



REGION 5 NBA REPORT

David A. Teegarden



At the recent Groundhogs Day festivities at Gobblers Knob in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania Punxsutawney Phil was pried from his den and saw his shadow which predicts six more weeks of winter. With all the lights on him from the cameras I'm not sure how he could see his shadow but apparently, he did. Perhaps the postal service should adopt a similar tradition which is an indicator of more weeks of mandatory overtime? Although we can all predict that without the fanfare.

In all seriousness there has never been a time that I can recall in my tenure with the postal service where forced overtime was more prevalent. It has gotten so bad that it is causing career and new employees alike to quit and find better employment. This model is unsustainable in its current form because the postal service is not getting enough applicants to fill the void those employees who have left created. The Postal Service needs to address this issue in a meaningful way, after all, even with all the lights shining on them we all know they are going to see their shadow and forecast another year of disgruntled workers.

Please continue to report 12/60, improper mandating, undelivered mail and city carriers performing Rural Carrier work on the spreadsheet that we have sent out. Those branches who have provided that information in the region have been successful in going to an all career workforce.

Region 5 Rap Session

The Region 5 Rap Session has been set for March 10-12. It looks to be record turn out if the number of reserved rooms, 200 per night, is any indication. We have a very diverse and aggressive training schedule along with NALC President Brian Renfroe set to get us started on Saturday morning. There will be something for all levels of union activists no matter what your experience level might be. As a reminder, Branch Presidents will meet at the Kansas City Branch 30 union hall located at 6320 Manchester Avenue Suite 41A Kansas City, MO 64133 at 4:30pm on Friday March 10th. The meeting should last approximately one hour. If the Branch President is unable to attend, please send someone who can get the information that is discussed.

RGA Margaret Parker just finished another four-week new steward virtual training class. The first time this training was done we averaged about 90 participants each week. This time we averaged 50 participants a week. which indicates that Region 5 has a great opportunity to educate these new union activists. We will continue to make education a priority in the region.

This spring we intend to build on the new steward training and conduct an intermediate level steward training virtually. Later this fall, we will conduct a steward college for a limited number of participants. Watch out for both training opportunities.

Reminder Branch Presidents need to send in their participants desired class selections for the Rap Session no later than February 28, 2023. After this date, classes will be assigned by the NBA's Office and participants may not be able to get in the class of their choice.

Legislative

HR 82- H.R. 82 would repeal the GPO and the WEP titles of the Social Security Act, which unfairly reduce or sometimes eliminate Social Security benefits for millions of federal workers, including letter carriers. As of 02/03/2023 there are 128 Co-sponsors for the Social Security Fairness Act (86 Democrats and 37 Republicans)

The lone Co-sponsor in Missouri is R-Sam Graves. The remainder of the Co-sponsors currently are Republicans Jake Laturner-KS, Mariannette Miller-Meeks-IA and Ashley Hinson-IA. The number of new Co-sponsors has been growing steadily each week but we need to reach out to our representatives across region 5 and ask them to Co-sponsor this bill.

There is an expectation that the Federal Retirement Fairness Act formerly HR 4268 will be re-introduced in the near future. This bill would allow certain federal employees to make catch-up retirement contributions for time spent as a non-career employees after Dec 31, 1988, making that time creditable service under FERS.

Covid

Standard Work Instructions (SWI) which were instituted to facilitate social distancing during the height of the Covid pandemic are being sunset as of January 27, 2023. This includes maintaining social distance for letter carriers on the street, while conducting 3999's, maintaining social distancing in the office and conducting 1838-C.

LiteBlue Scam

Please report anyone affected to the NBA office so that we can get the information to NALC HQ. We need the employee's name and contact # so that we can obtain the necessary information. The local branch should file a grievance for each individual affected using the grievance starter that the NBA sent to branch presidents.

NALC Food Drive

Registration for the NALC Food Drive is now open and all branches are reminded to register. Any branches that have previously used vendors for bags should get with them and work on securing those resources now. We will be actively registering branches at the upcoming Region 5 Rap Session if you have not already done so.

Back-Pay Issues

The issue of delayed back-pay awards has become so prevalent that I re-printed most of this section from my last NBA report. Since that report we have found there is an even bigger problem at the local level that involves lump sum or GATS settlements as well as back-pay via an 8038 and 8039. I am urging branch leaders to check and make certain that any settlements at the local level have been properly paid by the service as well as back-pay awards using the 8038 and 8039. Carriers across Region 5 and the country have, in some cases, been experiencing unacceptable delays in receiving back-pay awards. Normally Letter Carriers who receive these back-pay settlements are required to complete PS form 8038 stating the time carriers were off work, their pay rate, contact information, statement that the carrier looked for work etc. The service then must process PS form 8039 and send both signed forms to Eagan for processing. For many reasons this isn't happening as it should. When faced with these issues affected carriers should fill out the PS Form 8038 as soon as possible. Contact your branch president or the NBA office **before** you send the completed 8038 form to the Postal Service. Branches that are having issues with these back-pay awards should also file a non-compliance grievance as well as notifying the NBA office that the back-pay award has not been paid if it goes beyond 60 days. We are addressing these issues with District and Area Labor Relations, but we need the member and the branches help to figure out where these issues are. There are carriers that are owed tens of thousands of dollars that have been waiting on the back-pay for nearly two years and this is completely unacceptable and must be dealt with now.

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