



North Carolina Rural Carrier

Official News Publication of the North Carolina Rural Letter Carriers' Association

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Thank You Relief Carriers!

Appreciation Week was February 1-8, 2020

Many offices across our state took the time to recognize our hard working RCAs, PTFs and ARCs in February. Many offices had parties with cakes and food. The Reidsville office actually played *Family Feud* and passed out cute goody bags to their carriers.

If you are a regular carrier we hope you took a little extra time to say “**Thank you**” to your sub. If your office did not take the time to acknowledge and celebrate your relief carriers we hope that you will encourage your management to do so next year.

Included in this issue are photos of various relief carriers from North Carolina and some of those celebrations.

Additional photos are available on our website.



Inside This Issue

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COLA raise

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Burke/Caldwell/Catawba	9	Cumberland/Hoke	20	Five County/Person	28
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National Emergency Hotline

**1-888 EMERGNC
(1- 888-363-7462)**

is a toll-free number for
USPS employees to use
in the event of a facility or
weather-related emergency.

In an emergency, the hotline
provides employees with
information about the
status of their facility
and special instructions
or guidance.

Please keep this phone
number for future use.

WEBSITE

Please visit
www.NCRLCA.org
for all the latest news.

This month the password
will be **NC* lucky1**

The password will be
changed to the above on
March 31, 2020.

At this time the password
is only needed to access
the Junior Auxiliary page.

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Cover Photos

Front Cover: Top: Alex Orders at Morganton post office.

Middle Cake from Tokay post office.

Bottom: Statesville post office relief carriers.

Back Cover: Left: Reidsville post office; Ashley Harris, Shay Jones, Willette Thompson, Christy Graham, Toleather Williamson, Troy Alderson, Joey Barton, Curtis Lane, Freddie Harris, Roger Hayes.

Right: Tokay post office; Kaleena Middleton, Keyera McGougan, LaRhonda Boyd-Johnson, Katie Horne, Claudie Morrissey, Station Manager Andrea Canada, Khaleel Goodman, Gabriel Carter, Amanda Tarre, Lisa Stowe, Shannon Boles, Kaitlyn Martin, Kimberly Jones, Mitchell Howard.

President
Brenda Gibbs

We Must Still Work on Congress



Hi Everyone! I was so excited to see so many first timers at SAC. At my last check we had 463 members registered with approximately 40 of those being first-time attendees.

Registration began Saturday along with the annual Atlanta Postal Credit Union meeting beginning at 2pm. The shuttle ride over began with APCU trivia questions and the winners gaining \$2 bills for correct answers. Once we arrived there was a bag of gifts for us to use at work. My favorite was a reusable coffee cup. The guest speaker this year was Glenn Strange. His father was a rural carrier in South Carolina. Glenn entertained us with a program containing comedy, magic, audience interaction and an inspirational message. This was followed by APCU's annual report

Sunday morning began with SAC President Kelly Bagwell of Mississippi presiding. Cyndy Keyes, the NRLCA Auxiliary National President spoke to us about her program choice which is our program the (Postal Employee Relief Fund) PERF.

As of October 28, 2019, a total of 4,230 grants totaling \$21,993,200.00 have been approved since the 1990 inception of PERF. PERF's sole existence is to help active and retired postal employees whose primary homes are completely destroyed or left uninhabitable because of a major national disaster or isolated house fire. For more info go to Postalrelief.com.

Charles Head with APCU, Linda Foran with National General, Nadine Chaplin with Provident Guild spoke next followed by Cameron Deml with the Rural Carrier Benefit Plan. This information will be covered later in our magazine. Legal Counsel, Michael Gan, followed by Paul Swartz with Government Affairs and Jordan Schultz with PAC finished our morning. That information can be found on our Legislative and PAC pages along with the state and National websites.

After lunch Ronnie Stutts gave us an update on what is occurring at the National level. He spoke to us about the changes that are occurring in Congress with the loss of Elijah Cummings. He spoke about the changes coming to the Postal Service and the possibility of POV carriers purchasing a vehicle that would be route ready and about the other vehicles that were tested. He provided information on the new smaller scanners that are being tested.

On Monday the area Vice Presidents including Linda Malone had presentations prepared to let us know what they had been working on to improve their assigned areas. When they were finished the NRLCA executive committee members made their presentation. Then **we (the carriers on the floor)** were given an opportunity to ask questions and/or report occurrences that are happening within our offices.

Dennis Conley installed the new SAC officers and Doug Byrum held the closing benediction. This concluded another great SAC meeting.

H.R. 2382-USPS Fairness Act

The most pressing matter discussed came as a push notification to those members that have the NRLCA app on their phones. It called for members to contact their representatives by February the 5th concerning H.R. 2382 the USPS Fairness Act that will end the mandate to prefund USPS retiree healthcare and erase nearly 90 percent of the Postal Service's financial losses at no cost to the taxpayer. Hopefully you got this notification and did your part. I did!

Thank you to everyone who contacted their member of Congress asking them to support H.R. 2382, The USPS Fairness Act. The House passed the legislation 309-106, far exceeding the two-thirds majority needed to pass on the Suspension Calendar.

Here's how our representatives voted. We had four that voted **YEA!** Those four were Alma Adams, GK Butterfield, David Price, and David Rouzer. Thank you to everyone in those districts for contacting them. It worked!!

We still have a big job ahead of us to inform and convert our representatives. Remember we elected them therefore they work for us. If we are not happy with their performance, we must let them know.

The next step is to pass the Senate. On December 3rd Senators Steve Daines (R-MT) and Brian Schatz (D-HI) introduced **S. 2965**. This is the companion prefunding bill in the Senate. Please contact our Senators and ask for their support.

Please contact **Richard Burr**:

Asheville (828)350-2437
Winston Salem (800)685-8916
Rocky Mount (252)977-9522
Wilmington (888)848-1833
or Washington, DC (202)224-3154

And contact **Thom Tillis**:

Charlotte (704)509-9087
Greenville (252)329-0371
High Point (336)885-0685
Raleigh (919)856-4630
or Washington, DC (202)224-6342



Chaplain's Message

Jesse Ray Farmer Jr.,
Chaplain

The Ultimate Plan

Jeremiah 29: 11 *For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

The beginning of spring brings about plans for future vacations and projects all around the house. My wife begins looking at paint swatches and clearance rows of plants in the local nurseries to fill our yard with beautiful blooms and greenery. She is very meticulous about giving every inch in our house and yard a purpose that is filled with her artistic eye.

We have planned vacations in the past with each day filled with events or excursions that we want to enjoy. We make sure details are well coordinated.

Many times we have our own agendas of how we want our life to turn out. We push ourselves to become more successful, so we can enjoy ourselves and be happy. We want our kids to be successful and have great marriages with grandchildren to love. We buy new and better items hoping they last and provide us

with luxurious living.

Often we pack our lives to the brim, covering every square inch with plans for activities, social events, and work schedules. Often the clutter of our lives begins to overwhelm us so that seeking God becomes lower on our priority list.

In Jeremiah 29, God's plan for the people of Israel was to bring them to a place of peace and rest in Him. He was showing the people a way out of their despair to restore their lives. This is an early glance at His plans to redeem us through His son Jesus.

The plan was set in place long before Jesus died on the cross for our sins. Knowing that God loved us enough to plan for our redemption should encourage us that He is in control of our futures. If we align our desires with His, our lives fall into the direction of God's plan. He will be with us even when our earthly plans get ruined. Jeremiah 29:12-14 "then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord."

Prayer: *Dear Lord, take over the plans for my life. Thank you for your redemption in my life by your son Jesus so that I can be close to you Father.*

Reminder: For any needs of prayer and/or spiritual support, please feel free to contact me on my cell phone. My number is 252-939-6826. You may call or text me. I will get back to you as soon as I can.



Obituaries

Robert "Bob" C. Smith, 65, of Salisbury, peacefully passed away surrounded by his family, after a courageous battle with cancer on Monday, January 6, 2020 at his home.

He was born September 15, 1954 in Greenville, SC to the late Jerry Smith and Sue Duke Smith.

Bob worked for 30 years as a rural mail carrier for the US Postal service as well as delivering for the Salisbury Post for over 25 years. After retirement, he fulfilled a bucket list item by working a year at Walt Disney World in Florida. In his spare time, he enjoyed playing golf, tennis, running, and pulling for the UNC Tarheels. However, his favorite activity was spending time with his children and grandchildren. Bob was active in his community and spent several years coaching Little League baseball in Spencer. He was a long-time member of First Baptist Church of Spencer where he served as a Deacon, as well as children and youth ministry for many years.



Throughout his life, Bob touched many people's lives as he was always willing to lend a helping hand and never met a stranger. He loved the Lord and strived to put God first in everything he did.

Bob is survived by his wife of 38 years, Patricia Brown Smith; 6 children, Marty (Michelle) Smith; Katie (Jared) Ingram; Andy Smith; Luke (Megan) Smith; Nick (Meagan) Smith; Sally (Josh) Brendle; 4 granddaughters, Lakelyn and Haddie Ingram, Maddie and Abby Brendle; siblings, Jim (Margie) Smith; Dan (Shirley) Smith; Laurie Eagle; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Mr. Horace Suggs, Jr., 71, of Rockingham, died on Saturday, Jan. 18, 2020 at First Health Moore Regional Hospital in Pinehurst, NC.

Mr. Suggs was a retired rural letter carrier from the Rockingham Post Office.

(Continued on page 6)

Mr. Alonzo Russell, age 53, departed this life on January 31, 2020. He was a native of Person County and a member of Mill Hill Missionary Baptist Church. Alonzo was a member of the Person Senior High School "Class of 1984". He was employed by the United States Postal Service.

He was preceded in death by his parents Annie Beatrice Russell and Bryce Pettiford; maternal grandparents Annie Margaret Russell and James Russell; Paternal grandparents Pauline and Jule Pettiford; brother Bryce Carlton "Carl" Pettiford; aunts Janie Faye Russell and Debra Russell Haugabrook.

Alonzo is survived by his wife Deana Ragland Russell, one daughter Zoe Russell and one son Ian Russell all of the home; one sister Stacey Pettiford; one brother Preston Pettiford; and a host of additional relatives and friends.

Brenda Winnette Phelps "B.B." Bateman, 69, of Creswell, NC, died Monday, February 3, 2020, in the Palliative Care Unit of the Vidant Cancer Center in Greenville.

Mrs. Bateman was born in Washington County on June 28, 1950, and was the daughter of Robert E. "Bobby" Phelps, Sr. and the late Juanita Ambrose Phelps.

Retired after 27 years as a rural carrier with the United States Postal Service, she had served for many years as the District President of the Rural Letter Carriers Association. A faithful member of Philippi Church of Christ, she had been active in the Ladies Circle, the Praise Team, the Adult Choir, and had served as a Sunday School teacher and as Director of the Youth Choir.

In addition to her mother, she was preceded in death by a grandson, John Wayne Patrick; and by her in-laws, Ed and Margaret Bateman.

Surviving with her father, is her husband of nearly 49 years, Wayne Bateman; three daughters, Amy Patrick and husband, Heath, Lori Armstrong and husband, James "Lump", and LeAnn McGowan and husband, Quinton; two brothers, Bobby Phelps, Jr. and Ricky Phelps; four grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter.

*Happy
Easter*



Safety

Scott Deaf

Speak Up!

Hello to you all. As I'm writing this article, I am smiling ear to ear with the news that the groundhog is predicting an early spring. I know there are some who love winter and embrace it with snow skis and the like but I also know that there are some who aren't the biggest fans, especially with the job we do. The cold, gray, shorter days can be somewhat depressing.

With this in mind, I want to shift gears and talk about a subject that doesn't get a lot of attention and tends to have a stigma attached to it.

Mental Illness, Depression and Suicide

Mental illness and suicide are in fact a grim reality. Our jobs are physically strenuous, now more than ever, but also mentally challenging to a great degree. We as rural carriers are some of the strongest, toughest, salt of the earth types, who love serving our customers to no end. This makes it even more difficult for us to reach out for help, even when we need it the most. We're the ones giving the help most of the time, not receiving it.

We sometimes do more harm than good when we take on too much of a load with our "*I'll get it done, I'm a rural carrier*" mentality. The simple fact is we will all need help at some point in our lives, for we are human and not perfect.

A lot of us are aware of the Employee Assistance Program or EAP which provides help with any personal issue for you or anyone in your family.

We receive this counseling and referral service at no cost!

This is a tremendous benefit we have. Whether we need help with depression or any other personal issue. EAP can only help **if you call!**

The phone number is 1-800-EAP-4-YOU or 1-800-327-4968, TTY: 877-492-7341. The web address is www.EAP4YOU.com. Please reach out if you or your loved one needs help. EAP is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

As I was researching ideas for this article, I came across something else I wanted to share with everyone. I hope this will come to fruition. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is moving ahead with plans to designate a three-digit number to reach the National Suicide Prevention Hotline. The proposed

number is 988. This is not available yet, but hopefully with the help of Congress it will become a reality within the next two years.

The benefit would far exceed the cost. More than 47,000 Americans died by suicide and more than 1.4 million adults attempted to take their own lives in 2017, according to the Health and Human Services' substance abuse and mental health services agency.

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the US, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. America's suicide rates are at the highest level since World War II, with an increase of 33% from 1999 to 2017 alone, according to the CDC.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available now at 1-800-273-TALK or 1-800-273-8255. There is also a crisis text line. Simply text HOME to 741741 or visit crisistextline.org for more information. For crisis support in Spanish, call 1-888-628-9454. Again, have these numbers on hand in case you or someone you know needs them.

Suicide and mental illness take far too many lives every year. We have probably all been touched by this at some point in our own lives. I have personally lost family members, friends, and even a brother of our union to this tragedy. I will love and miss them all forever!

In closing, the intent of this article is to spread awareness and to keep the conversation going that it is OK to not be OK at times in our lives.

It is also OK to ask for help. We just need to have a plan for when we hit that bump in the road or when we need to know how to respond to those that need our help.

So in closing I want to encourage you to **Speak Up!** if you or someone you know is having a difficult time. Get help if you need it. There is no shame in asking for help. EAP is there for you!

As always...**Be Safe, Wear Your Seatbelt, Speak Up!, and Thank You** for the service you provide.

Retirement

Brian Hamlett



Retirement Options

When people think of retirement, they generally think of working 30 years, hitting Social Security age, and checking out. Unbeknownst to many there are other options like deferred retirement, postponed retirement, and disability retirement.

Deferred Retirement

When you decide you are ready to leave the Postal Service, but you haven't reached minimum retirement age, one option is deferred retirement. You can leave the Postal Service now and draw your pension later (usually 62). To qualify for deferred retirement, you must meet the following criteria:

1. Have at least **5** years of creditable service.
2. You must leave your contributions in the FERS system

You can apply for the benefit by writing to OPM or filing a *Form RI 92-19, Application for Deferred or Postponed Retirement*. You should submit the form two months before you want the benefit to begin.

Just remember if you take the deferred option and pass away prior to retirement; **no Survivor Benefits will be paid**. You also cannot continue to participate in the Federal Employee Health Benefit program. Another caveat is that if you complete at least 10 but less than 30 years of service before leaving Federal Service, your annuity will be reduced if it begins before age 62. The only exception to this is if you had at least 20 years of service and your annuity begins when you reach age 60, there is no reduction.

Postponed Retirement

Postponed retirement is like deferred retirement with the main difference being that you must be eligible to retire immediately by meeting the following requirements.

1. You have reached your Minimum Retirement Age (MRA) before you separate
2. You have at least ten years of creditable service.

MRA ranges from age 55-57 based on the year you were born. If you meet these requirements you may still be subject to a reduction in annuity for each month under age 62 equal to 5% per year (5/12 of 1% per

(Continued on page 8)

USPS EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
A Program You Can Trust



800-327-4968
(800-EAP-4-YOU) TTY: 877-492-7341
www.EAP4YOU.com

month). Instead of taking a reduced pension, you may wait until you reach a specific age (usually 62) to start your full pension.

As with deferred retirement you apply by filling out Form RI 92-19 or writing OPM directly at least two months before you want the benefit to begin.

With this option if you have been enrolled in the FEHB for five consecutive years prior to retirement you can start-up coverage again once you start receiving your annuity.

Disability Retirement

Disability retirement is for those who become disabled while employed in a position subject to FERS, because of disease or injury, and are unable to continue to serve in a useful efficient manner in your current position.

The disability must be expected to last at least one

year.

The Postal Service must certify it is unable to accommodate your disabling medical condition in your present position and that it has considered you for any vacant position in the same agency at the same pay grade/level, within the same commuting area, for which you are qualified for reassignment.

You must also have applied for Social Security disability benefits and withdrawal of the application for any reason will cause OPM to dismiss your application for disability retirement.

To qualify you must have 18 months of service at any age.

Remember membership does not automatically transfer into retirement. To remain a member you must reenroll. Simply fill out the 1187R form for dues withholding from your annuity.

Annuity Formula for Disability Insurance

First 12 months	60% of your high-3 annual salary minus 100% of your Social Security Benefit for any month in which you are entitled to Social Security benefits. However, you are entitled to your earned annuity, if it's larger than this amount.
After 12 months	40% of your high-3 average salary minus 60% of your Social Security Benefit for any month in which you are entitled to Social Security benefits. However, you are entitled to your earned annuity, if it's larger than this amount.
When you reach age 62 your annuity will be recomputed as if you had continued working until the day before your 62 nd birthday and then retired under FERS	If actual service, plus the credit for time as a disabled annuitant equals less than 20 years: then 1% of your high-3 average salary for each year of service. OR If actual service plus time as disability annuitant equals 20 or more years: then 1.1% of your high-3 average salary for each year of service.



RCHBP

Elaine Althoff

Getting To Know TrestleTree

Before I get into what TrestleTree is, I would first like to update members on “What’s New”.

Let me answer those burning questions.

Why did my rates go up?

As Cameron Deml and Britt Pyritz explained “It’s complicated and a number of things had an impact. Over the last 2 years; a higher than usual spending and utilization.

Also, the demographic changes, mainly due to increase use of members that are still working and using their insurance. Members between the ages of 39-49 had a lower usage rate, they are usually younger and healthy. Those 50-65 who are still working and are still using their insurance. The group 67+ are retired and are not using as much insurance.

The third is the Government Contribution Formula.”

Now for your other question on **Why is Self plus one more than Self and Family?**

As stated above the 50-65 group, in most instances their children are grown and out of the house. They are still working, not yet to retirement age and are using their insurance. That is where the Government Contribution Formula kicked in.

So, you ask “Can my spouse and I, whom are in the Self Plus One move to Self and Family?” YES, but now you have to wait ‘til open season to make any changes.

Retirees should have received a packet of information from OPM with instructions on how to make a change. Also, “If you find yourself in a situation and many retirees (annuitants) and surviving annuitants may have withholdings, like your health insurance premiums and membership dues withheld from your monthly annuity. In the event your total annuity won’t cover all of your withholding, OPM does allow for direct pay.

You can contact OPM’s Retirement Office by phone at 1-888-767-6738 Monday-Friday 7:30 am to 7:45 pm. EST or by e-mail at retire@opm.gov. Be sure to have your CSA or relevant retiree number available. If you have a question about dues for the NRLCA contact the membership department at 703-684-5545.

Aetna is partnered with CVS and this year it has been clarified that services at a *CVS Minute Clinic* are paid at 100% with no cost share to members.

This year coverage for preventative prostate screening for members age 40 and older under preventative services has been added.

TRESTLETREE

Trestletree joined on about four years ago, but what do you really know about them and all they have to offer?

Trestle Tree provides comprehensive telephonic

(Continued on page 10)

HEALTH SCREENING

at North Carolina State Convention

Don’t miss your chance to earn \$100.00!

(towards your wellness incentive fund that can be used for qualified medical expenses)

Rural Carrier Benefit Plan (RCBP) members will have an opportunity to complete their Biometric Screening onsite at the NC State Convention. In the upcoming weeks, you will be able to sign up for a time to complete your Biometric Screening by visiting my.questforhealth.com and entering registration key RCBP. Once you enter your information to confirm eligibility, select the event—National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA) – NC State Convention and reserve your spot.

You may also call the Quest Service Center at 855-623-9255 and let them know of the event location (National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA) – NC State Convention) and sign up for a timeslot.

Preregistration is required to receive your screening at the State Convention.

(Continued from page 9) **RCHBP**

health coaching for RCBP members. Also, RCBP members can complete their Health Risk Assessment (HRA) with a Health Coach over the phone. Upon completion of the HRA, \$50. will be deposited into your Wellness Incentive Fund Account to reimburse you for qualified medical expenses. To schedule the HRA see "To schedule the HRA".

For 2020 they have expanded their services.

Here are just a few:

Lifestyle Management

- Weight Management
- Stress Management
- Exercise
- Nutrition

Your Health Story

- Life Telephone Health Risk Assessment

In 2019, RCBP expanded their partnership with Trestle Tree to provide for dedicated health coaches for every RCBP member! The expanded partnerships include:

Comprehensive Pain Management Program

In response to the Opioid Crisis and pain management they have added:

- Aches and Pains
- Alternative pain management treatments
- Opioid help

Chronic Condition Support for:

- Diabetes
- High Blood Pressure
- High Cholesterol
- Asthma
- COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)

- Depression
- CAD (Coronary Artery Disease)

These are just a few of what is provided to members. You can find these and others in the Special Features section in your 2020 Plan Brochure sent out in January, Section 5 (H) Page 79. Here you will find detailed information about the most value-added programs such as disease management programs, Healthy maternity program, health and wellness programs, and so much more like:

- Trestle Tree
- Able TO
- 24 Hour Nurse line

To schedule the HRA telephonically, contact a health coach at 866-237-1442.

Coaches are available Monday through Thursday from 8:00am-10:00 pm EST and Friday from 8:00am – 6:00 pm EST.

You can also schedule an appointment online at <http://enroll.trestletree.com> (passcode:RCBP).

To Complete the HRA online, go to RCB-Phhealth.com and click on your secure member website.

Log in or register

Click on "DISCOVER A HEALTHIER YOU" under "Stay Healthy"

Hover over "RECORDS" on the top navigation bar and choose "Health Assessment"

Complete the questions

Click "Submit Now" once all questions are answered

Customer Service Department can be reached at 800-638-8432.

Poison Control Center 800-222-1222

This line is 24 hrs. 7 days a week. Please add to your Contacts.



Burlington post office RCAs: Left to right: Dontelle Williams, Samantha Boggs, Valerie Williams, Alvin Kight, Jennifer "Sam" Hinshaw, Domonique Ross, Terrance Davis, Whitney Lea, Reggie Kuewa, Stephan Hoover, Sierra Gentry, Jacob Flack.

South Atlantic Conference 2020

SAC Board Member

Derek Harpe

This year the 2020 SAC Conference in Atlanta, Georgia was very successful and had an attendance of over 468 people! Of that 43 were first timers!

If you have never attended a SAC Conference, mark your calendar now! It is held yearly in Atlanta, Georgia on the Sunday after the fourth Saturday in January and continues for half a day on Monday. The last few years there have been special seminars offered on Saturday night. On the fourth Saturday, the day before the SAC Conference, APCU has their annual meeting.

At the beginning of the SAC Conference on Sunday morning there was an inspiring worship service that was led by Doug Byrum of North Carolina. Following the worship service was the advancement of colors and the pledge led by Donna Bagwell of Mississippi, a Gold Star Mother.

The conference then began Sunday morning with our general session, hearing from NRLCA Auxiliary President (Cyndy Keyes). Then the conference continued with Atlanta Postal Credit Union (Charles Head), National General Insurance (Linda Foran), Provident Guild (Nadine Chaplin), Rural Carrier Benefit Plan (Cameron Demi), Legal Counsel for the NRLCA (Mark Gisler), Director of Governmental Affairs (Paul Swartz), and Communications and PAC

Manager (Jordan Schultz).

The conference continued Sunday afternoon with the Keynote Address from Ronnie Stutts, the National President of NRLCA.

The afternoon continued with a Retirees and Health Benefits Seminar and a RCA Seminar followed by questions & answers by all of the NRLCA officers that were present.

Sunday evening there was a Retirement Seminar regarding TSP and Retirement Mistakes and also a Labor Seminar.

On Monday morning we had remarks from USPS Area Vice President (Shaun Mossman) of the Southern Area, District Manager of the Appalachian District (Ms. Theriault), and USPS Vice President Area Operations CAP-Metro Area (Linda Malone).

After remarks from USPS Management, remarks were given by NRLCA Executive Committeemen: Dennis Conley, Johnny Miller, and Shirley Baffa. The sessions were followed with a question and answer panel consisting of Area Managers and NRLCA Panel.

Attending the SAC Conference is very beneficial and highly recommended in gaining information and spending personal time with our NRLCA officers and staff. Members are constantly saying that the benefit of coming to SAC is gaining knowledge and information in such a short time. If you have never been to SAC, January 2021 would be a great time to come!

Remember to mark your calendar now!!

Hope to see you there!



SAC First Timers

North Carolina had five first time attendees at this year's South Atlantic Conference. All of them enjoyed it and thought it was a great, informative meeting.

SAC First Timers

Left to Right: Samantha Boggs, Barbara Mesimer and Kara Winebarger.

Missing from photo are James Eberly and Robert Hilts.

Official Convention News

National Convention

National Delegate Election by Secret Ballot

A secret ballot election for the delegates of the North Carolina RLCA to the 2020 NRLCA National Convention will be conducted by mail.

Ballots will be mailed to members between May 20 and May 28, 2020.

Any eligible member who does not receive a ballot or whom spoils a ballot may request a new ballot by contacting the Election Committee Chairperson, Debra Bennett at 910-436-6487. If you request and return another ballot, only the replacement ballot will be counted.

Counting of the National Delegate ballots will take place on Saturday June 20, 2020 beginning at 10:00 AM at Harrah's Resort, at 777 Casino Drive, in Cherokee, NC 28719.

Any candidate or designee may observe the ballot tabulation.

In reporting the results of the election, the candidates shall be placed on a roster in the order of votes received. The number of delegates to which the state is entitled shall be declared regular delegates; the remaining candidates shall be declared alternates. In case of a tie vote, the tie will be broken with a blind drawing done by the Election Committee.

This year the National Convention will be held in Spokane, Washington from August 18-21, 2020. The deadline for delegate nominations this year is May 2, 2020. Anything received after that date will be returned to the sender as post office box closed.

Included below are the rules for delegate nomination from the *NRLCA constitution*, Article VI.

Section 2. Delegates

A. Eligibility

2. Only Bargaining Unit Members and Retired Members in good standing may be nominated, elected or seated as delegates. Such "good standing" status shall be the sole prerequisite for determining eligibility or entitlement to service as a delegate or to any payment or benefit, except that a state may establish reasonable rules to ensure attendance at the Convention.

3. A member who accepts or acts at any time in **any** capacity normally performed by a manager from the

end of one Convention to the end of the next Convention shall be ineligible to be nominated or serve as delegate.

B. Nomination

1. Within each state association, nominations for National Delegate shall be submitted by U.S. Mail to a pre-arranged post office box on a nominating ballot or copy. The nominating ballot shall be signed and show the name and address of the member making the nomination, and may include self-nomination. The nominating ballot and instructions shall be posted on the NRLCA website and in all published issues of *The National Rural Letter Carrier* from February – May.

2. Nominations must be received in the pre-arranged post office box at least 50 days prior to the opening of the state convention. (*This year that day is May 2, 2020.*)

State Convention

The State Convention will be held at Harrah's Resort & Casino at 777 Casino Drive, Cherokee, NC 28719 on June 21 thru June 24, 2020 with the business session starting on Monday June 22. Complete address and reservation information for the State Convention can be found on the back page of this issue.

Elections for the positions of President, Vice-President (one year term), Secretary/Treasurer (two year term) and Executive Committeeman (three year term) will be conducted on Wednesday June 24, 2020.

Included below are the rules for State delegates from the *North Carolina RLCA constitution*, Article VI.

Section 3. State Delegates.

- A. All districts shall be entitled to one delegate vote for each six paid-up members or a fraction thereof.
- B. No delegate shall represent more than one district.
- C. No district shall be represented in the State Convention by proxy.
- D. The total delegates from a district (if not in full attendance) may be voted by the one or more delegates in attendance.

Official Convention News

Candidate Announcements for State Office

The state officer positions up for election are President, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer and three year Executive Committeeman.

To have your candidacy announcements printed in our newsletter they must be received by **April 15, 2020**.

Any late submissions will not be printed.

All articles are limited to a maximum of **150 words** and will be cut off at that point. They will be printed verbatim with no editing by the editor. In other words you are responsible for all content of your submission.

Announcements will **appear in the NCRC May/June issue**.

Carriers currently serving in a management position are not eligible to run for a position in the Union.

usually offers special incentives (read that as free money!) to members opening a new account while on site as well as their normal services.

Britt Pyritz with Aetna will also be there along with representatives from Quest.

Quest will be on site on Tuesday and will be doing biometric health screenings for our members that have Rural Carrier Benefit Plan Health Insurance. You must preregister for this screening. See page 9 for more information on this.

TrestleTree has been invited to participate along with Aetna. We do not have a confirmation from them at this time. We will let you know in the next newsletter whether or not they will be visiting with us.

A National Officer will be our a special guest. Our National Officer usually spends all three days with us. We do not know yet who will be assigned to our convention. I will let you know in the next edition which National Officer will be on hand for us.

This Officer will have the floor on Tuesday afternoon for their main address. Whomever it is, they will let us know what is going on nationally with our association and with the Rural Route Evaluated Compensation System (RRECS) or "Time Study" as most of us call it.

(Continued on page 14)

Secretary/Treasurer

Vicki Gray



Outline of the State Convention

Sunday afternoon we will have a hospitality room with snacks and finger foods starting around four o'clock. Come early and mingle with your fellow rural carriers.

There will be a Memorial Service on Sunday evening at seven.

Business starts on Monday.

We have invited our District Managers; Russ Gardner from Greensboro District and Leslie Johnson Frick from Mid Carolinas to speak to us on Monday morning.

Representatives from the Atlanta Postal Credit Union will address us on Monday as well. APCU

If Elected as a State Officer

If you are elected to the State Board at the State Convention please be aware that you will be required to remain after the conclusion of the Convention on Wednesday for a Board Meeting.

This meeting will take place immediately after the convention. It takes approximately two hours.

If you are running for office please make arrangements to include this meeting in your plans.

This is a required meeting.

North Carolina Membership Totals

as of February 15, 2020

* totals will be recalculated & may change prior to our State Convention

We will also be voting on constitution changes and resolutions from across the state.

Elections of officers to your state board will take place on Wednesday. We are normally finished by noon on Wednesday.

I will have additional details regarding the State Convention in the next issue.

Membership totals for the districts are included here. These totals may change slightly as I will run a final analysis as we get closer to the State Convention.

Names of districts may also change.

I have listed them here like this to try to make the most sense of the changes after last year's Constitution change.

Many districts were split and are now in two different districts (such as Harnett, Tar River or Wayne). They may not be listed in their entirety.

Local districts will be deciding on name changes at their Spring Business Meetings.

I will update the local district information as I get it. Some information may not be available in time for our next issue.

Please give me a call if you have any questions about anything.

I hope you take the time to attend both your local district meeting and the State Convention.

District	District Name	Members	Delegates
1	ALAMANCE	83	14
2	ALBEMARLE	106	18
3	BRUSHY MOUNTAIN	165	28
4	ALLEGHANY-ASHE	54	9
5	PEACH BELT	62	11
7	ROANOKE-CHOWAN	62	11
8	SOUTHEASTERN	275	46
9	BURKE-CALDWELL-CATAWBA	286	48
10	FOOTHILLS	164	28
11	SMOKY MOUNTAIN	137	23
12	DURHAM-ORANGE	130	22
14	CASWELL-ROCKINGHAM	83	14
16	CENTRAL CAROLINA	140	24
20	CUMBERLAND-HOKE-HARNETT	238	40
23	SEA LEVEL-WAYNE	215	36
24	WAKE COUNTY	446	75
25	TRI COUNTY-WAYNE	161	27
26	YADKIN RIVER	178	30
28	PERSON-FIVE COUNTY	174	29
29	CLEVELAND-GASTON-LINCOLN	210	35
30	GUILFORD COUNTY	197	33
34	JOHNSTON -HARNETT	120	20
36	MCDOWELL-MT MITCHELL MADISON-BUNCOMBE	160	27
38	MECKLENBERG	424	70
42	RANDOLPH-DAVIDSON	189	32
44	ROANOKE-	172	29
47	RUTHERFORD-POLK HENDERSON-TRANSYLVANIA	126	21
50	PIEDMONT	309	52
52	TIDEWATER-PITT	342	57
54	UNION COUNTY	131	22
57	WATAUGA-AVERY	76	13
	North Carolina Total	5615	

State Convention Pre-registration

Appearing below is Article VI, Section 4 from the Constitution of the North Carolina Rural Letter Carriers' Association. This language was adopted at the 2019 State Convention in Raleigh.

This is the procedure put in place for our members to be compensated (paid) for attending the state convention as delegates.

Members must also be **elected** to serve as delegates at the local meeting; as per Article IV. This complies with labor laws which require that delegates must be elected by a direct vote of the membership.

Mail the completely filled out and signed preregistration form to me. Please print clearly as an illegible registration may cause it to be deemed unacceptable.

You must pre-register to be eligible to receive payment as a delegate.

Forms may be copied and will also be available on the website www.NCRLCA.org.

Please send in as early as possible.

ARTICLE VI, Section 4

State Delegate Compensation

- A. State delegates shall be compensated up to \$100.00 per each completed business session day of attendance at the State Convention for expenses.
- B. The state shall set aside a total amount equal to the rate of .00017% of a 40 hour, Step C, Table 1 regular rural carrier's yearly pay for each member on the rolls on June 30, to be used to pay state delegates. (proviso first deposit will be July 2019)
- C. These funds shall be held in an interest-bearing account.
- D. The maximum amount to be paid out per year will be \$60,000.
- E. Any state delegate to the State Convention who is being compensated for the State Convention by State or National funds shall not receive state delegate pay.
- F. All state delegate checks will be mailed by July 31.
- G. All state delegates must pre-register by submitting the registration form that will be printed in the convention issue of the state newspaper and on the North Carolina website.
- H. Verification of attendance will be the responsibility of the local President or the local Delegate-at-large.
- I. Disputes will be settled by the State Board.

PRE-REGISTRATION FORM NORTH CAROLINA STATE DELEGATE

Please print clearly.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

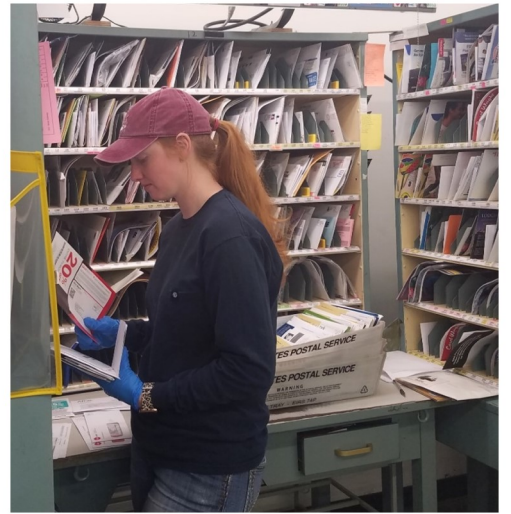
Phone _____

I submit my name as a candidate for delegate to the 2020 North Carolina State Convention.
I understand that I must also be duly elected as a delegate in my local district elections.

Signature of Member: _____

Clip and mail to: NC RLCA Secretary Treasurer
Vicki Gray
424 Wapiti Drive
Spring Lake, NC 28390





All names are listed from left to right.

Top left: Mocksville post office; Dean McNeely, Anesia Matheson, Joaquin Ramirez, Ja-Nelle Dockery, Amanda Smith, Megan Hanks, Cathy Willoughby, Mariah Lyons; **Top Right:** Morganton post office; Harlee Regan.

Middle left: Vilas post office; Tom Davis, Janet Hagaman **Middle right:** Leland post office; Cortney Havercroft, Myra Mitchell, Ashlee Mitchell, Melissa Ballard, Megan Averette, Julie Sammons, Autumn Whitley, Nick Salemmo.

Bottom Left: Connelly Springs post office; Marc Powell, Logan Church, Ronald Stroup, Danielle Fredell, Susan Rone **Bottom Right:** Morganton post office; Brandon Genwright.



North Carolina Relief Carriers



All names are listed from left to right.

Above: All from Hope Mills post office; **Top Row:** Psoma Fulbright, Omar Hicks, Brandon Patterson, **Middle Row:** Carla Bolden, Alviance Hankerson, Robin Calloway, **Bottom Row:** Kayla Godwin, Mercedes Avery, Patricia Garrett.

Below: Lakedale post office; Kelsey Woods, Deonta Ray, Karen Canady, Ebony Monroe, Jasmine Anderson, Robyn Covington, Libny Martinez, Richie Almario.



NRLCA CONSTITUTION CHANGE

The following proposed Constitution change is being presented by _____ and is hereby submitted to the Constitution Committee of the North Carolina Rural Letter Carriers Association at the 2020 State Convention in Cherokee, NC for consideration and appropriate action.

The following procedures are suggested for effectively presenting Constitution changes to Committee:

- 1) Place only one Constitution per sheet.
- 2) Present in Word document format. Formatting instructions:
 - (a) Font - Times New Roman; Font Size – 11
 - (b) New Language **BOLD**; Omitted Language ~~Strike Through~~
 - (c) Article _____ Section _____ Paragraph _____

Explanatory paragraphs should be headed as follows: (If spaces below are inadequate, use additional sheets with appropriate heading)

PRESENT LANGUAGE:

PROPOSED LANGUAGE:

INTENT OF/REASON FOR CHANGE:

**Mail to Vicki Gray, 424 Wapiti Drive, Spring Lake, NC 28390
To be presented to the Constitution Committee at the 2020 State Convention**

NRLCA RESOLUTION CHANGE

Check Appropriate Box

☐ Binding

☐ Non-Binding

The following proposed Resolution change is being presented by _____ and is hereby submitted to the Resolutions Committee of the North Carolina Rural Letter Carriers Association at the 2020 State Convention in Cherokee, NC for consideration and appropriate action.

The following procedures are suggested for effectively presenting resolutions to Committee:

- 1) Place only one Resolution per sheet.
- 2) Present in Word document format. Formatting instructions:
 - (a) Font - Times New Roman; Font Size – 11
 - (b) New Language **BOLD**; Omitted Language ~~Strike Through~~

Identify any Handbooks, Manuals, or Documents (if appropriate) to be amended by:

Name of Document _____

Article _____ Section _____ Paragraph _____

Explanatory paragraphs should be headed as follows: (If spaces below are inadequate, use additional sheets with appropriate heading)

PRESENT LANGUAGE:

PROPOSED LANGUAGE:

INTENT OF/REASON FOR CHANGE:

**Mail to Vicki Gray, 424 Wapiti Drive, Spring Lake, NC 28390
To be presented to the Resolutions Committee at the 2020 State Convention**

GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION OF OUTSTANDING MEMBER OF THE YEAR

I. Method of Selection

1. Nomination of candidates for the award shall be made prior to the State Convention. Nominations may be made directly from the members inviting such nominations. Also, local, county or district units may select candidates for the award.

2. In either event, the name of the candidate should be submitted, with a brief resume of accomplishments, to a Selection Committee to be named by the State Board, or by any other means, which may be the prevailing policy in the State Association.

II. Eligibility for Award

1. Any MEMBER of the Association may be nominated as a candidate for the Outstanding Member of the Year Award.

2. State Association Officers should not be arbitrarily selected for the award nor should they be eliminated from consideration. Officers have been chosen to lead and serve, but it is frequently demonstrated that their services go far beyond the routine duties of the office and, thus may be worthy of selection.

III. Criteria for Selection

1. The primary consideration of the Selection Committee shall be:

- (a) The service rendered by the candidate to the Rural Letter Carriers' Association;
- (b) Attendance and participation in local, state and national meetings;
- (c) Willingness to accept responsibilities and dedication in performing those duties;
- (d) Fraternal Attitude to others of the Rural Carrier Craft.

2. The Selection Committee should also consider, as a secondary matter, other service which the candidate may have rendered, such as civic and community activities, which reflect favorably upon the Rural Letter Carrier Craft and the Postal Service.

3. Consideration shall be given for services rendered in the immediately preceding twelve-month period, but not completely limited to this period of time. New carriers should be encouraged to seek to achieve this award.

IV. Presentation of Award

When each State Association has made its selection, the name of the candidate shall be reported to the

National Office by the State Secretary on the regular Annual Report. An appropriate award will be presented by the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association at its National Convention.

V. Other

These guidelines are not intended to be binding and a State may use any other selection procedure that is suitable for each State.

The announcement of the recipient of the award will be made at the banquet at the State Convention. The State Secretary shall report the name to the National Office and the award will be presented at the National Convention with State presentation at the Fall Booster.

This year the State Board has appointed the immediate past three recipients of the award to serve as the Selection Committee.

Please mail the name of the candidate, along with a resume to ALL members of the Selection Committee listed below, prior to the State Convention.

Brenda Johnson
525 Brown Road
Lillington, NC 27546-8804

Don Ayscue
121 Skinners Road
Hertford, NC 27944-9374

Roger Southern
221 Renn Road
Stokesdale, NC 27357-8234

**Nominations are
being accepted at
this time for
this award.**

Legislative Representative

Van Heath

Good News For A Change



USPS House Fairness Act (HR 2382) **Introduced in House (04/29/2019)** **Passed House (02/05/2020)**

This bill repeals the requirement that the U.S. Postal Service annually prepay future retirement health benefits.

Now it is on to the Senate. This is one of the most important bills related to the future of the USPS in quite some time. I hope that everyone contacted his or her Member of Congress as requested by the National Office and that is what got this bill passed.

Now we have to get to work and bombard our two Senator's office with letters to make sure this bill becomes law. Removing the onus of the Five Billion dollars a year Prepayment of Retirement Benefits will go a long way in making the USPS fiscally sound.

We all know that Retirement Accounts need to be funded, but it was unworkable from the start to require the Postal Service to pre-fund 75 years out. By a vote of 309 to 106, the bill passed the House.

The NC delegation voted 4 to 9 for passage. Please feel free to write Thank You notes to the four that voted our way. The four are:

Alma Adams (D, 12th)

G.K. Butterfield Jr. (D, 1st)

David Price (D, 4th)

David Rouzer (R, 7th)

The rest of our members voted against us.

You may go ahead and contact our Senators by mail, email or phone, and ask them to support this bill in the Senate.

Currently, we have no idea as to when this bill will come up in the Senate. I would like to think that it will as it required a 2/3 vote to pass the House. We all know the Washington saying, "The Senate is where bills go to die."

We cannot allow this bill to die. After your initial contact with our Senators, watch the NRLCA website for when it becomes crucial to make that last contact to help get the bill passed. All USPS employees working together is what it will take to see this bill passed.

We have gotten the **USPS Fairness Act** passed in the house. Now it is time to go back to work for the **Federal Retirement Fairness Act (HR 2478)**. I have written about this for some time now; but it is that important. The summary of the bill is:

Federal Retirement Fairness Act (HR2478)

Introduced in House (05/02/2019)

This bill modifies the federal civilian service that is creditable service under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS).

Specifically, it expands the nondeduction service that may be creditable under FERS. Nondeduction service is federal service where an employee's pay is not subject to retirement deductions (e.g., service under a temporary appointment).

Currently, nondeduction service performed before January 1, 1989, is creditable under FERS so long as a deposit is made into the retirement fund to cover the period of nondeduction service.

This bill allows nondeduction service performed on or after January 1, 1989, to be creditable under FERS so long as a deposit is made into the retirement fund.

Unless you are already retired, this bill has the potential to make a big difference in how much money you receive a month after you retire. This bill affects anyone that ever served as an RCA. Many of us served many years as an RCA, often working more hours than regulars do, but will have nothing to show for it when we retire.

The form letter is still on the State and National websites. Once on the State website, go to the PAC LEGISLATIVE page. Then go to the bottom of the page and click on:

[DOWNLOAD YOUR HR-2478 LETTER HERE](#)

Fill in the blanks and get that letter in the mail. If we are not able to get this bill passed this year, I do not think we will ever have another opportunity. ***It is your retirement. Work to improve it for yourself, your family, and all USPS employees.***

There are two more resolutions that I would like to make you aware of:

H.Res.33: "Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Congress should take all appropriate measures to ensure that the United States Postal

(Continued on page 22)

Service remains an independent establishment of the Federal Government and is not subject to privatization."

We have three NC Cosponsors:

Alma Adams (D, 12th)
G.K. Butterfield (D, 1st)
David Price (D, 4th)

S.Res.99: "A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that Congress should take all appropriate measures to ensure that the United States Postal Service remains an independent establishment of the Federal Government and is not subject to privatization."

Sadly, neither of our Senators are Cosponsors. If you are not tired of writing letters, write both Senators and ask them to sign on as cosponsors.

Thank you and I look forward to seeing many of you at the State Convention in Cherokee.



PAC CHAIR
Robert Gurganus

PAC Needs You

Hi everyone! As we all know, spring is just around the corner. There are many important pieces of legislation that are being debated in the House and Senate this term, and by contributing to PAC we make sure that we have a voice in these issues that affect our future.

Our representatives need to know that we are watching and that we vote for those who actually represent our interests.

Our PAC contributions get us a seat at the table when matters that are important to our union membership are being discussed. And, as has been said many times before, if you're not at the table, you're on the menu.

Becoming a sustaining donor to PAC is the best way to support our legislative goals. It's easy and painless! If you have any questions about how to sign up just ask me or one of the officers at your district meeting this spring.

Those of you who contribute to PAC at your spring meeting get a chance to win one of two \$500 Visa gift cards to be given away at this year's State Convention.

You don't have to be present to win, but it would be swell if you were! Imagine how many Amazon parcels you could buy with that! *(Just typing that made my back a little sore.)*

I'm looking forward to seeing you all at the spring district meetings and then again at the State Convention in Cherokee. Please come out and say hello to your pal Porkchop.

When we all join together, we achieve great things. God bless you all, and God bless our great union.

NCRLCA Dues for 2019-2020

Effective PP 02/2020 (January 24, 2020)

Regular, PTF...Cash.....	\$739.00
1187...Bi-Weekly.....	\$28.42
Retired.....Cash.....	\$111.00
1187R...Monthly.....	\$9.25
73, RCA, RCR, ARC.....Cash.....	\$246.00
1187.....Bi-Weekly.....	\$9.46

The membership year begins July 1, ends June 30. Please make checks payable to NCRLCA. Checks or membership forms should be mailed to Vicki Gray, NCRLCA Secretary/Treasurer, 424 Wapiti Dr., Spring Lake, NC 28390.

NOTE: "Dues, assessments, contributions or gifts to the NCRLCA are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.



Clayton post office RCAs: Sitting left to right; Diogene Mukama, Randy Krasowski, James Bayne, Julie Kaltenbaugh, Tawana Wiley, Brian Anderson. Standing left to right; Crystal Barbour, Kody Hutley, Darius Randall, Luis A. Gonzalez.

Auto-Home Insurance

Tracy Greer

Are You Driving Your Personal Vehicle On Your Route?

While your agent may know you deliver mail, are you sure you're being rated correctly? Ask your agent the following questions to ensure you are getting the most accurate rates:

1. How do you have my vehicle rated?
2. Will I be covered if I have an accident while delivering mail?
3. Can you show me where I can see the rating of my vehicle?

These three questions may save you a lot of time and money down the road.

Call 888-325-7727 now and mention code R-RP for your exclusive NRLCA insurance savings and benefits! For doing so, you will receive a \$10.00 gift card and be entered in a drawing for a \$100.00 gift card to be given away in June during the state convention.

You must call or text me your information after receiving your quote to be entered at 423-707-5578 or



email me at ncautoinsrep@gmail.com. Don't delay!! Get your quote and entry today!!

I also wanted to take a moment and give you a mid-year update on some data for the state. The following year has seen growth and we have done an amazing job. We are tying and exceeding quotes from other states on a monthly basis!!

Referral Quotes total by year

2018- 59 quotes

2019- 80 quotes

Referral quotes for 1st 6 months of fiscal year

2018- 38 quotes

2019- 52 quotes

Total in force policies for NC

2016- 198

2017- 242

2018- 310

2019- 386

Our state receives funds for every quote and policy from National General and it helps our state to keep these programs going and to help cover the daily operating expenses of our union.

Thanks to all of you for getting quotes and policies!! You are the reason we are performing so well. I would also like to thank all of you that help spread the word of the program including the state board and our academy trainers!!

Rural Carrier Mike Flythe Retires after 40+ years



Mike Flythe, retires from the New Bern Post Office with 40 years and 11 months as a rural carrier. Mike says New Bern had only three rural routes when he first started there. There are now 24 rural routes and two auxiliary routes.

Where To Find Scholarship Information on our Website

Do you know where to find scholarship information through the Website?

If you have a child or a grandchild who is preparing for college, check out the scholarships available through the Junior Auxiliary.

The link for the NCRLCA application is near the bottom of the Junior's Front Page just above the Contest link. <https://www.ncrlca.org/wp-content/uploads/NORTH-CAROLINA-RURAL-LETTER-CARRIERS-1-7.pdf>.

Please remember to check your newsletter for the current password to the Junior Auxiliary Page as it changes bi-monthly. If you have any problems, you can contact any Auxiliary Officer, North Carolina Rural Letter Carriers Board Member, or me.

The deadline for getting your junior's North Carolina Rural Letter Carriers' Auxiliary Scholarship application submitted is **June 1**.

There are numerous other scholarships available

Webmaster

Renee Johnson

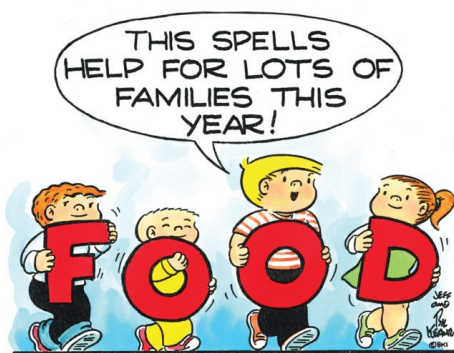


through the National Auxiliary link on our National Website: <https://www.nrlca.org/Content/NRLCANationalAuxiliary>.

Among these are the Smith Family Scholarship, Delbert "Lucky" Clark Memorial Scholarship, National General Insurance Scholarship, The Past National Officers (PNO) Scholarship, The Marie V. Mutchmore Scholarship, The Clara Gardner-Burch Scholarship, Ian Etheridge Scholarship, and The NRLCA Discovery Scholarship. However, the deadline for these scholarships is **March 1**. If you missed this year's deadline, remember to plan early for next year.

Also, a new scholarship has been announced in honor and memory of Francis and Laurie Raimer, but isn't available at the present time. Check the National website for further information and updates.

NRLCA To Be National Partner in Food Drive



**LETTER CARRIERS'
FOOD DRIVE**

RED SATURDAY IN MAY

PUT YOUR NON-PERISHABLE DONATION IN A BAG BY YOUR MAILBOX.
WE'LL DELIVER IT TO A LOCAL FOOD BANK.

National Partners



UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE



The 28th annual National Association of Letter Carriers' (NALC) *Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive* takes place on Saturday, May 9, 2020.

The NRLCA proudly continues its support of the annual Food Drive and are we proud to align ourselves with such a noble and distinguished cause. The *Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive* is the country's largest one day food collection event.

This food drive comes at a critical time of the year. Food donations usually plummet after the winter holidays. This leaves community food pantries nearly empty by spring and food requests increase immensely in the summer.

During the school year, 22 million children receive free or reduced-priced meals through the *National School Lunch Program*. Vacation from school means meals for many children are no longer available.

The *Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive* helps to fill those food pantries back up to provide for those in need. With the help of sponsors, volunteers and the USPS we collected 75.7 million pounds of food that was distributed to our local food pantries, shelters and churches in 2019.

The NRLCA will assist NALC in promoting the volunteer collection of non-perishable food, encourage participation by rural carriers in

the effort, and help deliver donations to local food banks.

As always, participation in the drive is strictly voluntary. All rural carriers have a right not to participate unless given a direct order. If required to participate involuntarily, management must compensate the carrier in some way. We encourage each of you to consider the good that occurs through this endeavor and participate if possible.

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Mid-Carolinas District Representative

Bethany Small

Hot Topics!

Second Trips

The Mid-Carolinas district is seeing an increase in grievance activity in a few different areas. Second trips would have to rank first. Most everyone was expecting a little bit of a slow down in parcels after the holidays but it doesn't seem like that happened.

I addressed this issue with our District Manager Leslie Johnson Frick in January. She explained that the issue that we were having here in the Mid-Carolinas was unfortunately a complex and multi-faceted issue that was going to take time and some creativity to fix.

The main issue in the coastal areas boils down to the fact that we have outgrown both our Fayetteville buildings and our mail volume exceeds the capacity of the processing equipment. From a facilities standpoint, this is the proverbial 10lbs in a 5lb sac.

When mail is processed, it is sorted into various types of large containers (racks, cages) and labelled for the appropriate office. Until that truck is ready to be loaded, it is staged on the dock. Due to the extreme space constraints in the building, there usually comes a point where there is no more room to stage additional cages. If the mail can't be moved out of the work areas and into the staging areas, then the whole operation comes to a stand-still. Trucks are forced to depart the plant partially full so that the staged mail can be loaded and sent. This means that not all the mail for the day is getting on those first trucks. This is why we are getting second and third trucks.

Staffing issues in the plants across the state has also been identified as a contributing factor. When shifts at the plant aren't fully staffed, less mail can be worked during that shift, creating the need to send multiple trucks to keep as on schedule as possible.

The plants would run the machines 24 hours a day if they could, which leads us to the least fixable aspect of the problem. The machines require a 4-hour maintenance window every day. This cannot be put off or

skipped, especially when it's the only machine in the building at which point there is no back up.

I would have to agree that this is a complex set of problems and that it will take time to work through the many challenges that the district is facing.

We are a state whose population continues to grow so this will most certainly not be the last time we have issues. Make sure you are recording your second trips properly on your 4240.

Scanner Data

Another issue we are hearing about is involving the use of scanner data for purposes of remeasurement. Many carriers are receiving Letters of Demand for overpayment of EMA and sometimes a decrease in evaluation based off of route adjustments as a result of the scanner measurements. Rural Carriers are entitled to route measurements conducted in person by management and we should not accept any changes to the route length as a result of the scanner data.

In the M-38, Section 621 states that "The postmaster or designee will remeasure the rural route using a measuring device tested for accuracy." The Union does not believe that GPS meets this requirement, as there is no way for the parties to mutually calibrate this method. Furthermore, the M-38 states that that measurement should not be done while the carrier is serving the route.

Rural Carriers also have the right to be present for the route remeasurement while off duty and in a calibrated vehicle provided by management. The use of GPS to remeasure a route does not allow for the procedure outlined in the M-38 to be conducted, observed or challenged by the carrier before the changes are made.

The use of the data obtained by the scanner may be used to alert management that physical remeasurement is necessary, however it should never be used independently to change the mileage and subsequently cause an adjustment to the evaluation and or the mileage. When this occurs and a Letter of Demand is issued, I encourage the impacted carrier to immediately file a grievance.

Backing Issues

Backing has become another hot topic in the district. It seems that the policies set forth by each district on backing frequently changes and is often not consistent with neighboring districts.

(Continued on page 27)

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We have been made aware that our National Office is seeking clarification of the backing policy from Postal Headquarters in an effort to prevent the confusion that currently exists.

Some offices are being told no backing, others are being told only under certain conditions or for certain distances. Some carriers have had investigative interviews and even discipline for allegedly backing for an unsafe distance or where they are not authorized. This is again an unacceptable use of the scanner data.

GPS scanner data is not a reliable or trusted source of information and should only be used to indicate to management that a Driver Observation may be necessary if an issue is suspected. If management wants to issue discipline, they need to prove their allegations, and this is simply not possible using sometimes inaccurate and unreliable scanner data.

In the meantime, please follow the directives that your management has issued and then file your grievance. Please make sure that any backing points that are part of your route are clearly shown on your PS 4003. Please grieve any discipline that is issued based off of scanner data.

Arrow Keys

There seems to be threats to safety and security nowadays that we never used to have to consider. Crimes involving Arrow Keys have become more common. We must in turn step up our diligence in protecting our customers against being the victims of mail theft or financial crimes such as identity theft or check fraud.

On page 1 of the PO-603 in Section 12: *Basic Carrier Responsibilities*, it states that the carrier is responsible for “protecting all mail, monies, and postal equipment entrusted to you.” It also states that the carrier is responsible for “returning all mail, monies, and postal equipment to the Post Office when you return from the route.”

We are expected to attach the Arrow Key to our person for the duration of our time away from the office. Do not wait to tell your manager that your Arrow Key has gone missing until you finish your route, call them as soon as you know!

The protocol that is now in place in our district requires that when an Arrow Key doesn’t make it home to the Post Office, that the POOM, the District Manager and the OIG be immediately contacted. Plans have to be put in place to change every affected lock in the

region if needed, which I imagine would be a costly endeavor.

Please grieve any discipline that is issued based off of scanner data.

That being said, we need to remind ourselves that the lengths we go to in protecting the mail and equipment has limitations. We are required to exercise ‘reasonable care,’ or a degree of caution and concern an ordinarily prudent and rational person would use in similar circumstances. Examples of this might include things like securing your vehicle when you step away from it, protecting

mail from rain or keeping the scanner safe from loss or damage.

Compromising your safety and security is not within the parameters of ‘reasonable care.’ Please do not challenge someone who is threatening your safety. Run away or retreat to safety if you can. If not, give them what they want. Don’t try to stop them, let them go and get help. Your life is not a fair trade for mail or personal possessions.

Please **BE SAFE** above all else!

Have a safe and happy Spring!!

Greensboro District Representative

Jeff Essick



Working in a Hostile Environment

After reading the article I wrote in the January-February newsletter on accidents, safety and among other things, how to file a grievance, I realized that we really are experiencing some difficult times.

I feel very fortunate to be able to do something every day where I can make a difference in helping others. It inspires me to continually strive to help our craft and management work toward a common goal for the good of each employee. Everyone deserves to go to work in a safe and tolerable environment.

After working as a USPS employee for over 36 years, I’m saddened by the way our work environment has changed. I also realize that the morals, thoughts and actions of the world around us have changed. Together, we must work towards changing the not so good things, deal with the reasonable or inevitable and adapt to the things around us that we

(Continued on page 28)

Recently I've dealt with long-term employees who for various reasons have just up and quit their jobs. I am very troubled by the trend I'm seeing. I pray every day for carriers who end up working under a manager that doesn't know how to manage people.

Managers who are losing control seem to grasp for extreme ways to mistreat, mismanage, harass, bully and create a hostile environment; all in the name of manipulating people, just to get them to conform and to make unrealistic goals. Unfortunately, I also see carriers who become negatively influenced and contribute to a not so good environment themselves.

Having a job is a blessing. We all should be happy to have a job and try to see the positive in it. Whatever we're asked to do within the confines of our National Agreement, we should do it. We must be there to give and not to receive.

If we work towards controlling our own thoughts and actions, our work environment may just become a little less stressful and a little more tolerable.

a route in the near future to visit the National Website, (www.NRLCA.org) and view the Automated Job Bidding link on the Home page.

To avoid the mistakes that others have made, you should visit [this link](#) and study the presentation, BEFORE it is time to bid. When bidding, the only time you can bid, change a bid or withdraw a bid, is while the job offering is open. Once it closes, there will be no changes allowed. Remember, if you have any questions, problems or concerns while bidding, you should immediately contact management and then contact your steward or representative.

Relief Day Work List

When a regular rural carrier is needed to work a relief day, due to the unavailability of a leave replacement, the Employer will, per **Article 8, Section 5. Relief Day Worked of EL 902** (*Our Contract*):

1. Select carriers on the list, in order of seniority on a rotating basis, to work on the relief day.
 2. If the need still exists, the Employer will accept volunteers from regular carriers not on the list before requiring regular carriers not on the list to work the relief day. Such requirement will be by juniority.
- B. On the day the regular carrier works the relief day, the assigned leave replacement may be required to work any route in the delivery unit consistent with the provisions of this Agreement. Administrative errors in the assignment of work to regular carriers on relief days will not result in monetary remedies.
- C. The Employer is not required to work any regular carrier on a relief day if it would cause the carrier to exceed the hours of the annual guarantee or fifty-six (56) actual hours within one (1) week.

Relief Day Work List Q and A

Q. *When is the RDWL supposed to be posted?*

A. The RDWL will be posted three weeks prior to the beginning of the first full pay period in May. *The RDWL will be posted for sign up on April 18, 2020 through May 1, 2020.*

Q. *When will the new RDWL become effective?*

A. The new RDWL will be effective May 9, 2020.

Q. *If I sign the relief day work list (RDWL), can I decline to work a relief day?*

A. No, a carrier who signs the RDWL is agreeing that

(Continued on page 29)

March April 2020

**Everyone deserves
to go to work
in a safe and
tolerable
environment.**



If you need assistance or have questions about work, please contact your assigned steward or representative. We are here to assist you.


If you are experiencing other issues at work or at home, seeking assistance through The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is an option. They offer free confidential counseling to us as employees. The number is: 1-800-EAP-4YOU (1-800-327-4968).

AUTOMATED JOB BIDDING



Automated Job Bidding

JOB BIDDING



Over the past few months we have received calls from carriers who failed to bid properly and did not receive the route or position that they would have, had they submitted a proper bid. I encourage every rural employee who may need to bid for

he or she is ready and willing to work any relief day as needed.

Q. *Once I sign the RDWL, can I decide at a later date to remove my name from the list?*

A. Yes, a carrier may remove his or her name from the RDWL at any time. However, if the carrier is scheduled to work a relief day prior to removing his or her name, the carrier must work that scheduled relief day.

Q. *Can a carrier on the RDWL who is selected to work a relief day defer to another carrier on the RDWL?*

A. No. A carrier must work their relief day when selected based on the rotation of the RDWL.

Q. *Can a leave replacement be required to work on a route that they do not know as a result of the regular carrier working the relief day?*

A. Yes. A leave replacement may be required to work any route in the delivery unit, even if they have not previously worked the route. The leave replacement would be entitled to be compensated for the evaluated hours of the route or the actual hours worked, whichever is greater in accordance with Article 9.2.M.3 if required to work a route that he/she had not carried in the past 12 months (or never carried before).

Q. *If I sign the RDWL and all the routes in my office*

are moved to another office, will my name remain on the RDWL in the new office?

A. When all routes in one office are moved to another office, the RDWL in the original office is merged with the RDWL in the new office.

Q. *If my office is a Remotely Managed Post Office, under the direction of a postmaster in an Administrative Post Office, is one RDWL utilized for all of the offices associated with the Administrative Office?*

A. No. As with stations and branches, the RDWL is established for each RMPO and APO individually. Each is considered a separate delivery unit for this purpose. The RDWL is administered and utilized separately in each delivery unit. (RMPO or APO).



Cost-of-Living Raises Set for February 29, 2020

Pursuant to the release of the January 2020 Consumer Price Index - Urban Wage and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), and in accordance with Article 9.1.E, the fourth COLA adjustment of the 2018-2021 National Agreement will result in a \$187 increase for eligible rural carriers.

This COLA adjustment will be effective February 29, 2020, (PP 06-2020). All COLA adjustments are based on a 40-hour evaluation with proportional application to those route evaluations over 40 hours. The increase should appear in paychecks dated March 20, 2020.

In accordance with Article 9.1.E.3, full COLA adjustments will apply to Table One and new Step 15 of Table Two. COLA adjustments to Steps 1 through 14 of Table Two will be adjusted proportionally to each step's percentage of Step 15. This will serve to bring Table Two schedule (Step 15) employees to the same pay level as Table One (Step 12) employees, thereby eliminating the pay differential between Table Two and Table One employees at the top step and for the rest of their careers.

NOTE: All leave replacement employees will now receive an additional 1% salary adjustment annually in lieu of COLA adjustments. Those leave replacement employees on the rolls prior to August 11, 2012, will now receive the additional 1% salary adjustment annually, rather than waiting for a COLA roll-in at the end of the agreement.

Updated pay schedules have been posted at www.nrlca.org and will be included in a future edition of the *National Rural Letter Carrier Magazine*.

From the NRLCA website

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June 1st Deadline For North Carolina Scholarships

Auxiliary News

From

Susanne Reavis

Hello *NCRLCA* Auxiliary Members

If you are the spouse of a NC Rural Letter Carrier that automatically makes you an auxiliary member and we would like for you to attend our meetings at the State Convention and Fall Booster meetings along with your local district meeting. Your children and grandchildren can be members of the Junior auxiliary also. There are age restrictions for this group, for the posters and essays the ages are 6-20

The convention this year is coming soon and we're going to Cherokee again June 21-24, 2020. This is Fathers Day so it could be a great gift for Dad to bring him to the mountains for a few days and enjoy the convention.

One of the programs for the National Auxiliary president is Americanism, "Volunteer, Recycle, Donate". I'm sure most of us do all of these in some form. We do all three in our household and I hope you will consider doing them in yours.

This year the auxiliary would like to revamp our Country Store at the State convention. We are in need of donations to sell. It would be appreciated if the items are new or slightly used.

Of course homemade crafts are always welcome and appreciated. Some ideas are, baskets, wreaths, afghans, dishcloths. Books, cookbooks, prints, candles also make great items to resale. If you have fresh made cakes, cookies, etc. you will need to make arrangements to get those items to the State convention.

All the proceeds from the Country Store goes into the Junior Scholarship fund and helps fund programs for the Juniors at the State convention. If you have a child or grandchild of age for the Juniors, please come and bring them. The kids learn how to carry out their meeting and also have lots of fun times planned for them also. The winners in the posters and essays win a monetary amount. Ages 6-7 poster "how my family recycles", age 8-9 poster "How donating Items helps others", age 10-11 poster "Make your Home Poison Safe", age 12-14 poster, "Be a Volunteer", age 15-17 essay, "Poison Proof your Home", age 18-20 essay "How Volunteering Makes a Difference", Special Education – poster, "Items to Recycle".

It's almost time for the district meetings to begin for this year and I'm sure if you have a handmade item and you can't get to the State convention, the State representative or Auxiliary member at your district meeting would be happy to bring your item to the Auxiliary at the convention.


If your child applies for a North Carolina Auxiliary scholarship, the application needs to be post marked or given to the Auxiliary Secretary by June 1, 2020.

You will find her name and address listed with the officers on the left of this page.

APRIL 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3 Pay Day	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 PP-9
12 Easter Sunday	13	14	15 Tax Day	16	17 Pay Day	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 PP-10
26	27	28	29	30		

MAY 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 Pay Day	2 Last Day for Delegate Nominations
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 PP-11
10 Mother's Day	11	12	13 Last Day for District Meetings	14	15 Pay Day	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23 PP-12
24	25	26	27	28	29 Pay Day	30
31						

Important Dates

March 8	Daylight Savings Times Begins	June 20	Ballots Counted
March 17	Saint Patrick's Day	June 21	Father's Day
April 12	Easter Sunday	June 21	State Convention Meet & Greet
April 15	Tax Day	June 22	Opening Day, State Convention
May 4	Last Day for Delegate Nominations	June 24	State Convention Ends
May 12	Mother's Day	July 3	Independence Day Holiday observed
May 13	Last day for District Meetings	July 4	Independence Day
May 25	Memorial Day		



NCRLCA
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SPRING LAKE NC 28390-1562

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2020 NC State Convention June 21 thru 24, 2020

**Harrah's Resort & Casino
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28719**

Phone (800) 427-7247
Room Rate is \$109.00 + tax
Group is NC Rural Letter Carriers

**Reservations must be made
by May 20, 2020
72 hour cancelation policy**

OFFICIAL ELECTION NOTICE

Elections for the office of President, Vice-President (one year terms), Secretary/Treasurer (two year term) and Executive Committeeman (3 year term) will be held at the State Convention taking place at Harrah's Resort, 777 Casino Drive, Cherokee, NC 28719 on Wednesday, June 24, 2020.

A secret ballot election for the delegates of the North Carolina RLCA to the 2020 NRLCA National Convention to be held in Spokane, Washington from August 18 through August 21, 2020 will be conducted by mail.

Ballots will be mailed to all members on or before May 28, 2020. For more information see page 12.

