Region 5
NBA Report
November 2026
David A. Teegarden

Region 5 Rap Session
Please secure your rooms at the following link!! https://book.passkey.com/e/51341078

The Region 5 Rap Session is scheduled for February 4-7, 2027. The link to secure rooms has been sent via email to branch presidents a few days ago, however, that same link below must be used to secure rooms for all attendees. We currently have a room block of 200 rooms each night for Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. We will have two full days of training, Friday and Saturday and a national officer Rap Session on Sunday. Class sign-up will be done via a QR code and will be available in November. Please make the necessary motions in your branches so that your rooms can be secured in advance. The guaranteed room block and rates close at the beginning of 2027. Room rates went up a couple dollars to $139.00 a night plus taxes and fees.

We will have the aggressive training schedule you have been accustomed to over the last few years as several completely new classes. Some classes will be offered as a roundtable type discussion while most will be interactive.

Some of the classes offered will be beginning, intermediate and advanced steward training, OWCP, branch officer training, TSP, DRAC, Article 8, route adjustment and review, retirement, LMOU, Region 5 chat, building winning case files, process and procedure, Arbitration decisions and settlements in region 5 (CAU), safety and health and many more.

The Region 5 staff and I look forward to seeing all of you at this event. Look for the Class sign-up QR code in next months report.

Hotel Reservation Link Closes January 11 th but please do not wait to ensure you get your room. Make reservations early!!

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AI Grievances
I wanted to take a little space in this report to discuss the use of AI in processing grievances and writing positions for grievances such as the Formal Step A appeal. Use of AI programs certainly has a place and is here to stay. If you've ever read an AI generated report, they are easy to spot.

I want to go over a few pros and cons of using these types of programs. First AI can only generate it hypothesis from the information the program is fed. If you leave out a rule or regulation, applicable contract or handbook out it can't form its response correctly. Like we say about Postal Service programs, "trash in trash out." Some of these AI programs go so far as to connect the dots so to speak by creating false citations, laws, rules etc. An example of this is a case received at Step B where AI created an ELM requirement management had to follow that did not exist-the program made it up to fit its own narrative. Another con is that when AI is used and the case proceeds to arbitration, the steward better understand the words, arguments and logic AI used and be able to explain what that means. If you can't, that witnesses' testimony won't be worth much. Although it's not illegal for us to use AI to write our contentions

it is illegal to use AI written briefs, pleadings, responses etc. for lawyers. I say that because many of our arbitrators are attorneys. There may be some bias there with the use of AI. Last con, I don't think stewards learn about the contract or how to argue grievances when you exclusively use AI. We need stewards who not only understand the contract but how to argue violations of it. If you don't know what you don't know, how would you be able to correct AI's mistake or outright false premises?

There are some pros as well. AI given the correct information can sort through and analyze more data in less time than any human ever can. It can be a time saver. It can find arguments you might not have considered. It can articulate arguments in a way that humans sometimes can't. All this is dependent though on making sure that those arguments are based in the real contract provisions, handbook or manual provisions or the law instead of something AI made up.

We are getting cases where it is obvious that no one is checking to see if everything AI refers to is accurate and that results most times in the case being lost even if we could have won the grievance had we made the right arguments. The Step B job is to make decisions on what is in the case file. Make sure you check AI to ensure that the rules, regulations and law it says applies actually applies or is even a rule. Crack open the handbooks and manuals, do the research so that you can learn your craft, reach out to the NBA office for advice but don't automatically assume that AI gets everything right because it does not.

Contract Negotiation Update

In a little over a month all officers elected to positions on the Executive Council will be sworn in to office. During the transition period the NALC will continue to prepare for collective bargaining. The parties are trying to agree on a neutral arbitrator and the new NALC President James Henry will be responsible for negotiating with the service to select the neutral arbitrator. The transition to the new officers is well underway. I have always taken the position that in Region 5 we don't bully, name call or demean fellow carriers if we disagree with them or feel they aren't particularly good leaders. Many people that I have spoken to that did not vote for James Henry or other members of the CLC in our region have said that they hope they succeed because if they succeed all letter carriers succeed. I could not have said it better. There should be no setting someone up to fail or trying to obstruct new or old leaders. We all need to row in the same direction to make positive changes for letter carriers. That doesn't mean there can't be discussions, debates or differences of opinions between people. That debate is healthy for our organization, but we must all realize getting involved and helping row this boat is what we will need to successfully navigate the political and contractual waters to secure not just a good contract but our craft and the Post Office itself from disappearing altogether. I hope across the country we can be respectful to one another and have meaningful discussion about what we do to chart our course forward like we always have done in Region 5.

Until next time stay safe out there,

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