service. Join the NALC e-Activist Network today. Then promote the e-Activist network to your Branch members and help them sign up too. As NALC e-Activists you and your branch will become part of the union's growing high-speed cyber-activist strike force, primed to act quickly whenever the alarm is sounded and ready 24/7 to defend letter carriers' rights and jobs by promoting effective sensible postal reform.

It is quick and easy to become an NALC e-Activist. Just log directly onto the NALC website at www.nalc.org. Enter your e-mail address and click the sign-up button on the homepage. This will take you directly to a web form where you can quickly and easily fill in all the information necessary to enlist in the union's new electronic legislative and political action force. When it is necessary to contact your elected representatives about crucial issues affecting the future of the Postal Service, your job, or your retirement benefits, you will receive an Action Alert from NALC President Young that asks you to take action by sending your own message to specific decision makers.

If you, your branch officers and stewards are already NALC e-Activists, don't stop reading. It is great if you are already signed up. The union certainly needs and appreciates your help. But as a branch officer, you know that signing yourself up is only the first step - en-

couraging each and every one of your members to join and helping them become online activists is the next. Discussing issues will help your members understand the gravity of the situation that letter carriers and the Postal Service face. The NALC e-Activist Network gives you and your members a tool to go beyond listening, discussing and understanding the facts provides a very concrete way to respond. Using the power of modern technology NALC members across the nation will be able to take charge, make their voices instantly heard and play an active role in shaping a positive and productive future.



Mobilizing members for the NALC e-Activist network sounds easy enough in theory, but if your members are typical of those across the country they will have questions about why they should make the effort. The stresses of modern day life make it hard to commit to yet another task. Many will have good intentions, but never quite find the time to follow through and turn on the computer. You can help by explaining how simple it is to join,

how easy it is to send messages, how little time it will require to participate, and, most important, what is at stake. Talk it up on the workroom floor and in the swing room. Enlist members who are already NALC e-Activists to encourage their brothers and sisters to sign up. Make it even easier to get active, by setting up one or more computers with Internet connections at your next branch meeting. Then ask a branch "techie" to stand by and help members go directly online and sign up as NALC e-Activists (see details at the end of this article).

As you and your branch officers talk to members who may need further details on why the NALC is involved and what it means to become a NALC e-Activist. Here are some answers to questions you may get asked.

Why should I join?

Obviously, the first answer here is "because your job, the welfare of your family and the future of the U. S. Postal Service are at stake". Remember, neglecting to take action, is, in fact, taking action. An apathetic response to NALC's all-out effort lets the forces of aggressive competitors who want to dismantle the Postal Service get the upper hand. NALC President Young has made it clear that this union is committed to meaningful and fair postal reform legislation that not just allows, but facilitates the "morphing" of this historic American institution into a progressive, productive, modern hub of the national postal sys-

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tem; a global model for the future. President Young and the National Officers of the union need the help of each and every member to shape this transition.

Another response to the “why should I join” question might be that it is a quick, easy and non time-specific way to participate in the activities of the union. If a member has trouble getting to all the branch meetings or taking part in other union activities because of time conflicts, this is a great way to participate. It is a union commitment that does not take a lot of time, only requires intermittent action and can be done any time of the day or night.

Finally, those who feel they are only one small voice and their message can't make a difference have found Internet communication to be a very empowering medium. Sending an occasional e-mail on an important issue only requires a few minutes, but its impact, when combined with hundreds of thousands of other messages converging almost instantly from all across the country, is *huge*. The bings and dings of incoming e-mails arriving one after the another will be enough to get any congressional staffer to put on ear protectors! People who have opposite plans for the future of the Postal service won't hesitate to use e-mail technology to push their cause. The NALC needs to level the playing field by making sure that letter carrier voices are heard loud and clear.

How does it work?

It is quite simple. A member provides their e-mail address to the NALC. NALC will then send e-mail Action Alerts about issues af-

fecting active and retired letter carriers and the future of the Postal Service. More specifically, when the time comes to act, President Young will generate a message explaining the issue, telling NALC e-Activists who to contact, providing a sample message (that can be fully or partially customized) and including easy e-mail link(s) as well as a mailing address. NALC e-Activists who want to double the strength of their message may want to send an e-mail, then print out the e-mail and send it by U.S. Mail.

How do I know what to write?

Some members may be worried that they do not know how to write a message to Congress; they do not know what to say or how to go about it. First, every Action Alert will provide sample language for a message. But, it also allows anyone to make changes; perhaps add sentences, remind the legislator of a recent meeting, or write about a relevant experience on the job. Customize the message; click “Send This Message” and the e-mail will head directly to the e-mail addresses of pre-selected members of Congress or other decision makers.

As easy as this process is, the NALC wants to help members send the most effective messages possible. To increase letter carriers' clout when communicating, the NALC will be providing training to all e-Activists on how to write effective messages that members of Congress will pay attention to. We will let branches and e-Activists know when this training program comes to your area.

OK, How do I sign up?

The NALC has launched a sign-up section on the union website at

www.nalc.org. The Internet signup box, located on the homepage, provides a space to enter your e-mail address. Upon clicking the “Sign Up” button; you will be transported to a page with an information form that puts you on the list to receive future NALC Action Alerts. After confirming that your sign-up information is correct, you will be entered into the system and will soon receive a confirmation e-mail message from President Young thanking you for joining the NALC e-Activist Network.

As mentioned above, branches can also set up an Internet-connected computer(s) at branch meetings, training sessions, or other events and ask members to sign up on the spot. Those members will sign up using a special Activist sign up page that asks for the same sign-up information requested on the website, but also demonstrates a sample message. At the same time a member signs up, he or she will also be sending a message to NALC National Officers that says, “You can count on me!” (See sidebar for details on setting up computer(s) and getting the kiosk connection.)

Populating your branch with NALC e-activists is a new way for branch leaders to take a proactive step in their on going mission to fight for the rights of members.

In 1970 letter carriers were asked to sacrifice their jobs and their livelihoods, what we are asking now pales in comparison.

HOW TO SET UP A BRANCH NALC e-ACTIVIST SIGN UP KIOSK

Set up an NALC e-Activist Kiosk at a branch meeting, training session or event and make the process even easier for members by asking a branch “techie” to stand by, answer questions and help members go through the online process. All you need is:

- a computer (one or more);
- a telephone line for each computer;
- a live Internet connection for each computer; and the special NALC Sign Up Kiosk World Wide Web location (url) which is <http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/signup>.

One or more computers can be used at the same time and branch members can sign up consecutively.

Here’s how it works. After logging into NALC’s special web location, the NALC e-Activist Sign Up Kiosk page appears on the computer screen. Information on the left describes how to sign up and on the right side of the screen, there is an information web form. Below, members will see a message similar to the one they will be sending as NALC e-Activists. After filling in the form, the new e-Activist clicks the “Send This Message” button. His or her information will be entered into the NALC e-Activist Network and at the same time a “You can count on me!” message will be sent to President Young and the NALC Executive Council. Then a confirmation screen appears containing information the new e-Activist just filled into the web form. If there are errors, the information can be corrected by clicking the “back” button on the web browser and putting the right information into the form. When the “Confirm” button is pushed, the screen clears and a new clean page will come up so the next person in line can start signing up. When the new e-Activist gets home and checks their e-mail, a thank you message from President Young will be waiting.

Tips:

Please ask members to use upper and lower case in the name and address fields. The system is case sensitive, so e-mail addresses should also be entered with this in mind.

Only one person can sign-up per e-mail address. If one family member signs up using the family e-mail address, another family member will not be able to sign up for the NALC e-Activist Network using the same e-mail address. Therefore, family members should sign up using different e-mail accounts *or* use the same action alert information to send out separate messages to the targeted recipients.

The kiosk *does not ask members for a password*. However the signup linked from the NALC homepage *does ask the user* to make up a password for the NALC e-Activist system. An NALC e-Activist may be asked for a password when checking on their information from links that appear on e-mail messages or Action Alerts. If so, make up any password and use it (or change it) the next time it is requested.

With a minimum of effort, your branch will be signing up legions of new NALC e-Activists and swelling the ranks of NALC’s new cyber-activist strike force.



Pass the Popcorn ... Let's Watch a Video

Just about two months have passed since "Your Job, Your Future, Your Fight: Saving the Postal Service in the Internet Age," a key element in NALC's ongoing campaign for postal reform, was first "released," but this is one video that definitely should be winning a growing viewership over time.

Every branch officer and steward knows that in early September, the NALC shipped to all 216,000 active members as well as some 18,000 non-member letter carriers a VHS videotape of NALC President William H. Young's June presentation to the Florida State Association of Letter Carriers' convention on the long-term financial status of the Postal Service and NALC's strategy for legislative reforms to shore up the Service and ensure its vitality in the decades ahead. For many union activists, the tape brought a familiar message. President Young, NALC's other resident officers and all 15 National Business Agents have made similar presentations at state conventions and other union meetings throughout the country during the spring and summer.

But just because *you* and your fellow branch officers or stewards are familiar with the presentation and understand the importance of NALC's message, it is not nearly enough. How many of your members have seen the tape? Did they talk about it on the workroom floor? At branch meetings? And if they did watch it and are talking about it, what's the reaction? Did the message come through loud and clear and are they willing to join you and

other NALC activists in the union's campaign to save the Postal Service? And did they return the postcard enclosed with the tape to indicate they're interested in being a legislative activist and also want to contribute to COLCPE, our political action fund?

And what about the non-member letter carriers in your stations? Are they concerned about the future of the Postal Service? Did any of them express interest in joining the NALC after watching the tape? Did you or your fellow officers and stewards aggressively use the videotape as an *organizing* tool to recruit non-member carriers into the union?

Whatever you and your branch have or haven't done, you can do more, right now

--it's certainly not too late. Remember that the message in the video is as current and as meaningful today as it was when President Young made his presentation in June. Sure a few of the statistics might be *slightly* (and only slightly) out-of-date, but the message is certainly current. Postal reform is an issue that's going to be with us for some time.

In the video, President Young argued that due to the relentless march of digital technology plus the increasing aggressiveness of private sector competitors, the Postal Service is facing a perilous long-term future. As a result, *meaningful* and

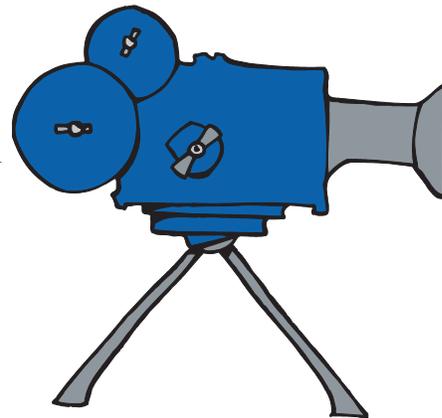
fair postal reform legislation that removes the commercial and regulatory shackles that presently inhibit the Service is imperative if the Service is to *survive* and *thrive in the future*--and if letter carrier jobs are to be preserved. But, NALC's president further makes clear, *the NALC will never accept any postal reform that doesn't protect the basic rights of letter carriers and other postal employees to bargain collectively with the Postal Service*--which is why collective bargaining is one part of the present law that's totally off-limits to legislators and others crafting postal reform legislation.

Since the video's message is still current--and will be for some time--members who haven't seen it yet *should*. But realistically, chances are if an active member or non-member hasn't taken the time yet

to watch the video at home, he or she isn't going to--at least not without branch officers and stewards doing some serious prodding. Remember, "Your Job, Your Future Your Fight: Saving the Postal Service in the Internet Age" doesn't have to be returned to Blockbuster in a few days, so even the most well-meaning carrier can set it on a shelf for a while, fully intending to watch it *some* day.

That day must be soon if the NALC is to be successful in *informing* un-

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ion members of the issues surrounding postal reform and in *motivating* the members to become active in our legislative program.

For branch officers, the video can, of course, serve as a crucial element in motivating members to become e-Activists as well as to contribute to COLCPE through the PostalEase system (See pages 8 and 10 of this issue for more information on these two programs).

So here are some steps that branch leaders should consider to maximize the number of members who see the videotape--and, as a result, understand the issues and are motivated to join in NALC's fight to save the Postal Service:

- Have stewards distribute on the workroom floor highlights of the video to motivate carriers to watch the video.
- Establish a competition between stations to see which station has the greatest percentage of "video-viewers"--and develop a "test" to make sure that the results are honest. (Best bet is to first give stewards enough time to motivate their carriers to watch the video.)
- Hold a special branch meeting or other event where the video is shown on a large TV or screen. Consider showing the video on a Sunday so you can combine the showing of the video with a picnic or other event that will attract family members.

- Hold an organized discussion of the issues raised in the videotape at the regular branch meeting following the showing of the tape and then follow this up by having those in attendance sign up as e-Activists and also call PostalEase to designate COLCPE as a bi-weekly payroll allotment (all *you* need is a telephone--but your members must have their PostalEase password and their *Postal Record* I.D. number).
- Give a prize to the member who can answer a specific question related to a specific fact that President Young used in his presentation--for example, how much did first-class mail volume decline in fiscal year 2002? (If you think there might be multiple winners, then put the names of members with the correct answers in a hat and choose one for the prize.)

Admittedly, not all of the above ideas will work for every branch--and they certainly don't exhaust the possible approaches. Nonetheless, one way or the other branch leaders should encourage their members to watch "Your Job, Your Future Your Fight: Saving the Postal Service in the Internet Age," then sign up as e-Activists on NALC's website (or complete the paper sign-up sheet that branches have been given to enable members who don't communicate via e-mail to participate in NALC's legislative program) and, finally, contribute to COLCPE--ideally through regular bi-weekly payroll allotments.

Time's a-wasting, so pass the popcorn and get your members to take a look at one video that won't win an Oscar.

It's far more important than those that will.



**National Association of
Letter Carriers**

100 Indiana Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20001-2144

Phone: 202-393-4695

William H. Young, President

Regional Training Seminars

Listed below are regional training and educational seminars scheduled.

For more information, contact your National Business Agent.

St. Louis Region (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska)

February 21-22 St. Louis Regional
Rap Session, Radisson Hotel &
Suites, St. Louis, MO

Boston Region (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont)

November 22-24 New England Re-
gional Rap Session, Holiday Inn by
the Bay, Portland, ME

San Francisco Region (California, Guam, Hawaii and Nevada)

December 5-7, Northern California
Training/Rap Session, Holiday Inn,
Sacramento, CA

Philadelphia Region (Pennsylvania, Southern New Jer- sey)

February 22-24, Region 12 Rap
Session, Atlantic City, NJ

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