



VOLUME 72 No 4

Official Publication of Branch Nine, NALC

May 2020

ACTION NEEDED

Congress must strengthen and protect the Postal Service during the COVID-19 crisis

Support the United States Postal Service in the next emergency stimulus

As letter carriers on the front lines of serving 160 million Americans and businesses every day, you know that the Covid-19 pandemic is something we have never experienced before. While our letter carriers show their resilience, strength, and continued service to the public every day, the Postal Service looms closer to shuttering due to the staggering loss in mail volume and revenue during this crisis. It's a desperate situation that only Congress and the Administration can help solve.

WE CANNOT ALLOW THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE TO FAIL.

Unfortunately, instead of providing much needed immediate financial assistance urged by NALC and stakeholders, the last stimulus gave the Postal Service a slap in the face by giving it access to a conditional line of credit. Those conditions aren't new to letter carriers as they seek to destroy the network and attack letter carriers at the behest of private shippers. This is not a solution. It is a way to weaken the Postal Service by riddling it with more debt to the point where opponents of the constitutionally mandated service will destroy it.

While it's been 40 years since we have needed taxpayer funding, we need financial relief to continue to serve this country through this crisis - and we need it now. Please take a minute to send a letter or postcard to your members of Congress and tell them that we need: an immediate and significant injection of money and secure, regular appropriations for the Postal Service until this crisis is over.

CONTACT YOUR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES (SEE POSTCARD INSIDE)

Need help finding them, go to www.NALC.org

**Branch 9 NALC has a new
"temporary" home @**

**4001 Stinson Blvd. Suite 304
Columbia Heights MN 55421
612-781-9858**



RETIREMENTS



Last Punch for Ken Wehr
(Thomas Burnett) with Stewards
Cheryl Dombrock and David Flynn.
Happy Retirement!

The Following is a list of Paid Members of PAL 9 for April, 2020.

Very Concern Members

Gerald Broman
Lisa O'Neill
Thomas Guthrie
Anthony Thompson
Leonard Radin

Regular Members

Gay Rene Woodgate

Jim Fodstad
Treasurer PAL 9

NEW MEMBERS

Leonardo Ambrose
Chun Chan
Benjamin Clark
Marvel Cross
Tesyfaye Deyasso
Camryn Green
Peter Heggstuen
Patrick James
Nicole Johnson
Janie Lane-Jenkins
Samuel Morgan
Jonathan Owens
Timothy Stevens
Thanh Truong
Abdigani Warsame
Cum Yong

IN MEMORIAM

Roberta Mykleby

Branch 9, NALC
4001 Stinson Blvd. Suite 304
Columbia Heights MN 55421
Voice: (612) 781-9858
Fax: (612) 781-9849
Website: branch9nalc.com

Branch 9 Officers

President

Samantha Hartwig

Exec. Vice President

JoAnn Gilbaugh

Recording Secretary

Robb Petersburg

Treasurer

Lisa O'Neill

Financial Secretary

Stacey Ellingson

Editor

Jeremy Rothstein
branch9news@branch9nalc.com

Sergeant at Arms

Jim Nelson

Trustees

Christa Abraham
Johnna Lush
Chris Pennock

Director of Retirees

Melia Derrick

NALC Health Benefits Rep.

Ken Jambois
HBR: (763) 370-1392

Calling on the Rank and File

The June/July issue of the Branch 9 News will be our
"Rank and File" special edition.

Please submit articles or comics to be printed in the
combined June/July issue.

Submission should be received by **June 15, 2020.**

email to: branch9news@branch9nalc.com

Mail to: Branch Nine News
4001 Stinson Blvd. Suite 304
Columbia Heights MN 55421

The Editorial Staff reserves the right to edit or refuse to print articles which are
derogatory in nature.

The Branch Nine News is a monthly
publication of NALC Branch 9, and is
published in the interest of and for the
members of NALC Branch 9.

The opinions expressed by the writers
are not necessarily those of the
OFFICERS, or of NALC Branch 9.

**Articles MUST be submitted to the
editor by the 1st of the month, and
must be signed.** The Editorial Staff
reserves the right to edit or refuse to
print articles which are derogatory in
nature.

Any official NALC organization may
reproduce our articles provided
appropriate credit is given.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We signed a lease for a temporary office space, and the address is 4001 Stinson Blvd. Suite 304, Columbia Heights, MN 44521. The next couple of weeks will be spent getting the Branch Office up and running. Since the fire we have not been able to retrieve any messages that were left on the Branch Office phone, and according to the phone company there may be no way to get to our old messages, if you have been calling the Branch Office and not getting a response from us that is why. The phone number for the Office will not change, and by the time this Branch Nine News hits your mailbox we will have the phones working again.

I am currently in the process of appointing a building committee to determine if we should rebuild at 2408 Central Ave, or if it is time for us to move to a new location in the city of Minneapolis. The committee will put all of our options together, and as soon we can have General Membership Meetings in person those options will be presented to the membership, and it will be the membership's decision which direction the Branch will be moving in.

I want to extend my thanks to all the membership for being understanding in regard to the extra length of time it sometimes takes for us to return phone calls on our Branch Cell phones. Sending us messages through email is also great way to get ahold of us.

COVID-19

There have been a couple of employees in Minneapolis that may have tested positive for COVID-19, per HIPPA Laws the only thing I can report at this time, is that none of them are letter carriers. Elmwood was one station that was affected, and as soon as the Postmaster knew of the employee possibly infected with COVID-19, there was a team sent

to the station within a few hours to Deep Clean the station. That is the procedure that will happen every time it is likely that an employee has tested positive. Contact tracing from the likely infected employee is also done, and it will be determined if any other employees will be required to quarantine. The USPS is following the CDC guidelines.

If you need to take leave for COVID-19 related reasons your local management team must first contact Human Resources to get instruction on how your leave will be coded and paid, if it is for yourself, or for daycare related reasons. Your local management team is not to be making this decision on their own.

I also want to take a moment and give a special Thank You to carrier Ryan O'Neill from the Elmwood Station. At the onset of the COVID-19 crisis he reached out to me with a contact for hand sanitizer, and I was able to get that information to the Post Office, and this resulted in supplies of hand sanitizer around the city. When I was at the Elmwood Post Station last week he gave me a new contact for cloth face masks, and I will be picking up 200 face masks to start with for the carriers, and 100 face masks a week after this for a while. I will reach out to the stewards to figure out which stations are in the most critical need of facemask.

Amazon Sundays

OTDL carriers have been scheduled to work on Amazon Sundays. Management must use all the OTDL and CCAs for Amazon Sunday before any Non-OTDL carriers can either volunteer to work or be forced to work on Sundays. The 60-hour a week limit, and the 20-hours overtime limit in a work still apply to the work hours. Any Full-time Regular carrier working on Amazon Sunday you are guaranteed 8 hours of work or pay if there is not 8 hours of work, do not wave



Samantha Hartwig

your right to the 8-hour guarantee. According to the Minneapolis Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU), item #14 A, overtime is assigned by station, in other words management needs to do everything they can to keep OTDL carriers in their station zones on Amazon Sundays.

CCAs

CCAs are limited to 11 ½ hours in a workday. On Amazon Sundays there may be times when CCAs are required to sort post. That is considered crossing crafts; however, the clerks have the standing to file grievances on this. If you are throwing post on Amazon Sunday, please give us a call at the Branch Office so we can alert the Clerks to this violation for grievances. If CCAs are throwing post, and getting the packages delivered, then it appears that there is proper staffing in the eyes of the Post Office, and this will not improve if left unchecked.

On May 9th there will be more CCAs converted to career. Due to COVID-19 the career benefits class is online now. If you do not get your career benefit class within the first 30 days of being converted please let us know at the Branch office so we can make sure you get your benefits class. There is a 60-day time limit to sign up for certain benefits and if you do not make the timeline, you will need to wait till open season.

Pres. Report cont'd on page 6

A VERY SAD DAY FOR BRANCH 9

Sunday, March 22nd, 2020 was the day our Branch 9 office and our historic soul were destroyed by fire.

Through no fault of our own, we lost our history on the walls. Our original charter from 1890 in its restored frame, gone! Every copy of our beloved Branch 9 news from the days of its first printing are gone!

Our five apartment tenants who lived above the offices are without homes and in most cases absolutely no personal belongings.

What's worse, we can't even conduct a Branch meeting to lament and discuss this situation

and our future, thanks to the pandemic.

On Tuesday and Thursday after the fire, I stopped by the scene and was able to help our two officers and Mike Zagaros rescue the files from 7 full file cabinets. Samantha Hartwig and JoAnn Gilbaugh were planning how to move forward, even before the fire was out. What a "dynamic duo"!

I can't imagine how Angie, our secretary, and the rest of our officers feel, losing all their records and especially all the work and dedication they put into their jobs.

Anyone who was ever in our building and saw all the Branch 9

history on the walls, knows what we lost.

Please be patient with our officers while they face the double tragedy of the fire and the pandemic. They need all the support we can give them.

Now we must rise up from the ashes and to the best of our combined abilities, rebuild our offices. There will most certainly be a Building Committee and I have volunteered to serve on it.

An injury to one is an injury to all.

Respectfully, Al Gulden
Retired 2002

HEAT ILLNESS PREVENTION

Because COVID-19 can spread between people in close proximity to each other, employees should adhere to social distancing guidelines (at least 6 feet apart) whenever possible.

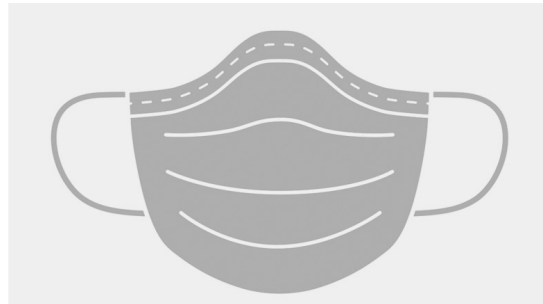
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that you wear cloth face coverings in public settings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

Employees exposed to hot and humid conditions are at risk of heat illness. It is important to remember to stay cool and safe.

If you experience difficulty breathing or discomfort as a

result of the heat while wearing your face covering, you should remove the face covering until the discomfort ceases.

However, if you decide to remove your face covering, you should continue to practice social distancing when you come into contact with others and sneeze or cough into your elbow or a tissue.



Remember these additional tips to prevent heat related illnesses:

- Hydrate before, during, and after work.
- Dress appropriately for the weather.
- Utilize shade to stay cool.

Know the signs of heat stress:

- Hot, dry skin or profuse sweating
- Headache
- Confusion or dizziness
- Nausea
- Muscle cramps
- Weakness or fatigue
- Rash

Finally, it's important that you call 911 and notify your supervisor if you experience signs of a heat related illness.

Always, remember, safety depends on you.

Exec. Vice President's Report

This Spring and early Summer has been a time of tribulations and triumphs for Branch 9. Every day we hear from the news media about the "new normal", along with constant reminders of social distancing, the value of masks and talk of when non-essential workers can return to their jobs.

All the while we have trudged along, doing what we do, and taking everything in stride. It took a while for Management to get us the necessary supplies. For some inexplicable reason, we weren't listed as essential employees, and the orders for sanitizer, gloves and masks were delayed. But, in typical Branch 9 fashion, our membership came to the rescue, bringing in and sharing their own supplies. Some of our members went the extra mile and found businesses that could provide us with large amounts of hand sanitizer and masks. These actions were essential to our ability to continue to safely deliver the mail while Management scrambled to fix the problem to get protective personal equipment (PPE) into our hands.

We won't pretend that there hasn't been a struggle. At times, the daily stand-ups about the coronavirus and changes to our delivery methods have been contradictory. There are varied opinions about the necessity for social distancing, and the use of PPE. This hasn't been an easy time for our membership. Many of them or their family members have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. For the most part, our membership has been respectful, and we strongly encourage each of you to continue to be considerate of each other's views. We can consider this a triumph during tribulation.

Amongst these battles, we were thrown a curveball when our Branch 9 building burned to the ground on Sunday, March 22nd. As the last of the fire smoldered where our building had stood, and while our membership delivered

their routes, Samantha and I were sworn in as President and Executive Vice President. Our goal has been to keep things running as seamlessly as possible for all of you, maintaining business as usual, until we could find Branch 9 a new home. We began working out of our temporary offices on May 1st, with a full move-in date the week of May 11th. Another triumph amid tribulation "in the books".

There are many among us who are dealing with reduced family income. With the stay at home orders, countless spouses and significant others are not able to work. The reduction of family income is a strain, and we are thankful to have work, to be an essential worker, giving us a triumph in tribulation.

But the greatest tribulation stands before us. We are feeling the pain of closed businesses. Our mail volumes are drastically down. The prediction is a 50% drop this summer, with the Postal Service running out of money by fall. The Postal Service needs a 25 billion dollar stimulus bill to be passed now, to keep our doors open.

The naysayers among us believe "the Post Office won't close down, it's just a scare tactic". "Congress won't let this happen; we don't have to worry". If only these statements were true. They are not. We have been fighting privatization for years. Never has it been more real. If we can't convince all of Congress to pass a stimulus bill, the current administration is poised to privatize us and that is a recipe for disaster for all of us. Private mailers are pushing for our demise. But with action, from all of us, our opportunity is great.

During this pandemic, we have witnessed the importance of our work to the people of America. Privatization would destroy the service we provide. It's incumbent upon each of us to take action to save the Service and our jobs.



JoAnn Gilbaugh

What should we do? TAKE ACTION! Our Representatives and Senators need to be told to vote for a stimulus bill. Do you want to save your career? It takes just a few minutes. Go to NALC.org. Click on Action Needed (scrolling at the top of the page). Fill in some blanks and a pre-written email will be sent to your Representative and Senator. Your personal information is deleted from the website once you hit send. Spread the word to your friends, families, and neighbors. Ask them to contact their congresspeople. We need to send a powerful message to Washington.

There is another easy way to help. A grassroots movement has started on social media. People are being encouraged to buy a book of forever stamps. We operate on the sale of postage. If everyone would purchase stamps, we can meet our operating costs. Pass the word next time you are on your social media accounts.

The bottom line is this: we need another triumph in tribulation. We can achieve the necessary stimulus package by acting together with our brother and sister letter carriers across the country. We're Branch 9 strong. We're making it through the pandemic. We're overcoming the fire. We must swiftly take action to save our careers. When we stand together, we succeed. It's time to show Congress: in Solidarity there is strength.

Pres. Report cont'd from page 3

I would like to schedule a ZOOM meeting just for CCAs, if you're interested please send me an email so I can have a "CCA" email list to send out invites, if the stay-at-home order continues past May. If the Stay-at-home order does lift, there will be a meeting scheduled for hopefully in June or July.

Safety

As the weather gets nicer and the outdoor temperatures begin to rise now is the time to remind ourselves of heat safety. You can download the NIOSH Heat Safety App to your smartphone if you do not it have already. This App gives you the heat index for the day, the warning signs of heat stroke, heat stress, and useful tips to be safe in the heat. The key is to stay hydrated, and if you do not feel well alert management, and take a break to cool down, even if it requires you to return to the Post Office for additional recovery time. Dog bites have been on the rise. With many more people at home because of the stay-at-home order there are more dogs outside. If there is a dog running around unsecure do not deliver the mail to the house. Bring the mail back to the station and let your management know why you had to bring the mail back.

In Solidarity,
SH

PLEASE HELP

The renters at the Branch 9 Building in the "Stately Estates" have lost their home and personal belongings due to the building fire.

GoFundMe page on our Facebook page "Branch 9 Online" and a link is on the website. www.branch9nalc.com

**Mandatory Stand-Up Talk
May 1, 2020
Updates from CDC**

New information on COVID-19 symptoms and transmission

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has updated its guidance regarding Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) symptoms. It is important to note that no two people are the same when it comes to COVID-19 symptoms. According to CDC, infected individuals have reported a wide range of symptoms, ranging from mild symptoms to severe illnesses. Some infected individuals have not had any symptoms. CDC says that COVID-19 symptoms may appear within 2-14 days after exposure to the virus and the symptoms may include one or more of the following:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

CDC advises you to seek medical attention immediately if you have any of the following emergency warning signs:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to awaken
- Bluish lips or face

This list is not all inclusive. CDC recommends that you consult with your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

In addition, CDC has updated its frequently asked questions (FAQs) regarding coronavirus and the mail. These FAQs can be accessed at cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html.

CDC states there is still a lot that is unknown about how COVID-19 and how the virus spreads. Coronaviruses are thought to be spread most often by respiratory droplets. Although the virus can survive for a short period of time on some surfaces, both CDC and the United States Surgeon General have indicated that it is unlikely to be spread from domestic or international mail, products or packaging.

It may be possible that people can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their mouth, nose or eyes.

However, this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. CDC reminds us the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60-percent alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Stay home if you are sick.

Postcard Instructions



1. Tear out the provided postcard.
2. Address it to your US House of Representative (address provided below.) If you don't know who it is go to <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>
3. Write your return address.
4. Place a stamp in the corner.
5. Mail it!

1st District of Minnesota

Jim Hagedorn
1530 Greenview Dr. SW,
Ste. 207
Rochester, MN 55902

2nd District of Minnesota

Angie Craig
12940 Harriet Avenue S.
Suite 238
Burnsville, MN 55337

3rd District of Minnesota

Dean Phillips
13911 Ridgedale Drive
Suite 200
Minnetonka, MN 55305

4th District of Minnesota

Betty McCollum
661 LaSalle Street, Suite 110
St. Paul, MN 55114

5th District of Minnesota

Ilhan Omar
404 3rd Avenue North
Suite 203
Minneapolis, MN 55401

6th District of Minnesota

Tom Emmer
9201 Quaday Ave. NE Suite 206
Otsego, MN 55330

7th District of Minnesota

Collin Peterson
1700 Technology Drive
Suite 119
Willmar, MN 56201

8th District of Minnesota

Pete Stauber
Cambridge City Hall.
300 3rd Avenue NE
Cambridge, MN 55008

Director of Retirees Report

So much has happened since my last column that it is kind of overwhelming. The corona virus spread across the nation turning our world upside down. The Branch office burned to the ground just as Mike was stepping down from his role as President. What a way for our new officers to start their service. But we have faith that as a unified Branch, we can do this.

As retirees, we can only imagine the idea of working in the Covid, social distancing environment. But all of us are experiencing its effects. My daughter lost her job within a week of the shutdown process. Her boss lost her mother who had been in a long term facility to Covid. We are attending more Zoom meetings than I ever knew possible (in fact I didn't know about them before this). We are breathing through masks as we shop for life necessities (or should be). Maybe even sewing masks for healthcare workers and first responders.



So how are you coping through this? The Branch retirees have a series of monthly breakfasts and a lunch where we meet to catch up and stay in contact with those we used to work with. We can't have these now and that is a profound loss. Through our facebook page and this column we are asking you to give the Branch your email address if you would like to stay



Melia Derrick

in touch with your fellow retirees through a zoom meeting. Angie will collect the emails and when a meeting time is set, send you the link to attend. This meeting will give important information and a time for conversation with friends. Governor Walz is proposing the stay close to home orders to be in effect until mid-May, but even then the restaurants will probably be restricted for onsite eating. Hopefully zoom meetings won't be a new reality, but a stop gap measure.

Did you get your \$1200 check from the government? To the thirty plus million newly unemployed people this is a godsend. But be aware that the Republicans are taking this opportunity to cut Social Security or at least underfund it. They are proposing a payroll tax holiday (that does nothing for the unemployed), which in essence is a "let's not fund SS for the rest of the year" ploy. Then when all of this settles and everyone starts looking at the debt we have racked up, the pressure will be very high to cut benefits. Social Security is your godsend. Be active in following the proposals that could undue Social Security benefits.

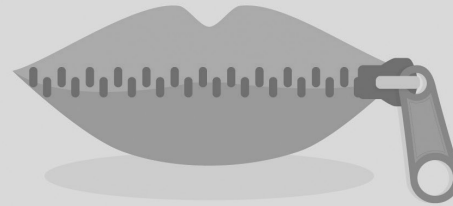
Stay tuned in
Melia Derrick

USPS

WORKPLACE & CAREER

CULTURE

How Gossip at Work Affects You and Others



Did you know that conversations that keep you from focusing on your job can damage your health?

Gossiping at work affects you! Perhaps you are aware that your words have the power to crush, frighten, enrage or annoy other people—but what do those same words do to you? There are three types of stress-inducing words that can break your spirit, keep you from focusing on your job, and even more important, can damage your health. Let's look a bit more at the different types of gossip.

CRITICAL AND JUDGMENTAL

Being critical or judgmental sounds like, "I can't believe she lets her teenager go to the mall without an adult," or "He must think he's so special because he drives that fancy new car." When we make assumptions about another person's choices or behaviors, we run a huge risk. It is rare that we know the whole story and incomplete information is no better than a falsehood. Before you speak a criticism, ask yourself, "Do I know if this information is true? Does repeating it add value to myself or others?"

WHINING AND COMPLAINING

Though whining and complaining isn't always about workplace gossip, it does spread negativity and ultimately affects your professional relationships and reputation. Seeing the bad side of every situation is not just off-putting to others; it can lead to chronic stress in your own life that could affect your sleep, mood and immune system. Better to try to find ways to see the good in others and in situations. Focus on what you can control and stop complaining about what you cannot change.

RUDE AND INCONSIDERATE

Most of us would deny that we are cruel. After all, we don't deliberately spread malicious gossip at work, right? But what about those "harmless" slips that can have the same effect? Snubbing a colleague, name-dropping, rolling the eyes, laughing at the expense of someone else. These may not seem like gossip but they can have the same effect in a workplace. Your words have the power to set a positive tone or a negative tone. Sarcasm, pointed remarks, thoughtless or rude comments will cause feelings of anger and chaos for those around you. Conversely, pleasant remarks, compliments and positive recognition go a long way in lifting the mood of an entire group.

AVOID GETTING CAUGHT UP IN GOSSIP

The way a person conducts themselves at work is an important reflection of their values and work ethic. The best route to success is to avoid discussions with co-workers that might be construed as putting down another person or the organization. Stick to discussions related to getting the work done or to general current events. The best way to avoid gossip if you are present when a group of people begin chatting, is to politely excuse yourself and do not contribute to the conversation.

Avoid becoming a target by conducting yourself in a friendly, professional manner. There is nothing wrong with some occasional, lighthearted banter. However, be sure you know the other person well enough. And if you have made the mistake of offending someone at work, talk to them about it. Take responsibility and work hard to show that you won't be repeating it. Showing integrity and loyalty at work will go a long way to benefiting your success and overall mental wellbeing.

FOR MORE WORKPLACE TIPS CONTACT YOUR EAP



USPS
Employee
Assistance
Program

CALL US TODAY: 800-327-4968
800-EAP-4YOU | TTY: 877-492-7341
WWW.EAP4YOU.COM



NALC

Department of Legislative and Political Affairs — National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO
100 Indiana Ave. NW — Washington, DC 20001-2144 — 202-393-4695 — www.nalc.org © NALC

The Postal Service and the COVID-19 Crisis

April 8, 2020

At the height of the 2008-2009 recession, more than 800,000 Americans per month lost their jobs. In recent weeks, millions of workers per week are filing for unemployment insurance. The COVID-19 crisis is both a public health crisis and an economic crisis. The U.S. Postal Service is a vitally important tool for battling these twin calamities. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Postal Service's financial situation will pose grave danger to its ability to provide crucial service to our country if decisive action isn't taken by Congress and the Administration.

Value of the Postal Service in Normal Times

In ordinary times, the Postal Service, which has fully funded itself through the sale of postage since the early 1980s, plays a vitally important role in our economy, our society and our health care system.

- It is the nation's only truly universal delivery and communications network, connecting 160 million homes and businesses in every corner of the country. It's the hub of a huge mailing industry - comprised of the paper, printing, marketing, publishing and e-commerce and shipping sectors of the economy - that together generate \$1.6 trillion in sales and employ nearly 7.0 million private sector workers. The USPS, with 640,000 employees, is among the largest employers in all 50 states - and the single largest civilian employer of veterans.
- The Postal Service provides American citizens, residents and businesses with the industrial world's most affordable and efficient delivery services. Postal services and post offices are particularly critical to rural areas, small towns, the elderly, military veterans, and most American companies, which are typically small or medium-sized enterprises and include millions of home-based businesses. Households and business depend on the reliable receipt of checks and payments to keep functioning - indeed, hundreds of billions of payments still go through the mails each year.
- The Postal Service is also essential to the political and cultural life of America, delivering hundreds of millions of magazines and weekly newspapers each year, not to mention billions of birthday cards, wedding invitations and other personal communications. It routinely handles tens of millions of ballots delivered to voters who request absentee ballots or who live in states that conduct elections by mail - for elections at every level, from school boards to city councils and state legislature to federal elections. The USPS is also a trusted presence in neighborhoods across the country, especially for the elderly and the disabled who value a daily visit and assistance when needed. Nearly everywhere local post offices serve as community hubs and letter carriers perform acts of everyday heroism when house fires, car accidents or crimes befall ordinary citizens.
- The USPS also plays an important role in the U.S. health care system by handling 1.2 billion prescription drug shipments a year - that's nearly 4 million every day, six days a week. It also delivers hundreds of millions of lab tests and medical supply shipments - from blood testing strips and insulin needles to contact lenses. The Postal Service is and has been a partner with law enforcement and government agencies that deal with natural disasters and other emergencies.

Importance of the Postal Service During this Crisis

In a major public health crisis like the one we face today; the Postal Service is more important than ever. In late March, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention sent a mailing to every American household to give our

citizens the information they need to protect themselves and their loved ones from the COVID-19 virus. The FDA is currently working on a self-testing nasal swab that must, once available, be efficiently delivered to 135 million households across America. As a matter of public health, there is no substitute for the Postal Service's universal delivery network, especially now with medical needs rising exponentially. A collapse of the Postal Service at this crucial moment or a severe disruption in service would undermine our fight to defeat the COVID-19 virus.

The Postal Service is also crucial for fighting the pandemic-induced recession. With foot traffic plummeting, small businesses increasingly depend on package deliveries to continue generating revenue and employing workers. Without postal deliveries of orders and checks, many will collapse. Similarly, the USPS is stepping up for large enterprises facing disrupted supply chains, empty stores due to quarantines and self-isolating consumers. It offers reliable end-to-end services to these firms while also providing "last-mile" delivery for tens of millions of packages for FedEx, UPS and Amazon. The universal reach of the postal network is invaluable to all Americans, but especially to those in rural, inner city and exurban areas that would not be served if not for the Postal Service.

And the Postal Service is vital to the functioning of the national government during this crisis, offering an affordable universal means to distribute paperwork for vitally needed Small Business Administration loans, household stimulus checks, tax returns and decennial Census mailings – all of which must go forward despite the crisis.

There is simply no substitute for the U.S. Postal Service as we battle both the pandemic and the deep recession it has caused.

What We Need Now

The Postal Service has experienced financial problems for several years now, for reasons unrelated to the coronavirus, and lawmakers have been considering postal reform measures for more than a decade. But the pandemic has created a separate and immediate threat to America's postal network. Now is not the time to debate longer-term reforms; now is the time for urgent and bold action to save the agency from the potentially devastating impact the COVID-19 impact will likely have on its ability to operate and serve the American people.

Indeed, in recent weeks, mail volume has plunged by the largest percentage since the Great Recession of 2008-2010 and is likely to drop by more than it did during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Postal management believes that volume and revenue may drop by 50% or more over the next year. The pandemic-induced loss of revenue facing the Postal Service is no less dramatic than that facing the airline and hotel industries. The Postal Service, and the segment of the private economy it supports, needs the same level of assistance provided those industries.

Unfortunately, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act, P.L. 116-137) signed into law on March 27, 2020 did not offer the same kind of support for the Postal Service that it did for airlines (\$61 billion), private cargo shippers (\$17 billion) and other corporations (\$425 billion). It provided \$10 billion in new debt authority, subject to control by the Treasury Department's Federal Finance Bank (FFB). That is woefully inadequate for two reasons:

First, it fell far short of the stimulus legislation introduced in the House of Representatives on March 23, 2020. That bill would have provided the Postal Service substantial relief, including an emergency appropriation of \$25 billion. Second, by making the coronavirus credit line subject to the control of the Treasury Department, there is no guarantee that the Postal Service will receive access to this credit. In any case, adding to the Postal Service's existing debt is not a real solution.

Indeed, the Federal Finance Bank has restricted access to the Postal Service's remaining \$4 billion in borrowing authority since September 2018, demanding ideological and operational changes supported by special interest groups before extending further loans to the Postal Service. Media reports imply that the Treasury is using the credit line as leverage to force massive price increases on competitive products (which will be especially damaging to small businesses and Americans in rural areas) and to interfere with postal collective bargaining matters. To its credit, the USPS Board of Governors has rejected these unacceptable pressure tactics.

Given this record, the CARES Act offers virtually no relief to the Postal Service - more debt with unacceptable

strings attached. Congress can and must do better in the next round of legislation to strengthen and preserve the Postal Service.

Therefore, to both protect public health and to stabilize our economy, we call on Congress to enact provisions in the next stimulus bill that would:

1. Make a direct “public service” appropriation of at least \$25 billion to the Postal Service to help it weather the pandemic and the deep recession it is causing. Although the Postal Service has not received taxpayer appropriations (other than for military/overseas voting and free mail for the blind) since the early 1980s, the present crisis warrants such appropriations now.
2. Authorize an emergency “public service” appropriation for the duration of the crisis, distributed quarterly, starting in Fiscal Year 2021 (which begins in just six months) to cover the difference between postage revenues and total USPS expenses. This would signal to the American people and the business community that the Postal Service will be there to: battle the pandemic (with the delivery of tests and public health information, etc.); deliver online purchases and prescription drugs; support the economic recovery; and facilitate absentee voting as well as other vital civic functions.
3. Provide a mechanism to reimburse the Postal Service for the cost of the COVID-19-related leave (both sick leave and family medical leave) provided by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127).
4. Ensure equal treatment for postal employees in any legislation that authorizes, and funds hazard pay for other front-line workers exposed to health risks related to the COVID-19 virus. Such legislation should cover postal workers, who face heightened exposure risks to the virus on a daily basis.
5. Remove the Federal Finance Bank’s discretion to impose operational changes and policy conditions on any of the Postal Service’s existing borrowing authorities – changes and policies that should properly be set by the Postal Service Board of Governors and the Congress, not the Treasury Department – and eliminate any annual limit on these authorities. (These authorities are provided by Section 2005 of Title 39 and Section 6001 of the CARES Act of 2020.)

Conclusion

The postal unions will work with the Congress, stakeholders in the mailing industry and the general public to advance a significant relief package and other measures to preserve the Postal Service, a vital part of our national economic infrastructure.

The USPS is a source of comfort and a welcome sign of normalcy to the American people. That has been true during recoveries from hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and other disasters in the past, and it should be now as we grapple with the current national crisis.

All American leaders, Democrats and Republicans alike, should work together to ensure that this pandemic does not destroy the U.S. Postal Service, a true national treasure and a vital part of America’s response and eventual recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic



Br. 9 Retired Letter Carrier
Kerry Herdine
Home: 952.854.2655
Cell: 612.805.8407

AME'S UNIFORMS

OUR BUSINESS IS MAKING YOU LOOK GOOD!

We offer “Life of the Garment” guarantee.
If fixable we will repair your uniform at no cost to you.
Take waist in/out and change hem length

Ame's Uniforms are a UNION PREFERRED vendor

Branch Nine News
4001 Stinson Blvd. Suite 304
Columbia Heights MN 55421

Change Service Requested

PRSRT STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
TWIN CITIES MN
PERMIT NO. 91964

Stay informed by:

- *Signing up for E-activist at NALC.org
- * Branch9nalc.com (website)
- * "like" our Branch 9 Facebook Page

Contribute to the PAC

The Letter Carrier Political Fund is the anchor for NALC's legislative and political activities.



nalc.org/government-affairs/political-activity

Branch 9 Calendar

ALL BRANCH 9 Meetings and events have been postponed or canceled until further notice.

Please continue to check the website and Facebook page for the latest information.

We will continue to explore alternatives to meetings to get information and training to the stewards and members.

**THE DIRECTOR OF
RETIREES IS
SCHEDULING
ONLINE SOCIALS**

If you wish to be part of them, contact Melia, the Branch office or check our Facebook page.

All other breakfasts and meetings are cancelled until further notice.