



February 2020

Business Agent's Report

NALC

Congratulations – I'd like to personally congratulate the new branch officers who have been elected and installed and those who have yet to be installed. The fact that you have been elected by the members of your branch shows the trust that the carriers in your branch have for you and confidence in your leadership. Being a branch officer or steward are the toughest jobs in the NALC. With these jobs' positions, officers and stewards must have the ability to multi-task, communicate and explain contractual language to members, hold management accountable and in most cases within Region 5, carry your route. Your efforts are appreciated.

Autonomous Delivery Vehicle Technology – The USPS has notified the NALC of their intent to investigate the feasibility of using autonomous delivery vehicles. These autonomous vehicles have been initially projected to be used on rural routes where the vehicle will drive from box to box while the carrier sorts the mail. I've also heard that they would like to program the vehicle to follow carriers on park and loop routes so that he never has to "dead head" back to the vehicle. The Service intends to issue Requests for Proposals to test the conversion of several of the Services Commercial-Off-The-Shelf Right-Hand Drive Mercedes Metris vehicles for automated delivery use. Vendors will have three months to respond, with a contract awarded later this year. The NALC will be monitoring the use of any autonomous vehicles closely.

NGDV – Next Generation Delivery Vehicles – The USPS has announced that they anticipate contract award(s) will be made in the late summer of this year. The NALC is reviewing the finalized "Statements of Work" and will be providing feedback to the Service as necessary. Hopefully 2021 will be the year that these new vehicles begin to arrive. With LLV's burning up (go online to view videos), these new vehicles can't get here soon enough.

Consolidated Casing – Update – The second day of the national arbitration has been completed, briefs are being written and will be submitted in the very near future. Meanwhile, the service has to make a decision on their next move. I've not heard of a single test site where the hours are less than those prior to the test. It's costing the Service more, not less. A sane person would review the data and end this "Test." Unfortunately, as you well know, we cannot count on sanity. The next decision that management will make while we await an arbitration decision, is whether or not "Test" will expand to all of the other offices listed in Phase III. Let's hope for sanity. Well...as I was about to mail this article out, we have been notified that Brookridge Station in Overland Park, KS., part of Branch 5521, will go online by the end of February.



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Food Drive – The 28th annual Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is scheduled for Saturday, May 9, 2020. The NALC is requesting that Branch Presidents register online by March 9, 2020. To register, log on through the "Members Only" portal on the NALC website. As I write this article on January 13th, only 4 branches within Region 5 have registered.

Retirement and Health Benefits – Twice in the last few months we have received calls from letter carriers who were preparing to retire but have not belonged to any FEHB plan for 5 years. The (5) five year rule states that federal employees must be continuously enrolled (or covered as a family member) in any FEHB plan(s) for the 5 years of [service](#) immediately before the date the annuity starts, or for the full period(s) of service since his/her first opportunity to enroll (if less than 5 years). That means...if you haven't had health insurance through the FEHBP for 5 continuous years before you retire, you won't be eligible to continue or join the FEHBP in retirement. Because of the 5-year rule, numerous carriers have had to delay their retirement. Don't be one of them.

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