



REGION 5 NBA REPORT



November 2011

National Business Agent's Report

NALC

On Tuesday, September 27th I was able to see something that has been missing for a long time. Standing on Market Street in St. Louis, Missouri, across from the Post Office with Bill Lister, President of Branch 343, I was able to see over 300 Union Members from all the crafts joined together in solidarity to **Save America's Postal Service**. Across our Nation and Region there were numerous gatherings like this from Salina, Kansas, Columbia, Missouri, Liberty, Missouri, Omaha, Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska, Grand Island, Nebraska, Scottsbluff, Nebraska, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Des Moines, Iowa, Springfield, Missouri, Topeka, Kansas, and Kansas City, Kansas. Members of the Postal Service's four employee unions joined together by bringing the truth to the American people, our customers. The different Union's showed their solidarity to Congress and the public in our support of HR 1351 which would end the retirement pre-funding requirement. A news release from KWWL.com quoted Iowa Representative Bruce Braley, "**Rain, snow, and sleet haven't stopped postal workers, but bureaucrats in Washington want to. The US Postal Services recent actions threaten hundreds of Iowa jobs and could close post offices in dozens of Iowa communities. That's a huge blow to countless Iowa small towns just like the one that I grew up in.**"

All Union members must understand and be aware that in America our method of communicating is changing. Versus sending heartfelt letters to our families, mailing our bills, and sending cards is almost a thing of the past. Stamped mail has declined by 47% since 2001 and fewer than 50% of all bills are paid by mail. The new mode of communicating in 2011 is through, Twitter, Skype, and Facebook. Brothers and Sisters we are in the age of instant messaging. We know that change is inevitable but we must preserve our Nation's network and save the USPS from self destruction. I am hoping that we can join forces like we did on the September 27th with all Unions and move collectively into the next century providing the service to our customers six days a week like we do now.

JARAP – This month I need to once again remind you that in order for your office to be reviewed this fall, you must request the review using the "Spring JARAP 2011 – Review Request Form," M – 1761. Complete the form and send a copy to this office. The evaluation period for the fall review will be September 1st to October 15th.

Local Negotiations – While it may seem unlikely at this point that we will be able to reach agreement with the Postal Service this fall on a National Agreement it is not too early to begin preparations for local negotiations. Larger branches may want to begin forming committees, while smaller branches without a LMOU may want to put into writing what have been local practices. Preparation is the key to success.

Article 12—over the years, large portions of this article has been overlooked or skipped over by stewards because its application has been very limited when compared to Article 8 or 16. Frankly, it can be a little confusing, if not confounding, when looking at the sections on “excessing” or “consolidation”. However, in the current postal environment everyone should become familiar with the provisions of Article 12. We have received multiple notices of processing plant closures, Delivery Unit Optimizations (DUO) and activation of Area Mail Processing (AMP) over the last few months and all of these could have implications for Letter Carrier and Article 12. While we are confident we can overcome the financial threats the Postal Service is currently facing, the possibility of further cutbacks is real. If those cutbacks in facilities continue we will see clerks excessed into the Letter Carrier craft and we will continue to see our remaining PTFs held back from promotion—these are Article 12 issues. The Postal Service has acknowledged shortcomings in their application of Article 12 and we have recently been in meetings with the Area/Districts and NALC Director of City Delivery, Lew Drass, to address these outstanding issues. We will be continuing our discussions at the Area and District levels to make sure the rights of Letter Carriers are protected through enforcement of Article 12.

Pre-Arbitration Discussions—three of the four districts in Region 5 are in the Western Area. We had approximately 200 cases pending arbitration from those districts and recently met with Postal Service representatives from the area level to attempt to resolve this large backlog of cases. I would like to let you know we were reasonably successful in our meetings. While we did withdraw a small number of cases which were not the strongest for us, we were able to resolve 140 of the pending cases and now have only about 30 cases currently pending at this time.

As you are reading this article, the National Rap Session will be underway, or about to begin, in Las Vegas. This National Rap will likely be the most important single meeting we will have this year as we face the battle to Save America’s Postal Service. As so many of you joined in the September 27th Rally, we must re-double our efforts and support our National officers as they lead us in this fight. I have never seen such a real threat to our jobs in my 37-year career. As I wrote earlier, we must all band together and be vigilant to inform the public of the truth and fight for our future. Stay tuned, there is definitely More to Come.

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