



North Carolina Rural Carrier

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

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January-February 2021

Relief Carrier Appreciation Week is February 6-12, 2021

The National Rural Letter Carriers' Association has designated the week of February 6-12, 2021 as National Rural Relief Carrier Appreciation Week. Your North Carolina board wants to say thank you for all you do!

We are encouraging all of our North Carolina regular carriers to please take the time to show your leave replacements your gratitude. Let them know that their hard work, dedication and commitment to the job has not gone unnoticed. Actually, we hope that you value and acknowledge them throughout the year. A little recognition can go a long way towards the morale in an office.

This year has been an exceptional challenge! The number of parcels we delivered this holiday is not yet known; but we all realize that this has to be a record year. First it was Covid-19 parcels, next it was political ads, ballots and election mail. Finally, it was an overwhelming amount of Christmas purchases and deliveries that placed a tremendous strain upon the entire postal service. If you have a sub that survived all that and is still with us, then now is absolutely the time to thank them!

Please send pictures of your RCAs, ARCs, PTFs and/or office appreciation party to Vicki Gray (address and email are on page 2), for possible publication in the next issue of the NCRC.

Inside This Issue

Retiree COLA

Steward Election Forms



National Board Announces New Recruitment Program

A new **Recruit A Friend Today (RAFT)** initiative will begin on January 2, 2021. Both the new member and the recruiter will receive an incentive payment under this new RAFT program.

Payments will be processed once the new member's dues withholding form (PS 1187) is accepted and processed by the USPS.

Please see page 10 For more details.

North Carolina Rural Letter Carriers' Association

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Sea Level	23	Peach Belt	5	Southeastern	8
Guilford	30	Central Carolina	16	Foothills	10
Roanoke	44	Yadkin River	26	Cleveland/Gaston/Lincoln	29
Rutherford/Polk	47	Watauga/Avery	57	Randolph	42
Tidewater	52				

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Burke/Caldwell/Catawba	9	Cumberland/Hoke	20	Five County/Person	28
Smokey Mountain	11	Wake	24	Johnston	34
Durham/Orange	12	Piedmont	50	McDowell/Mt Mitchell	36
Caswell/ Rockingham	14	Union	54	Mecklenburg	38

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Articles are the opinion of the Author and not necessarily the NCRLCA, the NCRLCA or the Editor.

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 Lucky*NC21

The password will be
changed to the above on
January 31, 2021.

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

Cover Photo

Hellebores bloom in Raleigh, North
Carolina in January.

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New EMA Rate - 70.0¢ per mile Effective January 2, 2021 (Pay Period 02-2021)

On December 10, 2020, the Bureau of Labor Statistics released the November 2020 Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which established the Private Transportation Index at 199.76, a decrease from the August 2020 Index of 200.83.

Therefore, based on the November 2020 CPI-W release, the Equipment Maintenance Allowance (EMA) for rural carriers will decrease 0.5¢ to 70.0¢ per mile.

President
Brenda Gibbs

Work In Congress Continues



Happy New Year! 2021 has finally arrived!

As I'm writing this article, a vaccine for Covid-19 has just been approved. This is a big step for those of us who are at risk every day. I sympathize with the many rural carriers who have been affected and those who will continue to be. We have carriers among us that have recovered rather quickly and some that have been out of work for weeks. Let's keep those people that have been affected close to our hearts. Contact your steward if you are having issues in your office with management following the guidelines recommended by the CDC and implemented by the Postal Service.

Our work continues. We must be vigilant and contact our Representatives in DC.

In December 2020 Congress unveiled a Bipartisan Stimulus Bill with \$10 Billion for the Postal Service.

On December 1st, a bipartisan group of lawmakers released a new \$908 billion stimulus bill aimed at providing economic relief for individuals, businesses, and state, local and tribal governments. The USPS would get \$10 billion in emergency funding if passed. If passed, the proposed stimulus plan would provide relief only through the end of winter with a new bill likely to be introduced soon after the new administration takes office.

A group of senators as well as members of the bipartisan House Problem Solvers Caucus worked together to design this new spending bill. Those sena-

tors included Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Susan Collins (R-ME), Angus King (I-ME), Joe Manchin III (D-WVA), Mitt Romney (R-UT) and Mark R. Warner (D-VA). The members of the House Problem Solvers Caucus who worked on the bill included Problem Solvers Co-Chairs Tom Reed (R-NY) and Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ) as well as Reps. Dusty Johnson (R-SD), Dean Phillips (D-MN), Fred Upton (R-MI), Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) and Anthony Gonzalez (R-OH).

On December 9, 2020, the bipartisan coalition responsible for the bill released further details on stipulations for USPS emergency funding. If passed, the bill would not require the USPS to repay the \$10 billion in pandemic relief, and terms and conditions previously agreed upon in principle under the CARES Act would no longer apply. More specifically, the bill would require the USPS Board of Governors to give Congress a plan to ensure long-term solvency at the agency within 180 days of enactment. It would also compel the USPS to show how the funds were used in its quarterly and annual reports to the Postal Regulatory Commission. Lawmakers have yet to reach an agreement on the final legislative text.

On December 10, 2020, the bipartisan coalition responsible for the bill released further details regarding stipulations for USPS emergency funding, though lawmakers have yet to reach an agreement on the final legislative text.

If passed, the bill would not require the USPS to repay the \$10 billion in pandemic relief, and terms and conditions previously agreed upon in principle under the CARES Act in July 2020 would no longer apply.

If it's passed, the proposed stimulus plan would provide relief only through the end of winter with a new bill likely to be introduced shortly after the new administration takes office.

On December 22, 2020 Congress did pass the \$900 billion COVID-19 stimulus package with some changes.

USPS is to receive a \$10 billion share for operational costs. Final wording was not available when this went to press. Please check the National website at www.NRLCA.org or the North Carolina website at www.NCRLCA.org for more information.



Chaplain's Message

Jesse Ray Farmer Jr.,
Chaplain

Covered in Love

"That their hearts may be encouraged as they are knit together in love, to have all the riches of assured understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, of Christ," Colossians 2:2

During the fall and winter, I begin pulling out the thermals. Layering on my thermals, scarves and thick socks is the only way I can survive the breezy days on the mail route. My idea of a cold winter's night is to be as warm as possible, inside, next to my portable heater and thick blanket.

Most of us have found comfort and warmth underneath our favorite warm blanket spending time with the ones we love. This time of year, reminds us of newness that will be coming but also of the losses we have experienced.

Over the past few months, my wife and I have been participating in the Prayer Shawl Ministry. Although we had no part in making the beautifully knitted prayer blankets, we have been spreading the love and warmth that these blankets symbolize.

Throughout scriptures we are shown times where grief has been present. In Matthew 9:23, we see the mourners surrounding the home of the dying girl that Jesus brings back to life.

In John 11, we are told that Mary and Martha had called on Jesus to come see Lazarus when he was becoming sickly. At the point that Lazarus had died, John 11:19 reports that "many Jews had come there to comfort Mary and Martha about their brother."

There is comfort in knowing that others are sharing in your grief or trial. In 2 Corinthians 1:4 Paul tells us the Lord "comforts us every time we have trouble, so when others have trouble, we can comfort them with the same comfort."

The prayer shawl in Jewish culture symbolized old testament laws that would be worn as a cloak to remember God's law covering their life. Today the prayer shawl, blankets or hats have been used to show God's love and provide comfort to those in the community. The prayer shawls have been made by precious hands. Usually that and that themselves have seen trials and heart ache. They too have needed God's comfort and are sharing comfort with others. As the garments are made, love and prayers are woven in for whoever will receive the final product.

My wife and I are honored to pass these treasures along to those in the community as we visit those who may be hospitalized, experienced a recent loss or anyone who may need encouragement.

Prayer: Dear Lord, may you continue to give strength to those who comfort and peace to the hearts of those who may need it now. Amen

There are many Prayer Shawl Ministries around the country. I have been collaborating with Roger Southern at Madison United Methodist Church in Madison, North Carolina.

If you are interested in supporting or joining this ministry, you can check out <http://www.mumcnc.com/prayer-shawl-ministry.html> or call (336) 548-6658

If you or someone you love, would enjoy the comforts of a prayer shawl you can also text or call me at 252-939-6826 or email at rayfarmer62@gmail.com.

Obituaries

James Ronald Taylor, 56, passed away on Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at home.

James was born on February 15, 1964 in Montgomery County Maryland and moved in Charlotte NC in 1989. He was employed by the United States Postal Service, Steel Creek location.

He loved life and always made those around him happy. He was a lover of animals and had a special adoration for his horses and horseracing. Jim loved to participate in Texas Holdup Tournaments and to watch all sports, most especially hockey (Carolina Hurricanes) and football.

James was preceded in death by his daughter, Valarie, his parents Sherman and Theresa Taylor. He is survived by his brother and his wife, Kevin and Cheryl Taylor.



Safety
Scott Deal

Staying Safe In Winter Conditions

Congratulations on surviving another peak season. I am sure we set another record.

As I am sitting here writing this article, the high temperature for the day is 68 degrees. In the next few days, possibly a few inches of snow on the ground in the mountains, most of which ends up scraped in front of the mailbox. With this in mind, it is especially important this time of year to be prepared for the weather and the extremes that can happen overnight.

Just a few reminders for the season:

For our POV carriers: have the snow tires, studded tires, or mud grips ready. It is always a good idea to check the tire pressure this time of year. With the cooler temperatures it's easy to lose a little air pressure in your tires. Don't forget to check your spare tire as well just in case. Having a couple of 2 X 4's in the trunk for those dirt road flat tires will ensure you have level ground to put your jack on. Have the tools you may need for the conditions such as a shovel/sand/cat litter or a rubber mallet to gently "tap" those frozen metal mailboxes to loosen the door.

For our LLV carriers, especially our newly hired carriers: start the day off with your morning vehicle inspection paying close attention to your tires, checking air and tread, and making sure you have cables on if needed. Newly hired carriers, keep in mind the LLV

is rear wheel drive so take it smooth and steady and never drive too fast for your conditions.

For all carriers: even though the Christmas Season has come and gone, the parcel volume in some offices has not. Always maintain a clear line-of-sight out of your windows and mirrors. Stay vigilant when it comes to being aware of your surroundings.

Postal Service forms 4056 (your mailbox needs attention) and notice 38 (box blocked) can be useful if you are continually blocked from the mailbox. Management may suspend delivery if the issue isn't addressed in a reasonable amount of time and it continues to cause us delay.

If management gives us permission to use an authorized passenger, remember the passenger simply drives (POV) and must wear their seatbelt. The sanctity and security of the mail is our responsibility, and we must keep our customers information safe and secure/private.


Footwear, while our shoe policy has been in place, it does feel like it has become a hot topic of late. Simply put, a sturdy shoe in good condition will not only keep our feet safe but also dry and warm in these winter months.

If you use the Postal provided yak trax, remember those can be slick on uncovered surfaces and **EVERYTHING** is slick on ice. Take the time to be safe. If the conditions become unsafe let management know asap.


I hope everyone had a wonderful Holiday Season and I wish everyone a Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous New Year!

Thank you for the service you provide!

Stay Safe!



USPS EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
A Program You Can Trust



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

The holiday season is a time for enjoyment, but often during this time of year stress has a way of showing up and crashing the party. With COVID-19 and the tough year we've had, it's understandable that stress levels are especially elevated. Your Employee Assistance Program is here to support USPS employees and their loved ones so that you may have a healthier and more enjoyable holiday.

The USPS Employee Assistance Program has the counseling tools and resources designed to help you overcome life challenges. The tools offered by your employer can help you and your loved ones begin to address those challenges. With EAP you'll find completely free, entirely confidential access to the counseling programs and services you need to live a balanced and happy life

Retirement

Brian Hamlett



Ready To Retire?

I've recently heard of a carrier who thought they were "ready to go" with their retirement. They had been to a counseling session, filled out paperwork, and had a date in mind. Two months later and they're still trying to sort out the paperwork. Apparently, an outside retirement/investment company had met with the carrier and the carrier thought that this was the retirement session with Human Resource Shared Service Center (HRSSC). Here's a little on what to expect when you can see the proverbial "light at the end of the tunnel".

It's on the employee to get things started when it's time to retire. When you get within a year of eligibility, you need to start pulling together the necessary paperwork and get signed up for your counseling session with HRSSC. Confirming eligibility and setting a target date is the first step. The office of personnel management (OPM) has a great website with charts to find your minimum retirement date and minimum years of service.

The next step is to gather information on other benefits you may be entitled to such as TSP, Social Security, and other pensions or retirement accounts. This allows you to have a good picture of your financial position after you retire. Then, if practical, inform your supervisor of the date to allow them to plan for succession after you leave.

Contact HRSSC for your pre-retirement seminar. There are outside services that you can pay for who will walk you step by step through this process if you want. They fill out the paperwork and, from my understanding, take a lot of the stress and questions out of the process. This is by no means required though. Many folks successfully navigate the retirement process by just going through HRSSC.

The retirement counselor works with you to setup a folder. It should include official documentation of your federal work history like beginning and end dates for creditable service, effective dates for step increases that effect your High-3 average salary years, and any other documents concerning pay and service dates. You should also review health and life insurance records, benefits, and payments as well.

All this and more should be started about a year before you plan to retire. This the right time to think about whether you plan on working another Christmas season carrying mail.

This is by no means a complete list of the things you should do when considering retirement. A lot will depend on your unique circumstances. There are valuable information resources available from [opm.gov](https://www.opm.gov) and if you're close to retirement, I'd start well before a year in advance, researching this and other information.

We'll talk more about what you should do as you get within 6 months of the projected retirement date in future articles. Prudent planning makes all the dif-

Federal Retiree 2021 COLA

The 2021 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will be 1.3 percent for CSRS annuities, FERS annuities, and Social Security recipients.

The COLA will be effective with the January 2021 payment.



RCA Jill Zapata and regular carrier Patricia Casey channel the Grinch during peak season in New Bern.



RCHBP
Elaine Althoff

Manage Your Health Care

Thank you for Choosing Rural Carrier Health Benefits Plan!

First, I would like to thank our members, whether you are a long-time enrollee and continue to carry the Rural Carrier Health Benefits Plan or you just chose the Rural Carrier Health Benefits Plan during open season. Thank you.

Now that you got that out of the way now what? Register for your Aetna member website. You'll find tools to help you manage your benefits, and take better care of your health. In one, secure place. It's easy and has a wealth of information, including:

- View Claim details and explanation of Benefits (EOB)
- View plan limits such as deductible and out-of-pocket
- View plan benefits
- Estimate cost of medical treatment without cost estimator
- Access your health assessment, incentives, health programs and discounts
- Find network providers
- View and order new ID card

And much more!

How to Register Your Aetna Member Website

- Grab your Rural Carrier Benefit Plan (RCBP) ID card
- Go to RCBPhhealth.com
- Click "Aetna Navigator" or Go to "Aetna Secure Member Website" under Member Resources
- Click "Register" to sign up for an account

Step 1 - Personal Information

- Enter your member ID number exactly as it appears on your RCBP ID card
- Complete the remaining fields
- Click "Continue"

Step 2 - Create Credentials

- Create a user name
- Create a password
- Continue with remaining fields
- Click "Continue"

Step 3 - Terms and Conditions

- Read "Terms and conditions"
- Click "I Agree and Continue"

Step 4 - Profile

- You're almost there! There's a quick count-down while we create your account.
- **Profile Validation**
- Verify all the information from registration is correct. You can personalize your account by choosing the preferences that are just right for you.

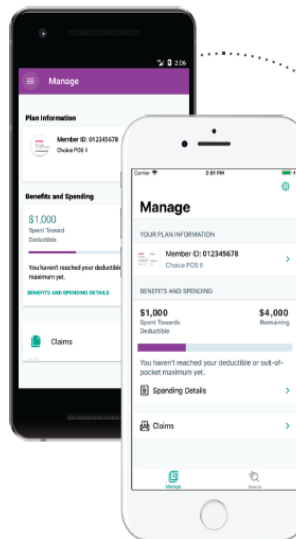
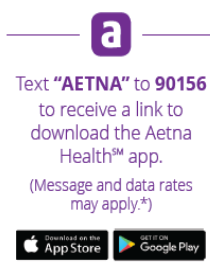
That's it- You're all set!

Get the Aetna Health Mobile App Also

Stay on top of your healthcare

You must first log in online (your password and User ID will be the same for online and app). After you have registered online **Text "AETNA" to 90156** to receive a link to download the Aetna Health App.

From here you can Search for providers, procedures and medications, get cost estimates before you get care. Track spending and progress toward meeting your deductible and Access our RCBP member ID card whenever you need it right from your phone, no more searching thru your wallet looking for your card.



Life Goes On



Legislative Representative
Van Heath

As I write this in mid-December, we are over thirty days out from election day and the Presidential race is still undecided and many statewide races across the country are undecided as well.

Who knows where this is headed? No matter how the election eventually shakes out; come January the Congress will be gaveled back into session and governance will continue.

We are still on a modified lock-down and rumors abound that we could go back into a hard lock-down any day. Be safe my friends. I am confident that we will all persevere.

Here is a list of bills; (some that I mentioned in my last article) actions and cosponsor numbers.

House of Representatives

H.Res.23: "Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of door delivery for all business and residential customers.

No action since January 2019

262 Cosponsors (NC4-David Price, NC12-Alma Adams, NC1-G.K. Butterfield)

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

No action since January 2019

267 Cosponsors (Price, Adams & Butterfield)

H.Res.54: "Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of its 6-day delivery service."

No action since January 2019

293 Cosponsors (Price, Adams & Butterfield)

H.Res.60: "Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to restore service

standards in effect as of July 1, 2012."

No action since January 2019

206 Cosponsors (Price, Adams & Butterfield)

H.Res.78: "Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States postal facility network is an asset of significant value and the United States Postal Service should take appropriate measures to maintain, modernize and fully utilize the existing post office network for economic growth."

No action since January 2019

3 Cosponsors (No NC)

H.R. 2478: "Federal Retirement Fairness Act"

No action since introduced in May.

62 Cosponsors (Butterfield)

H.R. 2382: "USPS Fairness Act"

Passed House, Received in Senate (No actions Since February 2020)

301 Cosponsors (Adams, Price, Butterfield & David Rouzer NC7)

U.S. Senate

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."

No action since March 2019.

54 Cosponsors (No NC)

S.4174: Postal Service Emergency Assistance Act. "A bill to provide emergency appropriations to the United States Postal Service to cover losses related to the COVID-19 crisis and to direct the Board of Governors of the United States Postal Service to develop a plan for ensuring the long term solvency of the Postal Service."

No action since July 2020

21 Cosponsors (No NC)

RAFT Program Guidelines

As an incentive for recruiters and new members, the 2021 RAFT Program offers the following benefits:

1. Individual recruiters will receive an incentive payment of \$15.00 for each RCA or ARC recruited and \$50.00 for each Regular or PTF carrier recruited. The only stipulation to receive this payment is that the recruited individual must sign an 1187 Dues Withholding Authorization Form.
2. The newly recruited RCA or ARC will receive an incentive payment of \$25.00 after his/her Form 1187 is received by the National Office, processed and sent to the USPS and accepted for processing.
3. The newly recruited Regular or PTF will receive an incentive payment of \$50.00 after his/her Form 1187 is received by the National Office, processed and sent to the USPS and accepted for processing.
4. In order to be eligible for the recruitment incentive payment, the recruiter must provide their USPS EID or CSA number and their full name and address (legibly) either in the upper right-hand corner of the 1187 or on an attached sheet before mailing it to the State Secretary.
5. There is no eligibility waiting period as in the past (2 months free before processing). All 1187 forms will be processed upon receipt as soon as administratively possible.
6. In addition, no incentive payments will be made to State Associations. Incentive payments will only be made to the new member and the individual recruiter when identified.

If you have any questions please call Vicki Gray at 910-745-8815.

NCRLCA Dues for 2020-2021

Regular, PTF.....Cash.....	\$741.00.....	1187.....	Bi-Weekly.....	\$28.50
Retired.....Cash.....	\$111.00.....	1187R.....	Monthly.....	\$9.25
73, RCA, RCR, ARC.....Cash.....	\$248.00.....	.1187.....	Bi-Weekly.....	\$9.54

The membership year begins July 1, and 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.

Recruiter Name _____ EID _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Revised
NRLCA Form 1187
2017

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
AUTHORIZATION FOR DEDUCTION OF DUES

RURAL CARRIER
CLASSIFICATION

☐ Regular ☐ PTF ☐ Relief ☐ ARC

(USPS EMPLOYEE I.D. NUMBER)

LASTNAME

FIRSTNAME

MI

MAILING ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP CODE +4

POSTAL INSTALLATION WHERE EMPLOYED

ZIP CODE OF INSTALLATION

INSTALLATION FINANCE NO.

SECTION A - AUTHORIZATION BY EMPLOYEE

I hereby assign to the **National Rural Letter Carriers' Association**, from any salary or wages earned or to be earned by me as your employee (in my present or any future employment by you) such regular and periodic membership dues as the union may certify as due and owing from me, as may be established from time to time by said Union. I authorize and direct you to deduct such amounts from my pay and to remit same to said Union at such times and in such manner as may be agreed upon between you and the Union at any time while this authorization is in effect.

This assignment, authorization and direction shall be irrevocable for a period of one (1) year from the date of delivery hereof to you, and I agree and direct that this assignment, authorization and direction shall be automatically renewed, and shall be irrevocable for successive periods of one (1) year, unless written notice is given by me to you and the Union not more than twenty (20) days and not less than ten (10) days prior to the expiration of each period of one year.

This assignment is freely made pursuant to the provisions of the Postal Reorganization Act and is not contingent upon the existence of any agreement between you and my Union.

Contributions or gifts (including dues) to the NRLCA are not tax deductible as charitable contributions. However, they may be tax deductible under other provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE

DATE

PHONE

EMAIL ADDRESS

SECTION B- FOR USE BY STATE ASSOCIATION

R - NATIONAL RURAL LETTER CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION

SIGNATURE OF ACCEPTING UNION OFFICIAL

DATE

I hereby certify that the dues of this organization for the above named member, for the applicable designation, are currently established at _____ per pay period.

LOC #	STATE
DATE	REMIT #

Vicki Gray

NC

STATE SECRETARY

SECTION C- FOR USE BY NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Date of Delivery to Employer (For National Office use)

ANNIVERSARY DATE TO BE USED
AT USPS PERSONNEL OFFICE

Send to:

NCRLCA Secretary/Treasurer
Vicki Gray
424 Wapiti Dr.
Spring Lake, NC 28390



PAC CHAIR
Robert Gurganus

We Need You

Hello everyone! It's your pal Porkchop. As I write this the election is over and the first doses of the Covid-19 vaccine are on their way to be distributed to front line medical workers and older people vulnerable to the virus.

On a personal note, I am a participant in the Moderna Covid-19 vaccine clinical trials and am hopeful that as the vaccine becomes more readily available that things will return to normal. I miss being able to meet with my fellow carriers and learn from you about what's going on in your offices and what you'd like to see our union focus on for the future. Like the song says, there is power in a union!

Our PAC contributions are a powerful vaccine against bad bills and labor policies that make our jobs less safe and our service less effective. Increasingly getting access to "the room where it happens" is becoming more important than ever. Our contributions make sure that we have a voice in the decisions that not only affect us, but future union members as well.

When I first started with the USPS years ago, we

had to pay taxes on our EMA, and it was a real burden. Luckily, our people in Washington were able to speak to people in the House and Senate who could write legislation to change that. I'd wager that most people don't know that without the political clout that our PAC affords them they'd have paid thousands more in taxes over the years. That's concrete proof that our PAC contributions matter.

I hope you'll take the time to sign up to be a sustaining donor with the form included in this issue. A small contribution from each paycheck adds up to a powerful legislative force in Washington!

When Ronnie Stutts calls Mitch McConnell, I want him to take his call. Our PAC contributions make our voice heard!

God bless our nation, and God bless our union!

YOUR PAC DONATIONS ARE NEEDED

***PLEASE CONSIDER BECOMING
A SUSTAINING DONOR NOW.
SIMPLY FILL OUT THE FORM
BELOW.***



I hereby authorize my bank to deduct from my checking account the monthly sum of: (circle one)

\$45 \$25 \$20 \$15 \$10 Other: \$_____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (print): _____

Employee ID Number: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Phone Number: _____

Please attach a voided check

Send to NRLCA-PAC 1630 Duke St, Floor 2, Alexandria, VA 22314

PAC DONORS

A very special thank you goes to our **Sustaining Donors**. Sustaining Donors are indicated by the * beside of their name below. These individuals regularly donate money to PAC via Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) or with payroll withholding.

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\$1500-\$1999

Dennis Conley*
Brenda Prevatte*

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Thank You For A Job Well Done

Vice President

Audrey Solomon



Hello everyone. Happy New Year! 2020 is now over.

It was a year for the history books. Not only did we get:

- a disease that hit millions
- a national/state shutdown
- wearing masks/hand sanitizer/gloves
- An overload of political mailings
- not waiting until Christmas to receive overtime
- parcel overload
- learned what an essential worker really is

That is just to name a few. I know you could probably name more. Whatever happened, 2020 made us look at life differently and learn to adapt. We found out quickly we are still in the business of service. Customers bought almost everything online and we got it to them.

Thank you all for a job well done.

So again, Happy New Year and I hope God's grace and mercy continue to be over each of you.



Auto-Home Insurance

Tracy Greer

Looking Ahead

As we are starting a new year, most of us are planning vacations, road trips, and sadly thinking about tax season. We have our minds on numerous projects and things we need to deal with that we seem to postpone. This may be the year we need a new vehicle, or that boat we have always wanted, an ATV, and the list goes on and on.

Most of us never think about the insurance and liabilities that come with these items. That is where I come into play and point you in the right direction.

If you are thinking about a purchase it is generally a good idea to see how it effects your insurance. You can call up your agent with a VIN number and they can quote you the cost prior to your purchase.

The old saying of being able to buy it, does not mean we can afford to own it. Maintenance, repairs, and even insurance can be extremely pricy on more affordable items, especially cars.

Now, I am not trying to say what you can afford or

not, just merely saying to plan. I purchased a vehicle one time that caused my insurance to jump about \$100.00 bucks a month. This was not an expensive vehicle by any means, but it was hard to work on body wise and parts were very expensive. I learned that lesson the hard way.

National General understands our needs and knows how to help us plan. If you already have National General, thank you. The New Year is a good time to revisit your policy and see if a lower rate is available. If you do not have National General, I recommend calling for your free, no obligation quote today. Call 1-888-325-7727 and mention code R/RP when you speak to an agent. The best news is you receive a \$10.00 gift card for your time.

I also want to take a moment of personal privilege.

Folks, it has been a tough year for many of us. Many of you I know personally and some of you may have been recently hired, and many of you I have not met yet.

All our functions have been cancelled and we have not had an opportunity to meet in person. I truly hope we get back on track soon. I am planning on seeing each of you at spring meetings but there is still uncertainty as to what lays ahead for us.

Please if you need anything feel free to call or text. I hope all of you are healthy and hanging on. See all of you soon!

Happy New Year!

I don't know about you, but I'm really glad to welcome a new year. 2020 was fraught with challenges and hardships for so many of us. Turning the calendar to January 01, 2021 promised good things to come. One of those good things is something many of you have requested—a method of checking analytics.

How is the website doing?

How many hits are we getting?

From where are they generating?

With this in mind, it is my pleasure to introduce you to the new analytics tool our host provided per our request. It is on the administrator's page, but can be shared on the website or in the newsletter, which we will do periodically. While looking ahead to a new year is exciting, looking behind can help us set goals.

Let's begin with the prior year up to December 7, 2020.

We can get a lot of information from these analytics. For instance, in Figure 1, we can see that during the past year up to December 7, 2020, our website had 16,356 page views from 3,868 users.

The average amount of pages viewed per session was 3.5, and there were 4,673 sessions.

Figure 2 shows us how the users found our site. For instance, 1,940 were direct connections, 1,778 came from organic searches, and 111 came from social media. Of the social media networks, only 4 came from LinkedIn. Instagram and Facebook ranked closely at 51 and 56, and Google searches provided 1,711.

We are working on bringing you some other exciting additions to the website, and welcome your feedback.

This is your site, your homepage for the things of interest to you. Please continue sharing your ideas and we'll continue striving to bring them to life.

Here's hoping 2021 brings good health, much wealth, and an overabundance of joy to each of you!

Webmaster

Renee Johnson



Figure 1: Prior year by month

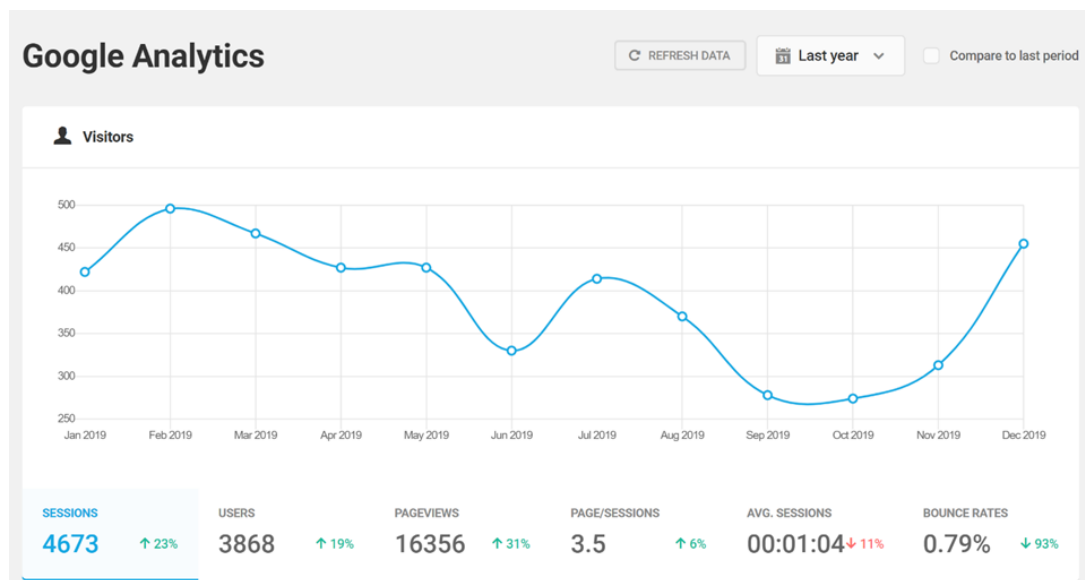
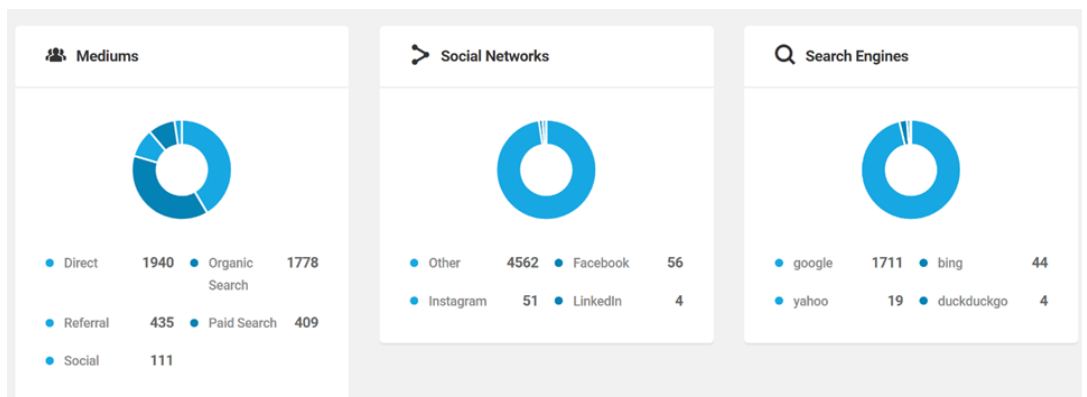


Figure 2: Mediums, Social Networks, and Search Engines



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NO TEXTING PLEASE

Texting is not an acceptable form of business communication.
The NRLCA does not want the employees of the National Steward System (NSS) texting.
This includes your DRs, ADRs, Area Stewards and Local Stewards
When needed, please **CALL** your assigned Steward or Representative.



Mid-Carolinas District Representative

Bethany Small

Every Office Needs a Matrix

Hopefully the new year finds each of you well and rested! As we move into what will hopefully be a better year, let's get back to the basics and talk about RCAs, the matrix and scheduling. Article 30 concerns working rules for Carriers, both Regular and Leave Replacements. This particular article has so many topics that it touches on but let's take a look at the parts of Article 30 of the National Agreement that discuss route assignments and scheduling for RCAs.

I first want to remind everyone that scheduling is the absolute responsibility of Management (30.1.G). In years past, it was not uncommon for the Regular and the RCA to make arrangements without Management's involvement to cover a route. However, Management retains the exclusive right and in turn, exclusive responsibility to schedule for their installation. Regular Carriers and Leave Replacements should not be making arrangements amongst themselves to cover a route, that is to always be done by Management.

RCAs are appointed only to fill leave replacement vacancies on regular routes or auxiliary routes (Article 30.2.A.1). RCAs should not be scheduled in other crafts. Each newly hired RCA is required to complete a (90-Day actually worked or 1 calendar year, whichever comes first) probationary period during which the employee may be separated at Management's discretion. There is not another probationary period when an RCA becomes a PTF or Regular (except concerning Leave usage), or when an RCA transfers to a new office as an RCA (30.2.B).

Every single office with rural routes should have an office-wide seniority list and a matrix. The Matrix was first introduced in the 1995-1999 National Agreement and its purpose was to "clarify the proper scheduling of leave replacement assignments beyond the primary assignment and allow for utilization of leave replacements assigned to a specific delivery unit, once the office matrix is exhausted."

My point in sharing this detail is that there is absolutely no valid excuse that would justify why an office does not have a matrix after nearly 26 years. Since I have recently been made aware of an office in

the district that did not have a matrix, it would be fair to consider that there may be others.

RCAs will be assigned to a primary route, a secondary route and a tertiary route, otherwise known as the first, second or third route assignments. Your primary route will be your primary responsibility. When your regular carrier is not working, you should be. No other Leave Replacement is entitled to your primary route work before you (except in some OT situations). However, if you are unavailable then the RCA in the secondary position should be scheduled to work (scheduling on the 2nd and 3rd assignment may be impacted if office has PTF carriers). If the secondary is unavailable, then the RCA in the tertiary or third position should be scheduled (30.2.D). It is not proper for work in the rural craft to be scheduled based solely on seniority. The Matrix should be the first document that is referenced when Management is looking to schedule work on a rural route. Once the Matrix has been exhausted, then Management assigns by seniority to qualified leave replacements and then unqualified leave replacements within the delivery unit. There are other factors that may impact this but this is a general overview of the process.

No route will have more than one primary assignment. No RCA should appear more than 3 times on the Matrix and no more than one route will be a primary. PTF carriers must be assigned to 2-5 K routes as a primary and they will not appear on the Matrix in secondary or tertiary positions. RCAs working a 6-day auxiliary assignment will not appear on any other route on the matrix.

What happens when there is a Leave Replacement vacancy? When an RCA goes regular, leaves the employ of the postal service or has been unable to perform the duties of their assignment (in accordance with MOU R-8), their primary assignment is considered vacant. If the route is not added to a PTF string, it should be offered to qualified RCAs by seniority (30.2.E). If an RCA accepts the new assignment, the route they vacate would be subject to the same process.

There may be circumstances in your office that could change the way Management is required and/or is allowed to assign work, particularly in Formula offices so make sure that you contact your steward if your situation doesn't quite fit the examples given here and you have questions.

We know that as an RCA, you are expected to check the schedule to see where you are working.

(Continued on page 18)

**There is absolutely no
valid excuse that would
justify why an office does
not have a matrix...**

(Continued from page 17)

You are not expected to drive to the office on days you are not working to see if the schedule has changed. The parties agreed in Step 4 E00R-4E-C 02148230 (S-18 in steward reference guide) that when Management changes the schedule for a Leave Replacement that Management will make every effort to notify the employee of the changes in a timely manner.

Thank you to all of the RCAs in North Carolina who have worked tirelessly alongside of the Regulars for so many months. RCAs are an integral part of the workforce and they are asked to move mountains some days. Sometimes your manager may require you to do something that not contractual. Please comply with orders and directives that you are given and then file a grievance. Unless we are being asked to perform an act that puts us in harm's way or is illegal, we need to follow the instructions that we are given. Please reach out to your Steward if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you and have a wonderful spring!

Greensboro

District Representative

Jeff Essick

Goodbye to A Dreadful Year

I pray that each of you had a Merry Christmas and my hope for you is to have a prosperous New Year. After "peak" season large volumes of mail and parcels may seem like a bad thing, but without them, we really wouldn't have a job.

As I write this article, I am feeling confident that God has gotten our attention by way of Covid-19 and has caused us all to realize it is time to rethink our way of doing things. After 2020, we are now aware just how difficult life can be.

I've heard from several disgruntled carriers in the last few months. I understand the life of a rural carrier isn't the same as it once was. It is discouraging to see the deterioration of the rural craft we have become accustomed to in the past. One must realize that contractual labor issues are not a fast process when dealing with the USPS. There just simply isn't a quick fix for problems as they arise in today's environment. I am assured our National Board is working on our behalf and realize that change does

not happen overnight. I must remind each of you, just because WE know something needs to be a certain way doesn't mean our National Board can demand it and get the USPS to agree immediately. That is why it is called "bargaining".

Stewards Needed

With bargaining in mind, I am including in this article the Local Steward Election Form (Form 10) and the Local Steward Application Form (for use by a newly elected local steward). We need more local stewards. If you are considering taking on the task, I will say it can be a rewarding experience, but it is also very demanding and challenging as well. The ability to help others while protecting their rights is the necessary mindset and attitude needed to be a successful steward.

If you decide to post the Election form and hold a local steward election, I ask that you contact your District Representative (Bethany Small/Mid-Carolinas or Jeff Essick/Greensboro) before you post the Election Form in your office. We will assist you in the proper procedure in order to meet the Department of Labor guidelines. I'm including in this article the "Basic Instructions for Announcing and Conducting an Election for Local Steward".

I want to extend congratulations to ADA Daniel Caudle on his retirement from the USPS on December 31, 2020. He has dedicated his time and efforts to his fellow craft members and will now take some much-needed time to do what Carolyn tells him to, like travel and enjoy retirement together. Thank you Danny!

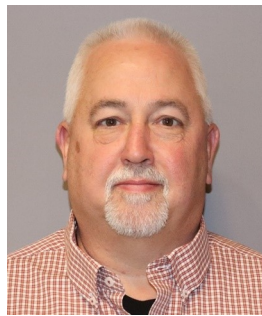
Please check the upcoming NCRLCA newsletter or website for updates and additional steward changes along with contact information and territory assignments while we transition.

Safety and Accidents

Unfortunately, many rural carriers continue to have accidents. I think there are several reasons for these occurrences. Some of them are: management's lack of hiring, and retaining a sufficient number of leave replacements, fluctuating volumes of parcels and mail (especially parcels), managements pushing carriers to meet unreal deadlines, working longer hours than usual, fatigue, exhaustion, inability to remain focused due to so many expectations from managements who want each of us to do more for less and just dealing with the stress of everyday life and the effects of Covid-19.

Please take the time to do your job properly and most of all, SAFELY.

(Continued on page 19)



**Please take the time to
do your job properly
and most of all,
SAFELY**

(Continued from page 18)

Remember, it is not a race! Each of us must work at a pace that is reasonable and most of all, safe. With the increased demand from management for us to do more in the same amount of time, I must remind you

that you are responsible for your own safety at all times. I have seen an alarming trend with more and more injuries while walking to and from a residence delivering a parcel. Watch you step. Slow down and be careful. If you feel you are being forced to work unsafe, then please contact your steward immediately.

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR ANNOUNCING AND CONDUCTING AN ELECTION FOR LOCAL STEWARD

1. Post *LOCAL STEWARD ELECTION CALL* in the office on the bulletin board used for rural carrier information or another conspicuous place. This notice must be completely filled in with the date, time and place of election. If you intend to hold the election in the Post Office, be sure and get permission from your Postmaster first. Generally it is better to schedule the election for a time and day that most carriers are in the office (Tuesday morning for example). **MAKE SURE THE POSTING GOES UP AT LEAST 15 DAYS BEFORE THE ELECTION.**
2. Allow members to nominate their chosen candidates or themselves by signing and printing their name on the Election Call.
3. At the planned time of the meeting, announce to all carriers present that the election meeting is going to be held and give them time to get prepared and get to the meeting place.
4. At the meeting have someone (any union member not a candidate) conduct the election. He/she should announce that only union members can nominate, vote or hold the office. If there are any questions about union membership contact your NRLCA District Representative or Assistant District Representative or the State Secretary for verification.
5. The person running the meeting should then announce that _____ has/have been nominated for the position of local steward on the Election Call Form and then they should ask if there are any other nominees. They should ask this at least twice.
6. If there is only one person nominated, then the person running the meeting should then say _____ has been nominated, all those in favor raise your hand. It only takes one vote to win that election because we do not allow "NO" votes or write in votes in elections.
7. If there is more than one candidate, then ballots should be handed out and each member votes secretly. The group should choose 2 or 3 people to count the ballots and report the results. It takes a majority **of the votes cast** to win an election. If there are more than 2 candidates, one must still get a majority (more than 50%) of the votes or there is no election. In this case, one candidate may wish to drop out. Either way, the vote must be taken again until one candidate gets a majority.
8. Whoever is elected should then collect signature from the carriers that voted on the *Application for Steward Certification* and also fill in all their personal information. **Both the Election Call and the Application for Steward Certification should then be sent to the District Representative.** If a ballot vote was held then the ballots should also be sent to the District Representative.
9. Remember, your steward is not certified to act the steward until trained and certified by the District Representative. The newly elected steward will be contacted soon after the election to schedule certification training.

NATIONAL RURAL LETTER CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION



Local Steward Election Call

A Local Steward Election is called for the
_____ **Post Office.**

This election will be held on _____

At _____

Location _____

**THIS NOTICE MUST BE POSTED AT LEAST 15 DAYS
PRIOR TO THE ELECTION DATE**

Date of Posting _____

In accordance with the Constitution of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association Article IX, Section 7, this notice hereby constitutes written notification to all NRLCA members that an election shall be held for the position of a Local Steward in their office. Failure of members to exercise this right will result in the local office being assigned representation in accordance with the Constitution of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association.

The selection of a Local Steward should be in accordance with democratic procedures. To become a steward, a rural carrier must be a member of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association. Local Steward Elections will be conducted in the month of July of every fourth year (i.e.; 2016, 2020, 2024 etc.) unless the incumbent Local Steward is unopposed.

The Steward shall serve until a successor is elected and certified or until he or she resigns. An election may be called any time the position is vacant, or when two-thirds of the members submit a petition to the District Representative for approval a Local Steward may be re-elected to the position.

Written notification to all NRLCA members shall be given at least 15 days before the date of the election. A majority vote of those NRLCA members voting is required for an election. When there is more than one (1) Local Steward at an installation, including stations and/or branches, a Chief Steward will be elected by the NRLCA members of said office.

Re: Article IX Sections 7.B.1, 2, & 3 of the NRLCA Constitution

Nominations will be accepted at the time of election and any dues paying members of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association with the exception of Assistant Rural Carrier (ARC-Des 70-5) can announce his/her intention to be a candidate by signing below:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

(Print name)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

(Sign name)

NRLCA/REVISED June 2020

NOTE: This page must be posted at least 15 days prior to the Election Date.

Application for Steward Certification

NATIONAL RURAL LETTER CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION



Date _____ Post Office (MAIN) _____
 Station or Branch _____ Finance Number _____
 Postmaster/Station Manager's Name (LFM) _____
 Mailing Address of Post Office _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 Number of Rural Routes at this Office _____ PO Phone _____ PO Fax _____
 Name of Rural Carrier Steward (LFM) _____
 Employee ID Number _____ Home Phone _____
 Steward Phone _____ Cell Phone _____ Fax _____
 Mailing Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 Email _____

This is to certify that the above named rural carrier has been elected as the RURAL CARRIER STEWARD to represent the rural letter carrier craft of employees in labor-management relations at the above named Post Office. It is understood that this representative upon successful completion of the NRLCA Training Course will be certified in accordance with Article IX Section 4.B.3 and 4 of the NRLCA Constitution. This representative will serve until; the next called election, the position becomes vacant, the incumbent Local Steward retires, or when two-thirds of the members submit a petition to conduct a steward election to the District Representative for approval in accordance with Article IX Section 7.B.1 of the NRLCA Constitution.

Signatures of those appearing below confirm the selection of the above named rural carrier as Local Steward for the rural carrier craft.
 ONLY DUES PAYING MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING ARE ELIGIBLE TO SIGN BELOW OR BE SELECTED AS STEWARD.

Signatures of Rural Carriers¹

Route No. ²	REGULAR	LEAVE REPLACEMENT
1	_____	_____
2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____
4	_____	_____
5	_____	_____
6	_____	_____
7	_____	_____
8	_____	_____
9	_____	_____
10	_____	_____

¹ If additional space for signatures is needed, attach a separate sheet.

² Indicate Vacant Routes.

I accept the responsibilities of the position of steward for the rural carrier craft for the above Post Office.

 Signature of Steward

 Print Name of Steward

District Representative Use Only - Do Not Write In This Space

Date Trained / Certified _____

Date PM / Steward Notified _____

 Signature of District Representative

The affixing of the signature of the District Representative
 will serve to validate this document

NORTH CAROLINA AUXILIARY OFFICERS

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252-771-8180
LEWhite1951@roadrunner.com

VICE PRESIDENT SUSANNE REAVIS

345 Harvey's Lane
Traphill, NC 28685
336-957-2004

SECRETARY/TREASURER SUE KELLY

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Linden NC 28356
910-980-0820 or 910-890-2804

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CAROLYN WARD

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Tyner, NC 297804
252-221-4683

PEGGY SIMMONS

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Nakina, NC 28455
910-770-3534

MIKE MOOSE

237 Northview Drive
Fayetteville, NC 28303
910-322-3917

CHAPLAIN NORMA WILLIFORD

511 Old Goldsboro Road
Newton Grove, NC 28366-7759
Phone 910-594-0433

PROVIDENT GUILD L.E. WHITE

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Elizabeth City, NC 27909-9596
252-771-8180

JUNIOR OFFICERS

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Blanch, NC 27212-9257

VICE PRESIDENT TAYLOR WARD

3951 Virginia Road
Tyner, NC 297804

SECRETARY/TREASURER LILY GRAY

424 Wapiti Dr
Spring Lake, NC 28390

CHAPLAIN MADISON HALL

9028 Main Street
Godwin, NC 28344-8387

Happy New Year Welcome to 2021

Auxiliary News

*From
Roanoke Heath*

Hope everyone had a safe and wonderful Thanksgiving and Christmas season. Welcome to the new North Carolina Rural Letter Auxiliary year 2021. The year holds new hopes and new challenges for our Auxiliary.

We now have to be thinking the new 2020-2021 scholarship season. Scholarships are available at the state and national level. Please encourage your child or grandchild to apply for the scholarships.

North Carolina scholarships are available on the North Carolina website or from one of the Auxiliary state officers. Their names and addresses are listed in the North Carolina newsletter.

The new applications have been available since November 1, 2020.

If your child or grandchildren applies for a North Carolina scholarship they must be postmarked or given to the Auxiliary Secretary by June 1, 2021.

All National Scholarship forms are on the National Website under the National and State Officers tab, then under the National Auxiliary tab.

Each National Scholarship has its own form to fill out. National Scholarship applications must be postmarked **NO LATER THAN MARCH 1, 2021**

Please make sure the application is filled out correctly – unanswered questions or incorrect information will disqualify the applicant.

Hopefully we will be able to have our State Convention in 2021.


Please stay safe and hope to see our friends soon.



James Brookshire dressed as a pony express rider for Halloween 2020.

His father Greg Brookshire is a rural carrier at the Leicester post office.

FEBRUARY 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5 <i>Pay Day</i>	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13 <i>PP-5</i>
14 <i>Valentine's Day</i>	15  <i>President's Day</i>	16	17	18	19 <i>Pay Day</i>	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 <i>PP-6</i>
28						

MARCH 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5 <i>Pay Day</i>	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13 <i>PP-7</i>
14 <i>Daylight Savings Time</i>	15	16	17 	18	19 <i>Pay Day</i>	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 <i>PP-8</i>
28	29	30	31			

Important Dates

January 1	New Year's Day Holiday
January 18	Martin Luther King Jr Holiday
February 6-12	Relief Carrier Appreciation Week
February 15	President's Day Holiday



NCRLCA
424 WAPITI DR
SPRING LAKE NC 28390-1562

Address Service Requested

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US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 387
FAYETTEVILLE NC
28302

Rural Carriers deliver with Christmas Spirit!



A J Haire delivers as the Grinch from the Rolesville Post Office.
Johnny Chandler gives Santa a lift on the roof of his car in Lexington.