



VOLUME 77 No 5

Official Publication of Branch Nine, NALC

May 2025

May 1st: International Workers' Day

Origins, History, and Lessons for Today's Labor Movement



Eight-Hour banner from 1856

May 1st, or “Mayday”, is International Workers’ Day, a holiday and tradition that was founded by the American labor movement in the 1880s. Organizing under the simple, but powerful slogans, “8 hours for work, 8 hours for rest, 8 hours for what we will”, and “An Injury To One, Is An Injury To All”, a slogan we still put on the masthead of every issue of the Branch Nine News, workers organized unions, and fought for better wages, and working conditions, in the quickly industrializing, often brutal, and exploitative workplaces of the United States in the late 19th century.

While the tradition of International Workers’ Day began in the US, it stopped becoming a reference point in this country over the course of the 20th century, even while it was picked up by workers around the world. Mayday was revived in the US in 2006 by the immigrant’s rights movement, who organized a mass protest and general strike of millions of immigrant workers in response to a draconian anti-immigration bill proposed by the Bush administration. This action defeated that bill, and reintroduced May 1st as a reference point for new generations of working people.

(Continued on page 7)



PAL 9

Contributors

Very Concerned (\$50 or more)

Jon Thompson
Brad Knutson
Pat Paplow

Concerned (\$25 donated)

Karen Torell
Doug Waldhoff

**Per the motion
passed unanimously
at the April GMM:
Voting on
By-Law proposals
will occur at
May 27, 2025 GMM**

**See April issue for
Proposed By-Laws**

NEW MEMBERS

Talaya Barker
Brennan Block
Amy Burton
Yan Che
Dawit Dires
Jacob Goffard
Laura Hanson
Martha Huson
Mark Hynes
Virginia Jones
Jerrell Lawrence
Pray Lekien
John Macdonald
Fany Mata
Lee Miller Jr.
Trenton Nellis
Nathan Reiman
William Scholz
Fallon Tackes
Zachary Wattier
Ashley Young

IN MEMORIAM

William Winefeldt
David Pierson

Branch 9, NALC
5831 Cedar Lake Road South
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Voice: (612) 781-9858
Fax: (612) 781-9849
Website: branch9nalc.com

Branch 9 Officers

President

Joe Rian

Exec. Vice President

Chris Pennock

Recording Secretary

Andrew Hagan

Treasurer

Barb Watczak

Financial Secretary

Stacey Ellingson

Editor

Tyler Vasseur
branch9news@branch9nalc.com

Sergeant at Arms

Jorge Quintero

Trustees

Cheryl Dombrock
Zoe Bunzli
Tim Bash

Director of Retirees

Joe Tanner

NALC Health Benefits Rep.

Susan Becker

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

The greatest time of the year for me as a letter carrier is always springtime. The drab and dreary grays of winter are replaced by green, growth and vitality. It means I survived another year and now live to enjoy the promise of an unknown future. Spring is awesome.

Branch 9 enters spring having worked through a tough winter with some big events most of us had never experienced in a leadership role, but we survived.

In our first 100 days, we completed NALC National Director and Officer Training, our LM-2 Department of Labor, our yearly audit for 2024, and our first quarterly audit with our new trustees.

In addition, we have or we will have by the time you read this,

- Held a "Hell No Rally" at the Minnesota Capital

- Completed another successful Ron St. Clair MDA Bowlathon raising over \$6000 to help kids with muscular dystrophy attend summer camp,

- In one weekend, hosted a Red and Gold Retirement Banquet and march in the Minneapolis May Day Parade, and,

- Participated in another National NALC Food Drive for America.

- Appointed Scribes and Legislative Committee members

We've met with congressional legislative leaders, US Representatives Angie Craig and Ilhan Omar, to discuss letter carrier and labor issues and we're looking to meet with more of our elected officials.

Let's face it we, when we have everyone working together we are capable of great things.

Which leads me to our greatest challenge yet.

As part of the budget reconciliation process, in a 22-21 vote, the US House Committee on Oversight and Accountability advanced a measure that would reduce benefits for federal employees, including letter carriers.

These proposals include:

- **Increasing the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) contribution rate for existing employees up to 4.4 percent.** This is the percentage we contribute per check to the FERS annuity you can see in the Postal Record. When I started it was, (and is for me now) .08%.
- **Cutting retirement benefits by eliminating the FERS special annuity supplement.** Joe Tanner's article explains how the so called "bridge funding" between retirement and Social Security eligibility at age 62 works. If this bill passes, we lose the bridge funding.



Joe Rian

- **Reducing annuity payments by calculating a retiree's annuity based on their high-five salary average (instead of three).**

You can do the math yourself and see that using a five-year average will permanently reduce the benefits of every new retiree.

The NALC completely opposes these measures and I hope all of you, as individual members, do as well. Our benefits are not free handouts. We have fought for and earned them through many service years of hard work. And now congress is trying to steal these benefits from us just like those time bandits in the route adjustment process are stealing time off our routes.

Contact your US Representatives and ask them to say

OH HELL NO! TO ATTACKS ON POSTAL RETIREMENT BENEFITS.

(202) 224-3121 or NALC.ORG/ACTION

Call early. Call often. You might just lose your retirement if you don't.



Join Branch 9

for a day of fun for the whole family,
food and a softball tournament

Please get your teams ready to rumble!!
(5 innings will have an umpire available.)

Aquatore Park

9191 Lincoln Street NE, Blaine, MN 55434
(East and West Pavilions)

Sunday, August 3, 2025

10am – 4:00pm

Price is \$5 per person

Food served at the East Pavillion - 11am – 1pm

Hot dogs, burgers, brats
2 types of potato salad
Assorted fruit, desserts, etc.,
(Catered provided by Unique Dining)

Return registration form and payment by **No later than Monday, July 14, 2025.**
(checks made out and mailed to: Branch 9, 5831 Cedar Lk Rd S, St. Louis Park, MN 55416)

Branch 9 Picnic Registration Form

Member's Name: _____ Station: _____

Number of Guests: _____ Amount Paid: _____

Name of Guests (include ages of children):

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| #1. _____ | #2. _____ |
| #3. _____ | #4. _____ |
| #5. _____ | #6. _____ |
| #7. _____ | #8. _____ |



Exec. Vice President's Report

Have you noticed that your manager and supervisors are more aggressive than usual during the morning go around? Have they been telling you exactly how much undertime you have and not taking no for an answer when you tell them you can't do it? That's all thanks to the new Management tool they're using to attempt to implement a speedup called the Auto-Pivot program.

First, they start with the DOIS or PET "numbers" and that tells them exactly how much undertime they're going to insist you have. Then they feed the numbers into the program which then tells them how they can assign pivots and overtime to cover their open routes. It also prints out computer generated 3996s.

If Management tells you that the numbers say that you have this much undertime and that that's all there is to it that's a violation of our contract. M-01769 is a national settlement that has a lot of great things for us including that Management's time projection tools, "...will not be used as the sole determinant for establishing office or street time projections." This means that if they tell you that the numbers say you have an hour of undertime so here's your one hour pivot they just violated our contract. This settlement can be found on a recent Branch 9 Facebook post and will be distributed at the May steward meeting.

This style of managing can be a very stressful thing for anyone and doubly so for new carriers. But we should not respond to this by skipping our lunch and breaks or by acting unsafe and running our routes off. Delivering the mail can be a hazardous job and being under intense pressure to make unrealistic numbers makes it doubly unsafe.

The answer is to inform Management when we can't complete our duties in eight hours by requesting PS Form 3996 and completing the form. That is the official method to notify Management that we have more than we can do in our regular tour of duty and is our way of asking them if we have approval for overtime. Sometimes all it takes is a little bit of pushing back in the morning and Management will relent and give you the time you need to complete your duties. But sometimes Management will still insist that you have undertime that you don't.

If Management denies your request for overtime and tells you to deliver all the mail and be back in eight hours many carriers are flummoxed. But our response to these tactics is a simple one, return to the office ready to punch out at eight

hours and bring your hour of undelivered mail back with you. We'd also recommend filling out PS Form 1571 to document any undelivered mail at the end of the



Chris Pennock

day. If Management wants to send you back out to complete the mail after their unsuccessful attempt to bully you this is a great time to give them the good news that they'll also be additional travel time required to complete this overtime. That will usually put an end to them picking on you.

Grievances can also be filed over any contractual violation in these interactions, including Management using just the numbers to determine undertime or to issue discipline based on failure to make the numbers. Management also violates our contract when they fill out our portion of the 3996. If they threaten us with discipline for failure to make the numbers that's a grievance. "Making the numbers" is not an excuse for the abuse of anyone. Stay strong brothers and sisters!

Ron St. Clair MDA BOWL-A-THON



Brooklyn Center



Lowry Station



Elmwood & Eastside



University & Columbia Heights



Retirees



Powderhorn



Richfield



Zone 4/54

Branch 9 members gathered at New Hope Bowl for the Ron St. Clair Bowl-a-Thon, on Saturday, April 26, to raise money for the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

Bowl-a-Thon sponsors will be displayed prominently in the June issue of the Branch Nine News.

EDITOR'S REPORT

(Continued from page 1)

History of the Fight for the Eight-Hour Day

In the second half of the 19th century the country was quickly industrializing. Massive amounts of wealth was created for the richest in the country, while economic inequality exploded among the masses. Workers started to get organized into the first nationwide unions, and the main rallying cry was the eight hour workday, which struck at the basic idea that workers should be able to work in order to live, not just live to work. To put it in modern terms, working people deserve a work-life balance, in order to enjoy life to the fullest. These movements of the 19th century laid the foundation for today's labor movement. It was in this era that the American Federation of Labor (later AFL-CIO, the labor federation NALC is a part of), and the NALC were started.

Eight-Hour Associations were created across the country, and momentum was built for mass demonstrations and strike action on May 1, 1886. Hundreds of thousands of workers took part across the country, quickly forcing the eight-hour day demand onto the national agenda. Three days later on May 4, tens of thousands of workers still on strike, gathered in the Haymarket Square in Chicago. At the demonstration a bomb was thrown into the crowd of police, killing one instantly. The incident was used as a pretext to crack down on the movement, even though it was admitted by the Chicago chief of police years later that an agent provocateur had thrown the bomb. An entire BNN could be dedicated to the story of Haymarket, or the overall fight for the eight-hour day, but we are forced to stick to just the overarching events and themes. The main point is that Haymarket became a rallying cry, and played a crucial role in making May 1st into the international holiday it would become.

Letter Carriers participated in the fight for the eight-hour day, winning a bill for the right in congress in 1888. The struggles of that era laid the ground for the creation of the National Association

of Letter Carriers a year later, in 1889. I encourage carriers interested in NALC's history to check out *Carriers in a Common Cause*, a book about the history of the letter carrier craft, and the creation of our union, which can be found on nalc.org. Branch 9 in Minneapolis, had members at the founding convention of NALC, a history we should be proud of, as our branch continues to be leaders on national issues within our union, from the fight for Open Bargaining in 2024, to the debate over the Right to Strike today.

Lessons for Today

Many Branch 9 members may wonder, what is the significance of having the right to an eight-hour day if wages are so low that you have to work overtime past eight hours to make up for it? Other members have experienced how management can look at you sideways if you regularly complete your route in eight hours, expecting carriers to take more and more, or to pivot "undertime" everyday.

We should learn the lessons of how the eight-hour movement got organized to fight for workers' interests, and won against the powerful robber barons of the late 19th century. The truth is that there is no single demand, or idea, that will save working class people indefinitely.

We live in a complex, and unpredictable world. Right now, the labor movement is under attack. President Trump's Department of Government Efficiency has ripped through the federal sector. If the federal unions don't fight back, the bosses will feel emboldened, and will go after private sector unions next. Massive tariffs have been implemented and have created what will likely be an uncontrollable trade war. Immigrants and trans people are being scape-goated, and blamed for society's problems, all while the rich continue to get richer, and a recession is looming over the economy.

It's at this moment that we need to take a serious look at the history of NALC, and the labor movement as a whole, and learn the lessons of past



Tyler Vasseur

struggles. There are key lessons in victories, and defeats, that can help us today. NALC members are fighting for our rights everyday on the workroom floor, in Minneapolis, the Twin Cities, and across the country. Members are getting organized to fight for a stronger contract next year, are preparing for the national convention to debate ideas like the Right to Strike, and how that is related to the need for things like a \$30/hour starting wage, real raises for all steps, an All-Career Workforce, and so much more. NALC members are preparing for national leadership elections, and the midterm elections, to choose our union leadership, and the makeup of Congress, for years to come.

The point is, while it feels like we are entering uncharted waters, we are not alone. Our brothers and sisters who laid the foundation for the labor movement went through similar experiences. There are lessons all around us for the fights ahead, you just have to know where to look. May 1st, International Workers' Day, is making a comeback, and the lessons of the workers' movement's history need to come with it.

Unions, spearheaded by the United Auto Workers, are lining up contracts on May 1st, to be able to bargain, and fight collectively. In 2025, hundreds of thousands of unions, immigrants' rights organizations, and working people rallied across the country. After decades of defeats, the labor movement is making a slow, but steady return to the national scene. Let's rebuild the tradition of Mayday, and fight for a better world for everyone in the years ahead.

Hello Branch 9 members!

I hope everyone is having an enjoyable spring. The Branch has been busy engaging with active and retired members to hear stories of successes and challenges we face. A success I'd like to share is the passing of the Windfall Elimination Provision/ Government Pension Offset during the last weeks of the Biden Presidency.



Andrew Hagan

At the March General Membership meeting retired letter carrier Bob Baird shared his story on how impactful this legislation was to him. Bob received \$5,995 back pay for 2024 and his monthly social security payments went from \$161 a month to \$595 a month. That's a significant increase in payment! Naturally we ask "why?". Back in 1984 congress changed the retirement system from Civil Service (CSRS) to Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS). Under CSRS employees didn't pay into social security. But people like Bob had worked at other jobs before joining the Post Office. Bob started working when he was 16 years old doing various jobs such as construction labor even though the minimum age was 18, all the way to working for the railroad and a machine shop. All those years he paid into social security meeting the 40 quarters requirement to receive payment benefits.

Bob joined the Post Office and couldn't pay into the social security program. In 1984 he was given a choice to go into the FERS program or stay in the CSRS program. Bob decided to stay in CSRS. By staying with the Post Office and CSRS he became ineligible to receive his Social Security payments for prior work to the Post Office. After years of trying to get this corrected the NALC headquarters started a campaign of "give me \$5" for the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF). Bob signed up right away knowing how important repealing GPO/WEP legislation was. Since 1984 the union and its members have tried to get it passed and after forty years it passed. There's no doubt if we had more members contributing to LCPF we could have gotten it passed sooner. There is legislation now that affects active carriers' retirement now. H.R 1522 Federal Retirement Fairness Act would allow carriers with non-career time to buy back their time and add it to their retirement calculation. If we can get more members of Branch 9 to contribute, we won't have to wait forty years like Bob or the nearly two million affected people did to get what we deserve. Please go to NALC.org and go to the Government Affairs and choose how you'd like to contribute. Or reach out to myself at Andrewh@branch9nalc.com for questions.

Thanks, Andrew Hagan, Loring Station, Recording Secretary

Greetings Brothers and Sisters of Branch 9. Spring is here. Time to clean out those closets and donate any clean, still usable uniforms. They can be brought to the branch office or given to your stewards to bring to the GMM. With the time and effort of retired letter carrier from Loring station, Vince Froelich, the branch has a very nice, organized uniform shop. Shout out to Vince! Uniforms, as you all know, are very expensive. Let's help our junior carriers get what they need. The postal Service is the #1 trusted federal agency in our country. Wearing a full uniform helps the public identify us as such. When you look good, You feel good. Let's wear our blues with pride.

In solidarity,
Cheryl Dombrock
Thomas Burnett Station, Trustee



Cheryl Dombrock

MEMBERS' VOICES

Stronger Together

I came into this job with the baby boomers who had 20+ years of seniority. Since there are a lot of carriers who have never worked with them, let me do my best to explain. They knew two things very well: how to deliver the mail, and solidarity.

When it came to delivering the mail, they knew how to tell management no! They took the time to do the job right. We hear that all the time. What does that mean though? The very first thing was to take care of your body and go at a speed that will make you last. There was no chance of getting them to move faster. A phrase I heard when I first started was, "If they don't like this gear, they won't like tomorrow's". In other words, management can't set your pace for you. They can't tell me how fast I have to drive between my mailboxes, or how fast to make a delivery.

See, I've gotten to the point in my career where I totally understand why the carriers delivered the mail the way they did when I first started. I was a "runner" for many years. Anyone who does deliver mail that way still or thinks that it's the only way to deliver the mail, it is way more stressful. There is this pressure we as carriers put onto ourselves. Thinking we need to get all the mail delivered. That we will get into trouble or the boss will get mad. This pressure you feel is all in your head, and management feeds off of it. It's how they get you to make their numbers.

I want everyone to understand there is zero street standard. If you are moving, you are working. You will never get into trouble for your speed. All you need to do is let management know. We should all fill out a 3996, and make management aware of how long it's going to take for the day. It's not a negotiation, it's literally whatever you say it is. If management wants to escalate it to something more, REQUEST YOUR STEWARD. Then don't say another word until your steward is present.

At any point during the day when you are delivering and you notice you are behind from what your estimate was in the morning, text on the scanner. Give management the best update you can. You never need to use your cell phone. This is how you deliver the mail stress free. You all have rights, and I know it can be intimidating to enforce them. If you have a good union steward, ask them for help. If you don't have a union steward, or know a very helpful one, trust me, other people who have your back.

You can always file an EEO if you feel you are feeling discriminated against.

by the EEOC is protected from retaliation.

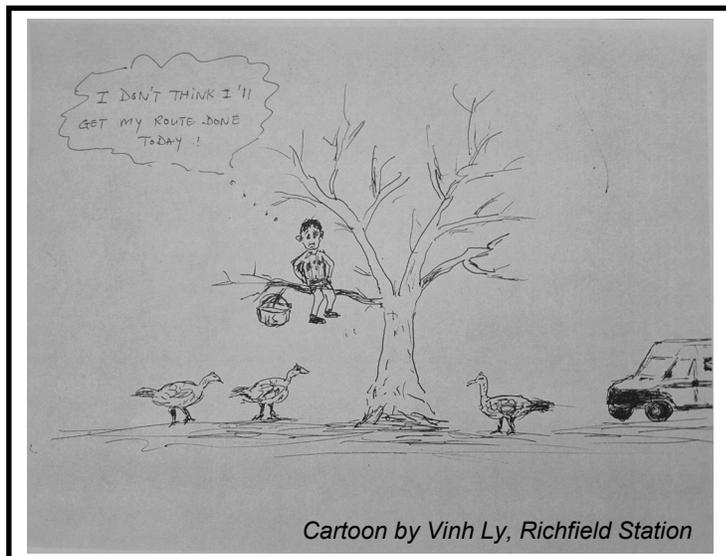
To file a complaint, <https://efile.usps.com> or write a letter to NEEOISO – EEO Contact Center, PO Box 21979, Tampa, FL 33622-1979. You have 45 days from the day of the incident.

Now I would like to talk about the solidarity part. The baby boomers definitely were strong in this area. They never fall for infighting among carriers. They all knew that it was the oldest trick in management's book. When we all fight each other that is what some in management want. The biggest example, if a carrier is given an hour of overtime, but it actually took 3 hours to deliver it, then this could upset some carriers. That is exactly what management wants. Carrier on carrier fighting, and now the carrier will feel that pressure to hurry up and get done. That needs to stop, it is no one's business how long it takes any carrier to do their job. If you are bothered by that you really need a tie and clipboard. If you have a blue badge and wear the uniform then you should support your fellow brother or sister. We never know what's going on in anyone's life or what stage they are in their career or what stage in life they are. There are many factors why carriers deliver at different speeds and any carrier at any point who wants to make changes, we need to start supporting them!

Don't forget it is your job to deliver mail. It is management's job to make sure all the mail gets delivered. Please don't confuse this, it is not your job to make sure all the mail gets delivered.



James Spencer
Steward, Blaine Station



Cartoon by Vinh Ly, Richfield Station

**J. Wesley Woods
\$1,000 Scholarship Application
Form**

Name _____
 Address _____

 Phone _____
 High School _____
 Member parent's name _____
 Work unit _____
 School to attend (if known) _____

**Jerome J. Keating/Austin B.
Carlson
\$2,000 Scholarship Application
Form**

Name _____
 Address _____

 Phone _____
 High School _____
 Member parent's name _____
 Work unit _____
 School to attend (if known) _____

**Walter E. Couillard/Eugene P.
McNulty
\$2,000 Scholarship Application
Form**

Name _____
 Address _____

 Phone _____
 High School _____
 Member parent's name _____
 Work unit _____
 School to attend (if known) _____

**High School Seniors,
please submit your scholarship
applications to Branch 9 by
May 27, 2025**

Every spring, Branch 9 awards three scholarships to graduating seniors: the J. Wesley Woods Scholarship (\$1,000); the Jerome J. Keating/Austin B. Carlson Scholarship (\$2,000); and the Walter E. Couillard/Eugene P. McNulty Scholarship (\$2,000). These awards have made it easier for many students to begin their post-secondary education while honoring the sacrifices and contributions of important Branch 9 Leaders.

The following rules apply to all three scholarships:

A. Any senior graduating from high school and is a dependent of a Branch 9 member is eligible for these scholarships.

B. The scholarships may be used for any accredited trade school, vocational/technical institute, community college, or university.

C. Three names will be drawn for each scholarship. The first name picked will be the winner, then first and second runner-up respectively. The winners of any drawing will not be eligible for the other drawings.

D. The application for the drawings will run in the March and April issues of the Branch Nine News. The drawing will be held at the May General Membership Meeting. The applications shall contain the following information:

1. The applicant's name, address, and home phone number.
2. The name of the applicant's parent or guardian who is a member of Branch 9.
3. The intended school of choice, if known.

E. Payment to the winners will be made after they have enrolled and can show proof of payment towards their tuition.

Members with dependents who graduate from high school this spring and who plan to attend an accredited educational institution next fall, should complete the applications and return them to the Branch Office by May 28. All three forms should be submitted as there are three separate drawings for each scholarship. Please enter the three scholarship drawings only once.

Adult Learners Scholarship

Leonard A. Larson/ Barry J. Weiner

**Adult Learners,
please submit your scholarship
application to Branch 9 by
May 27, 2025 or bring to that
night's GMM**

Leonard A. Larson/Barry J. Weiner Adult Learner Scholarship Application Form

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Active or Retired _____

Work Unit _____

Two (2) \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded.

The following rules apply to the two scholarships:

A. Any member active or retired in good standing of Branch 9 is eligible for one of the two scholarships.

B. The scholarships may be used for any accredited trade school, vocational/technical institute, community college, or university. The Adult Learner Scholarships may also be used for any community, county or state adult educational program.

C. One name will be drawn for each scholarship. The first name picked will be the winner. The winners of any drawing will not be eligible for the other drawings.

D. The application for the drawings will run in the March and April issues of the Branch Nine News. The drawing will be held at the May General Membership Meeting. The applications shall contain the following information:

1. The applicant's name, address, and home phone number.
2. Whether active or retired.

E. Payment to the winners will be made after they have enrolled and can show proof of payment towards their tuition.

F. Benefits under the Adult Learner Scholarships expire one year from date of drawing.

Members who plan to attend an accredited education institution should complete the application and return it to the Branch Office by May 28, or bring to that night's General Membership Meeting.

Become a contributor to the Branch Nine News!

Email the Branch Nine News Editor, Tyler at branch9news@branch9nalc.com

- Articles due by the first of the month to make it into that month's issue of the paper
- Articles about specific issues at your station, ideas for the union, cartoons, or even suggestions on layout and design are all welcome
- If you have an idea, but don't know where to begin, the Editor can work with you to help form your idea into an article
- Proposed articles are published at the discretion of the President, Executive Vice President, and Editor

Branch Nine News
5831 Cedar Lake Road South
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

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

Branch 9 Calendar

May 27

General Membership
Meeting
7 PM
Crystal VFW

June 10

Steward Meeting
7 PM
Crystal VFW

June 24

General Membership
Meeting
7 PM
Crystal VFW

July 8

Steward Meeting
7 PM
Crystal VFW

July 22

General Membership
Meeting
Crystal VFW

Northside Retiree Breakfast

1st Tuesday of the Month
9:30AM
Elsie's
729 Marshall St. NE, Minneapolis

N Suburban Retiree Breakfast

1st Friday of the Month
8:30AM
Denny's Restaurant
9020 Quaday Avenue NE, Otsego

Fridley Retiree Lunch

2nd Tuesday of the Month
11:30 AM
Route 47 Pub and Grub
7820 University Ave

Stay informed by:

*Join Veterans Group [https://www.nalc.org/
member-benefits/join-the-nalc-veterans-group](https://www.nalc.org/member-benefits/join-the-nalc-veterans-group)

* 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

