



North Carolina Rural Carrier

Volume 42 Issue 3 Circulation 5000 Edited in Spring Lake NC November-December 2025

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

29 First Time Attendees at the Fall Booster

This year's Fall Booster was well attended with seventy seven members attending. Twenty nine of them attended the Booster for the first time.

Members were encouraged to make their reservations for the South Atlantic Conference this coming January in Cherokee. (Info on page 13).

Open Season and Health Insurance info was distributed along with Retirement Planning and Fall Safety tips.

Inside This Issue

Open Season

Christmas
Overtime

SAC
Registration

(Continued on page 18)



Fall Booster First Time Attendees-Seated; left to right: Andrea Hollingsworth, Mariana Camacho Gutierrez, Valencia Caldwell, Nina Turner, Sue Hahn, Lindsey Duncan, Victoria McClean, Anatinisha Harper, Kathy Hedrick, Charles Rabun, Kathy Roberson. Standing; Sonja Biggers, Elizabeth Parsons, Sara Waisner, Lusi Andre Carreno, Clarence Rogers, Alaffia Macdonald, DeMarcus Poole, Lisa Talini Zamora, Brittany Blackwood, Brandi West, Scott Milton, Shelly Johnson, Vivian Early, Porsha Snowten, Tiffany Ratliff, Teresa Tingle, Danelle Thomas, Wanda Bell.

North Carolina Rural Letter Carriers' Association

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Southeastern	8	Central Carolina	16	Albemarle	2
Tri-County/N Wayne	25	Wake	24	Roanoke Chowan	7
Yadkin River	26	Cleveland/Gaston/Lincoln	29	Foothills	10
Six County	28	Johnston/N Harnett	34	Caswell/ Rockingham	14
Randolph/Montgomery/Davidson	42	Union	54	Mecklenburg	38
Roanoke/Beaufort/Hyde/Pitt	44				

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Alamance	1	Brushy Mountain	3	Alleghany/Ashe	4
Smoky Mountain	11	Peach Belt	5	Burke/Caldwell/Catawba	9
Durham/Orange	12	Sea Level	23	Sandhills	20
Guilford	30	McDowell/Mt Mitchell/ Buncombe/Madison	36	Piedmont	50
Tidewater	52	Rutherford/Polk/Henderson/ Trans	47	Watauga/Avery	57

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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 H@ppyH*lid@y!

The password will be
changed to the above on
November 30, 2025.

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

Cover Photo

Winter Red Mailbox

Table of Contents

AFVC	12
Auto-Home Owners Insurance	10
Auxiliary News	19
Chaplain's Message	5
District Representatives & Area Stewards	16-18
Dues Rates	6
Emergency Hotline Number	3
Fall Booster	1 & 18
NCRLCA Website & Password	3
Obituaries	5
Officer Assignments	2
Open Season	7
PAC	9-10
President's Message	4
RCA Corner	22
RCHBP	7
Retirement	6
Rural Carrier Moments	15
SAC Info	13
Safety	8
Vice President's Message	11
Webmaster	14

Important Dates

November 11	Veteran's Day Holiday
November 27	Thanksgiving Day Holiday
December 25	Christmas Holiday
January 1	New Year's Day Holiday
January 24-26	South Atlantic Conference

Happy Holidays!



President

Elaine Althoff

Are you ready for Fall Weather & Open Season?

Happy Fall!

We all know what's coming besides peak season, Open Season. This year, **Open Season is November 10 – December 8, 2025.**

Unlike last year, when everyone had to change, this year if you are enrolled in the PSHB plan and **do not** want to make any changes for 2026, you do not have to take any action to stay enrolled in your current plan and coverage. Please note, like past years, if you're enrolled in Self plus one and it is higher than the Family plan, you can make the change to Self and Family during Open Season. Make your supplemental insurance choices as well.

As I say every year, **“If you do plan to make coverage changes, check that your current Physicians participate with your new insurance company as well.”**

See Tracy Greer's article in this edition.

Retirees, are you ready for open season? Make sure you take a few minutes now to reset your passwords and ensure you're ready to make any necessary changes during Open Season.

If you are retired and recently married, to change to a family health benefit enrollment, call OPM anytime from 31 days before your marriage to 60 days afterward. Otherwise, you will have to wait until open season to make the change.

Visit www.Post-Retirement-OPM.gov

The **MOU** to allow regular carriers to volunteer to work on Sundays and to volunteer to assist with other routes in the office. No carrier will be required to perform either of these duties. All work performed in accordance with this MOU shall be paid at the overtime rate.

This MOU is for the current term of our collective bargaining agreement and will not expire until May 20, 2027. You can find this MOU on www.nrlca.org

The **MOU** on leave Carryover- I always get a call on this one. You may carry over 520 hours of accumulated annual leave from leave year 2025 to leave year 2026, and from leave year 2026 to 2027.

EMA increased on October 4, 2025. The new Equipment Maintenance Allowance will increase to 97.5 Cents per mile or a minimum of \$39.00 per day, whichever is greater.

(Continued on page 5)



*Merry
Christmas*

*from
Your State Board*



Chaplain

Jesse Ray Farmer Jr.

This time last year, we watched as powerful storms—like Hurricane Helene—ripped through the East Coast, destroying homes, businesses, and entire communities.

More recently, devastating floods swept through Texas, catching many off guard, with lives lost as rivers overflowed and the waters surged into places thought to be safe. Some people never got the emergency alerts in time. Others were asleep when the floodwaters came, forced to scramble for shelter or higher ground.

For those of us who work out in the elements—like mail carriers—this imagery hits close to home. We face storms, both literal and spiritual, and we know how quickly things can change. That's why having a firm foundation matters.

Today, we face many challenges. Culture wants to divide us: left or right, liberal or conservative. The real

A Firm Foundation

question isn't which side you're on, it is what is the foundation you're building your life on.

When the moral storms hit—when you're tested in your integrity, your patience, your faith—what will hold you up?

You won't get a warning every time a storm is coming. But if you've built your life on God's truth, you'll be ready.

As mail carriers, you deliver faithfully—rain or shine. But even more important is what you carry inside: your beliefs, your convictions, your spiritual strength.

Now is the time to check your foundation. Is it solid? Is it built on the Rock?

Make sure you are standing on a solid foundation.

Wishing you all a Blessed Christmas!

(Continued from page 4) Presidents Message

You can find the full EMA schedules and the new Salary charts on www.nrlca.org

I hope many of you were able to make it out to the Fall Booster.

I hope we see everyone at the South Atlantic Conference in Cherokee, January 24th-26, 2026. This will be the first time it is held outside of Georgia. SAC has many informative seminars and most of the National Officers are in attendance there. Let's show our support and come out to SAC. See the SAC article and the www.ncrlca.org for more information.

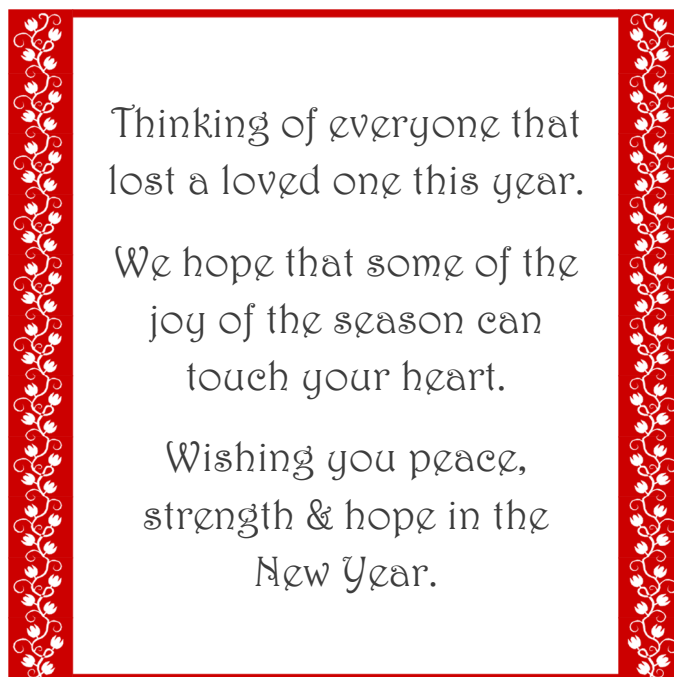
We face many challenges during this time of year. The time change will have many of us working well into the dark hours. Make sure you can be seen with reflective clothing, lights, etc. Please keep SAFE. I want you to go to work and come home to your loved ones just the same as you left in the morning. SAFE AND SOUND.

Happy Holidays



Obituaries

No Obituaries were submitted for this issue.



Thinking of everyone that
lost a loved one this year.

We hope that some of the
joy of the season can
touch your heart.

Wishing you peace,
strength & hope in the
New Year.



**Executive
Committeeman**
Telisha Locklear

Give Yourself the Gift of a Secure Retirement This Holiday Season

As we deliver holiday joy to families across America this December, it's the perfect time to think about giving yourself a gift that keeps on giving – a secure retirement.

Whether you're a new rural carrier just starting your career or a veteran thinking about your golden years, understanding your USPS benefits is one of the best presents you can give yourself and your family.

Start with the Basics: Know Your Benefits

Your retirement security rests on three pillars: your FERS pension, Social Security, and the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP).

But here's what many carriers don't realize – small mistakes in your personnel records can cost you thousands in retirement. Take time this winter to check your Form 50 and EOPF files. Those DACA codes might seem like alphabet soup, but they directly affect your annuity calculation.

Don't Leave Money on the Table

If you're not contributing at least 5% to your TSP, you're literally giving away free money. USPS automatically puts in 1% even if you contribute nothing, but they'll match up to 5% of what you put in. That's like getting a guaranteed 100% return on your investment – better than any holiday sale!

Navigate LiteBlue Like a Pro

Log into liteblue.usps.gov and explore the "My HR" section. If you're within five years of retirement, you can get an estimate of your future annuity.

It's like peeking at your presents early, but this one's encouragement!

Protect Your Family with FEGLI

Life insurance might not be the most cheerful holiday topic, but FEGLI (Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance) is crucial protection for your loved ones. Your Basic Life coverage equals your salary (rounded up to the nearest \$1,000) plus \$2,000.

Remember, the last open season for life insurance was in 2016. When the USPS has an open season on life insurance enrollment, take advantage.

Make This Season Count

As you bundle up for those cold December routes, remember that planning your retirement doesn't have to wait until spring. A few minutes checking your benefits now could mean thousands more in your pocket later. After all, the best gift you can give your future self is financial security.

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

NCRLCA Dues for 2025-2026

Regular, PTF...Cash.....	\$839.00
1187...Bi-Weekly.....	\$32.27
Retired.....Cash.....	\$115.00
1187R...Monthly.....	\$9.58
RCA, ARC.....Cash.....	\$280.00
1187.....Bi-Weekly.....	\$10.77

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.

**Reminder: Membership ends with retirement.
You **MUST REJOIN** to remain a member.**

Open Season is Here!

If you are enrolled in a PSHB plan and do not want to change, no action is needed. You will stay enrolled in that plan.

The Postal Service Health Benefits System (PSHBS) will be used specifically for health benefits enrollment.

Requires a login.gov account.

Visit www.login.gov for more information on how to set up an account.

You must be a DUES paying member to enroll in the Rural Carrier Benefit Plan!

Plans for Medicare Eligible Retirees:

Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug Plan (MAPD) for RCBP Retirees with Medicare

- ✦ Opt in by calling 866-241-0262

SilverScript Prescription Drug Plan (PDP)

- ✦ Opt in by calling 1-833-825-6754

You may enroll and make changes for dental and vision plans on the www.benefeds.gov website. There are more benefits and plans available by Greater Insurance Services through the NRLCA and that information is available by visiting www.nrlca.benefithub.com or calling 1-800-747-4472.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Check out www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/pshb/premiums to determine how much your monthly or biweekly premiums will change next year.



Are you taking advantage of RCBP's Massage Therapy Benefit?

Up to 30 Visits Per Year!

RCBP covers massage therapy when performed by a covered provider as defined in the Plan Brochure, Section 3.

The benefit is limited to 30 visits per person per calendar year and limited to one visit per day.

The in- and out-of-network benefit is the same: 15% of the plan allowance for up to 30 visits per person per calendar year and no deductible is applied.

Reimbursement:

For reimbursement, you must submit a claim as outlined in Section 7, Filing a claim for covered services.

Your claim must include:

- provider's first and last name
- provider's address
- provider/therapist's license number or certification number
- itemized bill that includes description of services rendered
- cost for each service
- paid receipt

Merry Christmas Everyone!



Executive Committeeman
Tracy Greer

2026 Rural Carrier Benefit Plan Premiums

Active Carrier		Carrier Premium	Change from 2025
Self (79A)		\$158.24	+\$11.73
Self + one (79C)		\$306.50	+\$23.97
Family (79B)		\$300.26	+\$26.89
Retired Carrier		Carrier Premium	Change from 2025
Self (79A)		\$342.86	+\$25.42
Self + one (79C)		\$664.09	+\$51.94
Family (79B)		\$650.56	+\$58.26

Fall Back, Stay Safe

On Sunday, November 2, we'll "fall back" for the end of Daylight Savings Time. That extra hour of sleep is nice, but shorter days mean more of our routes will be finished in darkness.

For us North Carolina rural carriers, this brings a mix of visibility challenges, wildlife activity, and colder temperatures to keep in mind.

Stay Lit

- Check headlights, taillights, brake lights, flashers, and turn signals daily. Properly working lights keep everyone safe.
- For deliveries after dark, a headlamp with a red light is especially helpful. The red-tinted light:
- Preserves your natural night vision
- Lets you read addresses clearly without the harsh glare of white light
- Illuminates your path when dismounting in areas with poor visibility
- A reflective vest, while optional, makes you more visible on narrow country roads and during dismounts.



Layer Up

- Dress in **layers** to stay warm and dry, but adjust as needed to avoid overheating during the more active parts of your routes.



**Executive
Committeeman**
Alicia Pressley

Wear Proper Footwear

- Choose shoes or boots with **good traction** to prevent slips, trips, and falls, especially during dismounts on wet or icy surfaces.

Watch for Wildlife

- Deer and other animals are most active around dusk and dawn, coinciding with our time on the road and many delivery times.
- A single deer often signals others nearby.
- Slow down, scan the sides of the road, and anticipate sudden crossings from fields, creeks, and wooded areas.

The November 2nd time change is a reminder to slow down, adjust routines, and stay mindful. With extra lighting, awareness of wildlife, layered clothing, and proper footwear, we can all finish our routes safely.

Each delivery matters, but so does our safety. Let's all do our part to make it home to our loved ones.

Have a Blessed Holiday Season!

Gift Yourself This Holiday Season

The Holidays are fast approaching along with numerous requests from agencies asking for your support. While making those donations consider supporting yourself and your job through PAC. PAC is a Political Action Committee that collects voluntary contributions from our NRLCA members. These contributions are distributed to members of Congress that play a key role in supporting our interests as rural carriers.

You can become a sustaining donor with a minimum of \$5 donated from each paycheck or monthly from your bank account. Forms can be found in this magazine and on NCRLCA.org on the legislative page.

One-time donations can be sent by check or money order to me at the address on page 2. They must be made out to "NRLCA PAC".

Another way you can help is to contact your Representative by phone or email about legislation that you would like them to support. Tell them your story and why you're asking for their support. We have four members of the House supporting H. Res

70 and three supporting other legislation that supports us. That leaves nine that don't.

Remember that we are a non-partisan group delivering to all of Rural America.



PAC CHAIR

Brenda Gibbs

The following are before Congress right now.

H.R. 70 "Expressing the sense of the House that Congress should take all appropriate measures to ensure that the USPS remains an independent establishment of the Federal Government and is not subject to privatization." I reported 221 co-sponsors in my last article. Alma Adams, Deborah Ross, Donald Davis and Valerie Foushee are co-sponsors. We are up one to 222 co-sponsors with a Representative from CA signing on Sept. 30th. The Senate version, **S. 147** had 7 and remained at 7 with Thom Tillis being one of those.

H.R. 1065 "Protect our Letter Carriers Act" had 135 co-sponsors previously. In August there were 4
(Continued on page 10)

Become a Sustaining Donor

Use this form for automatic PAC payments from your checking account.



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

\$50

\$25

\$15

\$10

Other: \$ _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (print): _____

Employee ID Number: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Phone Number: _____

Please attach a voided check or include Bank Routing number along with your account number.

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

WHY YOU SHOULD CHOOSE NATIONAL GENERAL AS A RURAL CARRIER

First, your state board would like to say **Happy Holidays** and thank you for your hard work and dedication to the craft. As this peak season approaches, we know rural carriers will do what we always do, pull our load, and deliver for our communities.

This season, give yourself a gift: save money and gain peace of mind with benefits designed specifically for rural carriers. With just one phone call, you can access the advantages below—plus, earn a holiday perk!

Why Choose National General?

- * **Proven Legacy** – Over 60 years of commitment to the rural craft.
- * **Understands Your Roads** – Whether dirt, mountain, icy, or snow-covered, National General knows the routes you face every day.
- * **On and Off Route Protection** – Coverage in both POV and GOV vehicles.
- * **Federal Tort Act Coverage** – Protection while performing your job duties.
- * **Job-Specific Insurance** – Tailored for carriers, not just standard commercial rates.
- * **Comprehensive Coverage Options** – Homes, cars, boats, and motorcycles, and RVs.
- * **Retirement-Friendly** – Coverage continues when you retire.
- * **Receive a \$10 e-gift card** just for calling for a quote!

Be sure to provide your email to the representative to claim your gift.

This holiday season, consider National General as your insurance partner—because they understand your job, your risks, and your needs better than anyone else.



(Continued from page 9) PAC Donors

Representatives and 6 in September bringing the new total to 145 co-sponsors. Deborah Ross, Valerie Foushee and Donald Davis are Representatives from NC, and they all signed on in the spring. The Senate version is **S.463** with 7 co-sponsors. There are now 9 co-sponsors after gaining 2 new co-sponsors from DE on September 10th.

H.R. 1522 “Federal Retirement Fairness Act” had 102 co-sponsors and is now up to 107 with 5 new co-sponsors in Sept. Donald Davis, Deborah Ross and Valerie Foushee are co-sponsors from our state, and they all signed on in the spring.

H.R. 3011 “USPS Shipping Equity Act” had 4 co-sponsors and is now up to 5 with a Representative from FL signing on Sept. 18th. No one from our state has co-sponsored this legislation.

North Carolina members that donated to PAC at the National Convention!

Elaine Althoff, Celeste Britt, Wanda Burwell, Doug Byrum, Phillip Fulwood, Brenda Gibbs, Robert Gurganus, Glenn Johnson, James Morrison Jr, Wanda K Ritter, James Simmons, Barbara Smith and Audrey Solomon.

District Officer Training at Fall Booster

Empowering Leadership for District Success

The North Carolina Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NCRLCA) District Officer Training at the Fall Booster was designed to educate new and seasoned officers on the proper procedures to ensure the continued success of district meetings. This training serves as a cornerstone for district officers, equipping them with the knowledge and confidence to lead effectively throughout the year.

Purpose of the Training

The Fall Booster provides a focused environment for district officers to enhance their leadership abilities. The training was focused to address the unique challenges faced by rural letter carrier leaders and is rooted in the principles of effective communication, strategic time requirements, and organizational stewardship.

Key Components of Leadership Training

- **Communication Skills:** Officers learn techniques to communicate clearly and persuasively with members, fellow leaders, and stakeholders, ensuring transparency and trust within the district.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Practical strategies are discussed to address and resolve conflicts amicably, maintaining a positive working environment.
- **Team Building:** Emphasis is placed on fostering teamwork, encouraging collaboration, and recognizing the strengths of each team member.
- **Strategic Planning:** Officers are guided through the process of setting district meetings, planning for the future, and encouraging participation.
- **Ethical Leadership:** Sessions highlight the importance of integrity, accountability, and ethical decision-making in all aspects of district management.

LEADERSHIP:

The Heart of NCRLCA Success

True leadership is about inspiring others, setting a vision, and leading by example. The Fall Booster recognizes that district officers are not only representatives but also role models who shape the culture and success of their districts. No matter if a district has 50 or 500 members. Each meeting is another opportunity to invite, encourage and recognize participation.



Vice President

Jay Schreiber

Benefits for District Officers

- Enhanced confidence and competence in leadership roles
- Greater understanding of NCRLCA policies and procedures
- Improved ability to motivate and support members
- Opportunities to network and share best practices with other officers
- Preparation for future leadership challenges and opportunities

Conclusion

The Board wanted to have District Officer Training at the Fall Booster to invest in the leadership of our districts. By prioritizing the development of district officers, NCRLCA ensures that its leaders are equipped to serve with excellence, adapt to change, and uphold the values of the association. Leadership, at every level, is the foundation upon which the NCRLCA builds a strong and vibrant future.



ARMED FORCES VETERANS CLUB



The Armed Forces Veterans Club (AFVC) is a fraternal organization composed of veterans or anyone who supports their goals of providing financial support for high school seniors and college students whose parents and grandparents are NRLCA AFVC members. All proceeds go to provide \$150 scholarships for students to further their education.

The AFVC held their annual meeting at the NCRLCA state convention in June. Officers were elected for the 2025-26 year. Debbie Bennett was elected president, Audrey Solomon vice-president and Mike Shue secretary-treasurer. Thirty eight members joined or renewed their memberships, a new record for North Carolina. Per the changes in our state AFVC constitution, we awarded our first \$150 scholarship to Lily Gray, granddaughter of Vicki Gray. Congratulations Lily.

If you are a member of the AFVC and have a child or grandchild who will be entering higher education for the 2026-27 academic year, watch for the scholarship application beginning with the January/February issue of the state paper. The application is due by May 31st, 2026. Any applications received after that date will be forwarded to national and entered in the national AFVC drawing.

Thank you for your continued support of our veterans and our children and grandchildren.

Debbie Bennett Pres.

Audrey Solomon V-Pres.

Mike Shue Sec.-Treas.

Thank A Veteran!



47th South Atlantic Conference

Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort

777 Casino Drive

Cherokee, North Carolina 27819



On-Site Amenities

Wi-Fi
Pool (Outdoor & Indoor)
Self Check-In
Handicap Accessibility
Free Valet Parking
Spa & Salon
Fitness Center
Pet Stay
Business Center

On-Site Restaurants

BRIO Italian Grille Caesars Eats—Delivery & Room Service ESports Zone
Gordon Ramsay Food Market Guy Fieri's Cherokee Kitchen + Bar Noodle Bar
Ruth's Chris Steak House Selu Garden Café Starbucks
Gordon Ramsay Truffles Pub Wicked Weed Smokehouse

On-Site Attractions

Bowling Alley
Strikes Arcade
ESports Zone
Shows & Events

On-Site Shopping

Studio
Cherokee Tower Shop
Sequoyah National Golf Shop
Gilded Basket
Tower Shop
Cherokee Outdoors

January 24th — 26th 2026
Room Rate — \$140.00/night

Room Rate includes: Resort Fee, Valet Parking and
(1) \$30.00 voucher for slot play.

NOTE: Rates do not include tax. Credit Card guarantee required at booking. Rates valid 01/22/2026 through 01/26/2026.

Deadline for booking is December 23, 2025 so book now, don't miss this offer!

Book your stay by calling 1-800-CAESARS (1-800-223-7277) and use the group code S01RLCA or online at <https://book.passkey.com/go/RURAL26>. Your check-in site will be at the Cherokee Tower.

We are offering a Breakfast Buffet on Sunday Jan. 25th, 2026. Price is \$15.00/person. Available on registration form below.

Driving Directions from Asheville— Take I-40W to exit 27 (Truck US-64W). Stay on US-23S. Take Exit 74 onto US-441.

Please fill out and mail-in this registration form to let us know that you're attending:

*****Submitting this registration form does not confirm/make your room reservations*****

Name:

☐ I will be attending the 47th South Atlantic Conference.

The total number in my party will be: # _____

Address:

☐ I would like to purchase # _____ Breakfast Buffet
tickets at \$15.00/each.

City, State & Zip:

Make checks out to **NRLCA-SAC**

Phone #:

The total of my enclosed check/money order is
\$ _____

Mail to:

Glynda Wurtz
410 Westwood Dr.
Ellaville, GA 31806

****Must be received by 12/20/2025****

Website Results for September 2025

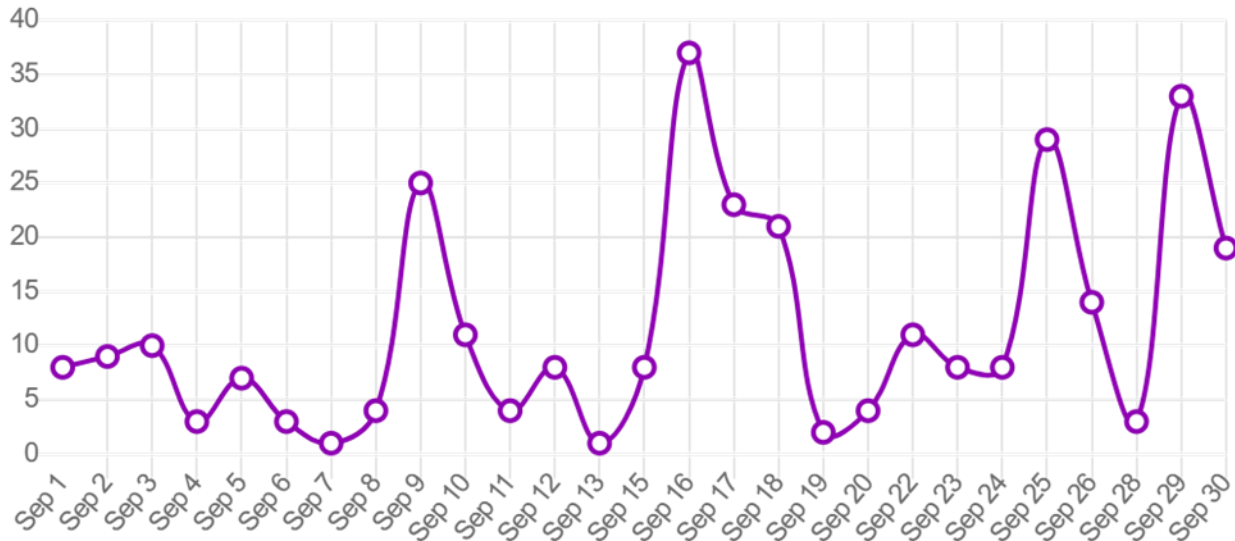
Top posts for the month of September were the [EMA increase](#), the [National Convention Picture Gallery](#), the [Rally Picture Gallery](#), and the [Rural Route Evaluation Dispute Process](#) with the links for the Updated Forms.

We have posted new contact information for our stewards. Please check telephone numbers and email addresses to ensure you receive the quickest responses.

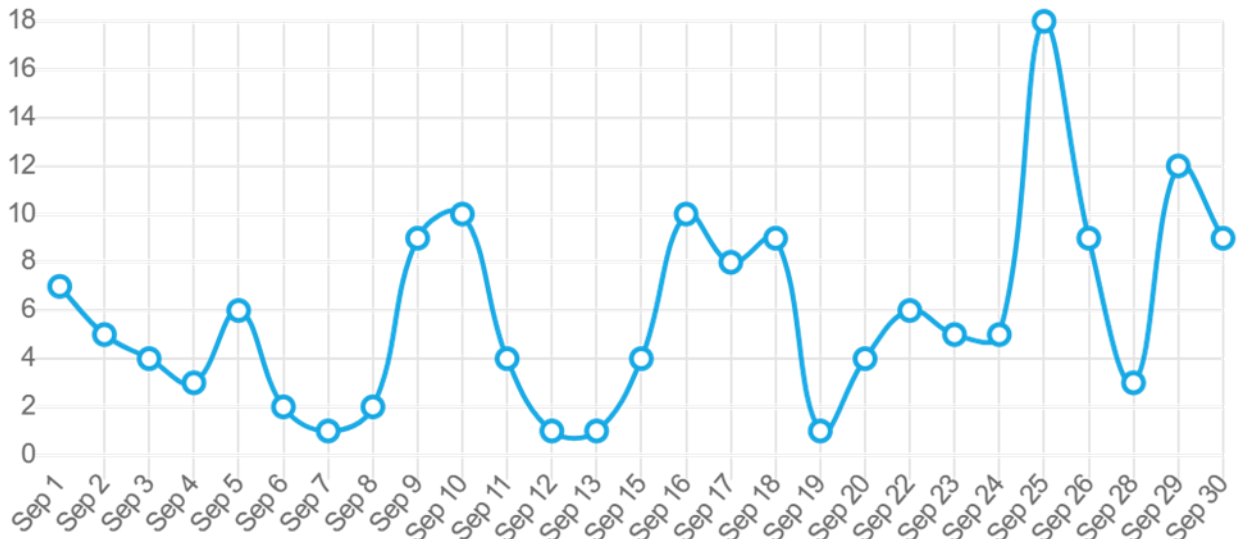


Webmaster
Renee Johnson

Pageviews Up 1%



Sessions Up 16%



Be sure to check the Events column. Several districts are holding Fall Meetings, and we have information on the Fall Booster and the South Atlantic Conference (SAC) listed under Events as well.

Don't forget to make your new insurance selections during the Insurance Open Season. We'll have more information available on the website as it becomes available.

Wishing you all a safe and joyful Thanksgiving and Christmas.

RURAL CARRIER MOMENTS

Local Athlete Wins at Senior Games State Finals

Press release from NC Senior Games, Inc:

Kaye Bentley from Asheville won a gold medal in the Football Throw competition with a perfect score, and a bronze medal in the Discus Throw Competition at the 2025 North Carolina Senior Games State Finals, held in Raleigh and Cary, September 15-21.

Bentley qualified at the annual 2025 Asheville-Buncombe Senior Games this past Spring.

Asheville-Buncombe Senior Games is part of a statewide network of 54 local programs sanctioned by North Carolina Senior Games, Inc. NCSG is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing year-round health promotion and education for adults 50 years of age and better.

NCSG is a statewide nonprofit organization sponsored by the North Carolina Division of Aging and Adult Services. The Gold Sponsor of State Finals for 2025 is the Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP); Silver Sponsor is UNC Healthcare. Bronze Sponsors are North Carolina Farm Bureau Insurance, Harrah's Cherokee Casino & Resort, and Wellcare.

NCSG also offers SilverArts, the statewide heritage, visual, literary, and performing arts program; SilverLiners senior line dancing program and SilverStriders national award-winning walking program.

Qualification for next year's State Finals will be held in the spring of 2026 at Local Senior Games across North Carolina. For more information on a Senior Games program in your area, please contact North Carolina Senior Games at (919) 851-5456 or visit their website at www.ncseniorgames.org.

Kaye Bentley, a union member, worked as a rural letter carrier for 38 years. She retired in June of 2018. She served as a local steward, was a QWL-EI facilitator, and also served on several committees during the state conventions over the years.

Kaye encourages everyone to stay active in retirement. She says participating in local senior games in your own communities is a fun way to stay active and healthy.



Retired Rural Carrier Kaye Bentley holds up the medals she won at the 2025 North Carolina Senior Games State Finals .

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Gail Naillon

Rural Carriers: Your Overtime is Coming....and So Are the Packages!

Ho-ho-hold onto your satchels, North Carolina carriers – it's that magical time of year when mail volume skyrockets, scanners beep like crazy, and coffee becomes your best friend. Yep, it's Christmas Overtime Season!!

The Christmas period kicks off the first Saturday in December and runs three weeks ending with the Friday before Christmas. During this time, overtime rules get a holiday twist:

During the Christmas period, regular rural carriers are eligible for two types of overtime:

1. FLSA overtime – FLSA overtime is paid at all times of the year for work hours that exceed 12 hours per day or 56 hours in one work week.
2. Christmas overtime – Regular rural carriers are paid Christmas overtime under two circumstances:
 - A. Christmas Assistance – assistance provided by the regular carrier on their relief day. These work hours are entered in the "Xmas Assist" box on the PS form 1314.
 - B. Hours a regular carrier works in excess of the routes evaluation are paid at the overtime rate. This is based on the total actual work hours for the week, rather than each day. (NOTE: Paid leave taken is credited as work performed for the purpose of determining work hours)

The overtime rate for a regular (FLSA Code B)

carrier is 150% of the carrier's regular rate. The regular rate is calculated by dividing the total compensation received for hours actually worked since the beginning of the guarantee year (excluding overtime)

Remember if you have an "X" day balance prior to the beginning of the new guarantee period, the X day will not be available for use until the Christmas period ends. If a regular carrier works their relief day during this time and is entitled to a future "X" day, it must be taken during the same pay period. Rural timekeeping will not allow a DACA3 or R to be entered without a corresponding DACA X.

Regular carriers can provide assistance only on their relief day while a relief carrier carries the full route. For replacement carriers, it applies to any assistance provided on a regular or auxiliary route during the Christmas period.

RCA's and PTF's are entitled to FLSA overtime when they have worked in excess of 40 hours in one work week. RCA's serving any auxiliary route are compensated at the hourly wage for actual work hours and are not paid the evaluated hours during this period

Christmas overtime isn't just about the paycheck (though that part is nice). It's recognition of your superhero-level effort: braving the rain, snow, and the NC December chill to deliver everything from Grandma's cookies to the latest gadgets from Charlotte to the Outer Banks.

Here are a few tips for Surviving and Thriving

1. Track your hours: Make sure every extra mile and minute is counted..
2. Dress smart: Layer up – you never know if a morning in Boone will be frosty or sunny.
3. Snack Wisely: Keep some local treats handy and drink plenty of fluids.
4. Laugh often: If a box of Christmas lights falls out of your satchel, it's probably trying to tell you to take a break.

So, whether you are delivering in Asheville, Fayetteville, or a small town that even Google Maps sometimes forgets, remember you are the magic

(Continued on page 18)

**Remember you
are the
MAGIC
behind every
holiday gift
delivered!**

(Continued from page 17)

behind every North Carolina holiday gift delivered!!!.

During Christmas, management can pull from a different sleigh:

1. Volunteers (bless your holly-jolly heart)
2. Non-Volunteers (sorry, but Santa's list doesn't skip anyone)
3. RCA's and PTF's to help get the job done.

This is the busiest time of the year! You will be delivering smiles, gifts and occasionally mystery boxes that weigh more than a snowman. The Christmas overtime provisions are the stocking stuffers from the contract, a way to make sure your extra work earns extra pay. Remember Christmas overtime is not an entitlement, it is an option.

Your contractual rights do not change simply because management is controlling work hours. It is the position of the NRLCA that reporting times should not be changed on a daily or weekly basis. Rural carriers should receive reasonable advanced notice when the schedule is to be changed. If rural carriers feel pressured or forced to work in a manner that places them in an unsafe situation, they should request a PS Form 1767. Complete the form and return it to your supervisor. Discuss the issue and if it is not resolved, contact your steward.

(Continued from page 1) **Fall Booster**

Linda Foran with National General Auto & Home Insurance joined us. She explained how National General Insurance understands the Federal Torte Act and how it applies to us and our auto insurance. She encouraged us to get a quote from National General for your auto insurance.

Our District Rep. Cliff Workman recognized all the Stewards present for Steward Appreciation Week. He also updated us on the results from the Mini Mail Survey and shared the latest news from the National Office.

Local District Officer Training took place that afternoon. All officers present received folders and information from the State Board to help them with their roles as officers.



Central Carolina's Anatinisha Harper is excited to receive her folder and items to help her fulfill her duties as Secretary Treasurer.

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NATHALIE WARREN

CHAPLAIN
TRENTON GREER

Fall Into the Holiday

Auxiliary News
From
Sue Kelly

The busy time of the year is here. Are you ready?

Glad to see a little cooler weather as Fall is here. The trees are beginning to change. What a spectacular sight to see.

We encourage everyone to support the Auxiliary **Project for the 2025 -2026 Program of Support for Bananas Foster**. Our Rural Letter Carrier family can make a huge difference in the lives of children and their families through our financial efforts. This year our Juniors will collect money for the program. Thanks in advance for all your support.

This year our Scholarship committee awarded 10 young adults scholarships. They are as follows,

	In memory of	From
1. Tylon Lowery	Prennis & Love Page	
2. Harleigh Cox	Kay Carter	
3. Victor Sharpe	Harriet Lineberger	
4. Countney Hash	Leo Wagoner	Brushy Mtn.
5. Tkaii Gaither	James & Nancy Cole	Smoky Mtn.
6. Maxel Nelson	Malamie Shultz	Burke/Caldwell
7. Jerry Mabine Jr.		Wake Co.
8. Joshua Weaver		McDowell
9. Connor Finnerty		Tidewater/Union
10. Charlize Ashton		Foothills

It is time again to complete those applications for scholarships. National scholarships are due by March 1, 2026. The State scholarships are due by June 1, 2026. Please visit the websites for both National and State for the applications. Children and grand children of the rural carriers are eligible to apply for the scholarship.

Please look in the upcoming magazine articles for “**mandatory**” preregister forms for Juniors. The forms will be due no later than May 15, 2026. Any Junior that is not preregistered will not be allowed to participate. There will also be a \$10.00 fee (**non refundable/required**) for T-shirt purchase.

The Auxiliary and Juniors would like to thank the Association for the continual support that you give us.

Enjoy the Fall, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Be safe.



NCRLCA
424 WAPITI DR
SPRING LAKE NC 28390-1562

TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 387
FAYETTEVILLE NC
28302

Address Service Requested

**Remember to
Register for SAC**

Forms on page 13



January 24-26, 2026
Harrah's Resort
Cherokee, NC

Rate is \$140/night (includes \$30 voucher)
Book by December 23, 2025