North Carolina Rural Carrier

Volume 43 Issue 3 Circulation 5000 Edited in Spring Lake NC November December 2026

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

Open Season
November 9th—December 14th

During the annual Open Season, eligible employees can enroll, change plans or plan options, change enrollment type, or cancel their enrollment in the Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program or in the Federal Employee Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP). Employees can also re-enroll or newly enroll in the Federal Flexible Spending Account (FSA) Program

The 2026 Open Season (for the 2027 Plan Year) begins on Monday, November 9, 2026 and runs through Monday, December 14, 2026. Coverage begins on January 1st.

Inside This Issue

Open Season

Christmas Overtime Procedures

SAC Info

We know that this is very busy time of year for rural carriers so please do your research and make your changes early. You do not want to wait and perhaps miss the deadline. That deadline is 11:59 PM Eastern Time on Monday December 14th.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM), is requiring that employees provide proof of eligibility for any family member they wish to add to their health plan this open season.

We want to remind you to also compare coverage within your plan. This year, with the Rural Carrier Benefit Plan (RCBP), the Self Plus Family has a lower cost to the member than the Self Plus One plan. RCBP members in Self Plus One are highly recommended to change to the Self Plus Family plan for lower premiums.

Please read pages 8 & 9 in this issue for more info and check the National website at www.NRLCA.org current updates.

North Carolina Rural Letter Carriers' Association

Officers

PRESIDENT
JAY SCHREIBER
132 Sky Sail Blvd
New Bern, NC 28560-4572
Phone 252-474-7473
NCRLCAPresident@gmail.com

VICE PRESIDENT
TRACY GREER
PO Box 41
Vilas, NC 28692-0041
Phone 423-707-5578
NCRLCAVP@gmail.com

SECRETARY/TREASURER
VICKI GRAY
424 Wapiti Drive
Spring Lake, NC 28390-1562
Phone 910-745-8815
NCRLCASecTreas@gmail.com

Alleghany/Ashe	4	Foothills	10	Roanoke Chowan	7
Southeastern	8	Central Carolina	16	Burke/Caldwell/Catawba	9
Smoky Mountain	11	Wake	24	Durham/Orange	12
Caswell/ Rockingham	14	Tri-County/N Wayne	25	Cleveland/Gaston/Lincoln	29
Randolph/Montgomery/Davidson	42	Six County	28	Guilford	30
Roanoke/Beaufort/Hyde/Pitt	44				

Executive Committee

HEALTH BENEFITS
ELAINE ALTHOFF
PO Box 544
Lake Junaluska, NC 28745-0544
Phone 828-456-9352
NCRLCAHealth@gmail.com

SAFETY
ALICIA PRESSLEY
294 Dream Valley Dr
Clyde, NC 28721-5519
Phone 828-734-6197
NCRLCASafety@gmail.com

RETIREMENT
TELISHA LOCKLEAR
PO Box 631
Raeford, NC 28376-0631
Phone 910-785-2954
NCRLCARetirement@gmail.com

Peach Belt	5	Alamance	1	Albemarle	2
Sandhills	20	Brushy Mountain	3	Yadkin River	26
Sea Level	23	McDowell/Mt Mitchell/ Buncombe/Madison	36	Mecklenburg	38
Johnston/N Harnett	34	Rutherford/Polk/Henderson/ Trans	47	Piedmont	50
Watauga/Avery	57	Tidewater	52	Union	54

Appointed Officers

CHAPLAIN
JESSE RAY FARMER JR
4377 5 Points Rd
La Grange, NC 28551-8119
Phone 252-939-6826

P.A.C. CHAIRMAN
ERIK ANDERSON
4017 Dublin Road
Winterville, NC 28590-6804
YourNCPAC@gmail.com

WEBMASTER
TRACY GREER
PO Box 41
Vilas, NC 28692-0041
Phone 423-707-5578
NCRLCAWebmaster@gmail.com

AUTO-HOME INS. REP.
JIM MORRISON
2202 Ranch Road
Clayton, NC 27520-6450
NCAutoInsRep@gmail.com

HISTORIAN/PHOTOGRAPHER
TIFFANY RATLIFF
402 Earl Drive
Goldsboro, NC 27530-9154
NCRLCAHistory@gmail.com

The *North Carolina Rural Carrier* is published bi-monthly as a benefit to the members of the NCRLCA. It is printed by Williams Printing of Fayetteville, NC and mailed at standard rate by permit from Fayetteville, NC. Articles and photos must be submitted to the editor by the 10th of the month prior to publication. Late submissions may or may not be printed.
Articles are the opinion of the Author and not necessarily the NRLCA, the NCRLCA or the Editor.

National Emergency Hot-line

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 hot-line 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 $afetyAlway$
The password will be changed to the above on November 31, 2026.

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

Cover Photo

North Carolina Christmas Tree Ornament

Table of Contents

AFVC	**13**
Auto-Home Owners Insurance	**16**
Auxiliary News	**23**
Breast Cancer Awareness	**12**
Chaplain's Message	**5**
District Representatives & Area Stewards	**20 -22**
Dues Rates	**11**
Emergency Hot-line Number	**3**
Fall Booster Announcement	**20**
NCRLCA Website & Password	**3**
Obituaries	**5**
Officer Assignments	**2**
PAC	**14 - 15**
President's Message	**4**
RCA Corner	**18 -19**
RCHBP	**8 - 9**
Retirement	**7**
SAC Information	**17**
Safety	**10 - 11**
Vice President's Message	**6**

Important Dates

November 3	Election Day
November 8	Fall Booster
November 11	Veterans Day Holiday
November 26	Thanksgiving Day Holiday Christmas
December 25	Christmas Holiday
January 1	New Year's Day Holiday
January 23-25	South Atlantic Conference

What I Have Learned In The Past Month:



President

Jay Schreiber

- New hire program was tested in the Atlantic Area for about 6 weeks and has now gone nationwide. We are seeing a decrease in how long new applicants are having to wait from application to orentation. We know it could took 3 – 4 months in the past and the new system it is now taking 2 – 3 weeks. Another benefit of the new system is local management does not control when or how many postings. RCA and ARC listings seem to be posted from Fridays to Mondays at https://jobs.usps.com/applytohire.
- 8/11/26 FALL BOOSTER 8:30 a.m. – NLT 5:00 p.m. We will have training focused on mapping at Koury Convention Center, 3122 West Gate City Blvd, Greensboro, NC 27404.
- The Recruit A Friend Today (RAFT) program is still a great tool for you to help strengthen the NCRLCA. You will receive $15 for each RCA or ARC that you recruit and $50 for each regular carrier or PTF that joins.
- "Membership Increase" competition will be October 1st – June 30th. The states with the highest membership increase over 9 months will be recognized at the 2027 National Convention in Indianapolis, IN.
- New resolution submission guidance; If resolutions or constitutional changes are not submitted at the district meeting and approved by district, they will have to be submitted as new business at our state convention. What does this mean? New business at state convention must be approved by the delegates if they want to allow it under the standing rule #7.

Rule #7 Only Constitution Amendments & Resolutions that have been reported out by the respective committees will be addressed. The body MAY suspend the rules and consider any additional/other changes under "NEW BUSINESS"..

I hope you have learned something as I have. Take care of yourselves this holiday season to get home safely every day.



Merry Christmas from Your State Board

The Gift of Sight



Chaplain
Jesse Ray Farmer Jr.

One of the most valuable tools we have as rural mail carriers is our eyes. Every day, we depend on our vision to read addresses, watch for changing road conditions, navigate through rain and storms, and keep an eye out for unexpected hazards, including a dog that may suddenly appear around the corner.

Recently, I had surgery to correct significant eyelid drooping that had developed over the years. At first, my recovery seemed to be going very well. But several days later, I experienced increased swelling that made it difficult to see. My vision became limited to only a small opening between my eyelids, and even ordinary lights seemed to have a glare.

That experience gave me a new appreciation for something I had probably taken for granted every day: the gift of sight.

Many people live with vision challenges. Some are born with limited sight, while others lose their vision because of illness, injury, or the effects of aging. Experiencing even a temporary reduction in vision reminded me how much we rely on our eyesight to safely perform our jobs and enjoy daily life.

For those of us who spend our days traveling rural roads, stopping at mailboxes, and serving our customers, good vision is something we often don't think about until it becomes more difficult. We use our eyes constantly, not only to do our work, but also to appreciate the world around us.

Sometimes it takes a challenge or unexpected setback to remind us of the things we value most. Difficult experiences can give us a deeper appreciation for everyday blessings that might otherwise go unnoticed.

As you travel your route this week, take a moment to notice the things around you. Enjoy the sunrise, the changing seasons, the familiar roads, and the communities you serve. Appreciate the ability to see the details that make each day unique.

We all face challenges from time to time. When the road becomes difficult, remember how much you have already overcome. Stay positive, keep moving forward, and focus on the blessings that are still present along the way.

May we never become so accustomed to the good things in our lives that we forget to stop and appreciate them.

Obituaries

Katherine (Kathy) Diane Presnell Atkins, Jun 5, 1959 — Oct 13, 2026

Kathy, 67 passed on to her heavenly home on October 13, 2026, at Atrium Health Carolina Medical Center in Charlotte, NC.

Kathy was kind to all. She loved her daughter and son-in-law, grandchildren, extended family, friends and pets. Kathy also enjoyed vacationing at the beach.

Kathy was a 1977 graduate of Randleman High School where she played in the band and was a bus driver for several years. Growing up, she attended Randleman First Wesleyan Church.

Kathy was the loving daughter of the late Joe and Dicie Presnell. She was the widow of the late Lewis Dale Atkins. She is survived by her daughter Crystal Davis (Kenneth), Grandson Jordan Epperson and granddaughter Holly Epperson, grandson Alex Davis, grandson Cameron Davis (Kess) and great grandson Tate.

Kathy is survived by her mother-in-law Edith Atkins. She is also survived by her aunts and uncles that were more like brothers and sisters: Bobby Lucas (Lucy), Ruby Hunter, Brenda Karella (Rusty), Randy Lucas (Sue) and Mark Lucas (Angela).

Kathy leaves behind many friends and extended family that will cherish their memories of her.

The Importance of Participation



Vice President

Tracy Greer

Meeting notifications arrive in our mailbox, but the way we respond to them varies widely: some employees review the invitation, prepare, and participate; others overlook it or choose not to engage.

Over the past several years, both attendance and active participation have declined, creating consequences that extend well beyond an empty seat. When knowledgeable team members are absent, important perspectives, experience, and context are missing from the conversation. Decisions may be made without complete information, ideas can go unshared, and the organization risks losing valuable opportunities for collaboration, alignment, and collective learning.

Reversing this trend requires each of us to recognize that meaningful participation is not simply a calendar obligation, it is an essential contribution to the success of the team.

The association supports its members by bringing knowledgeable speakers to meetings, preparing relevant seminars, and offering clear opportunities to ask questions and receive guidance.

That support begins at the local level with attendance at your District meeting. These smaller gatherings bring together people from your area, along with a state officer and an ADR (steward), to share prompt information about current issues and explain how those issues can be addressed.

Because the setting is smaller, discussion is often more personal and informal, giving members a comfortable opportunity to raise concerns, exchange experiences, and learn from one another.

Participation at the State Convention is equally important. The convention is where the association conducts its official business, elects officers, considers and votes on proposed constitutional changes and resolutions, and offers seminars and presentations from speakers whose expertise is directly relevant to our work.

By attending meetings at both the district and state levels, members stay informed, contribute to the decisions that shape the association, and help ensure that our collective knowledge and experience continue to benefit everyone.

The SAC Conference offers one of the most valuable opportunities to hear directly from national officers, engage with key officers, and gain a broader understanding of the issues affecting our work. Panel discussions bring together representatives from postal management, DRs, national officers, and other officials, giving attendees access to a wide range of experience and perspectives.

Informative seminars address topics that matter to every member, including retirement planning, the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), insurance, workers' compensation, workplace concerns, and legal issues.

With so much practical information available in one place, the conference serves as an exceptional resource for members at every stage of their careers. Prepare in advance, make plans to attend, ask questions, and take an active role in the conversations that shape our workplace.

Your participation can strengthen your knowledge, improve your work environment, ensure that your concerns are heard, and help build a more informed and effective association.

My hope is to see you at future meetings.

SAC info on page 17



Executive Committeeman
Telisha Locklear

Retiring Soon?

What Should You Know?

If you are planning an optional retirement, the Office of Personnel Management's Online Retirement Application (ORA) lets you complete your application, upload documents, and track its progress online. Begin gathering your records early, especially when you are within six months of your planned retirement date. Gather all documents needed for your application beforehand.

How do you start?

Create a Login.gov account with a personal email address you will keep after retirement. Call the Human Resources Shared Service Center (HRSSC) at 877-477-3273, option 5, and give them that address. After HRSSC starts your application, OPM will email an invitation. You will also receive an email about a group counseling session; take advantage of it. Sign in with Login.gov and create a PIN to certify your application. Keep your PIN in a safe place.

What should you check?

Review your service history, sick leave balance, and other information shown in ORA. Gather documents that apply to you, such as a marriage certificate, divorce decree or DD 214. Review your survivor benefit choice, insurance forms, direct deposit information, and tax withholding. Upload required supporting documents as PDFs. Contact HRSSC about errors before you submit and take advantage of a retirement webinar while you are planning.

When will your first annuity payment arrive?

OPM's processing timeline begins when it receives your complete retirement package from USPS, not on your last day of work. Plan ahead: the new online retirement system is faster, plus you can track your application online. You may have a longer wait time for your annuity if you don't have all your correct information. Some carriers have reported waiting three to six months for their payments, so plan for a possible gap between your final USPS paycheck and your first annuity payment.

What is the best day to retire?

For a rural carrier covered by FERS and eligible for an immediate optional retirement, the last day of a month is often a practical choice. The annuity generally begins on the first day of the next month. For example, retiring September 30 generally gives you an October 1 annuity start date. Annuity payments for October are normally payable on the first business day of November, subject to processing. Ask HRSSC to review your eligibility, service record and leave situation before setting your date. Different rules can apply to disability and other types of retirement.

Retirement Contacts and Resources

- **USPS HRSSC:** 877-477-3273, option 5
- **OPM retirement questions:** 888-767-6738
- **NRLCA Retirement Department:** 703-684-5545
- **NRLCA Insurance Department:** 703-684-5552
- **USPS Retirement Benefits:** RetirementBenefits@usps.gov or 202-268-2246
- **Online:** OPM.gov ~ LiteBlue.usps.gov ~ NRLCA.org •

Retirement is a new chapter. Give yourself time to prepare so you can enjoy it.

Enjoy your holidays and
Happy Thanksgiving.



Executive Committeeman
Elaine Althoff

Navigating Open Season

Open Season runs November 9th – December 14th

Happy with your Health plan?

If you are happy with your current health plan and do not need to make any changes, you do not need to take any action during this year's open season.

If you wish to change health plans into the Rural Carrier Benefit Plan, you must be **a membe**r to enroll, for this is a closed plan.

It is the only plan that offers 100% cancer coverage, with no copays and no deductibles when the primary diagnosis is cancer!

Our plan codes are 79A- Self, 79B Self+ Family, and 79C Self +1.

Do you need to make coverage changes? Now is the time to do so. Outside of open season, you can only make qualifying life event changes: getting married, divorced, having a child, adopting a child, or loss of life. OPM is requiring proof of all added or dropped dependents, such as a marriage license, birth certificate, or divorce decree.

Do you need to add a supplemental Insurance Plan, administered by Greater Insurance Service (GIS), that includes Dental, Vision, Long-Term Disability, Short-Term Disability, and Life Insurance? Call GIS at 1-877-817-4807 for more information.

As in my last article, if you have not already set up or created your www.login.gov account, now is the time to do so. The Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) enrollment website is http://healthbenefits.opm.gov/ where you can review plan rates for all PSHB health plans.

Important Information for Carriers

1. Qualifying Life Event changes need to be made with the Retirement Information Office (888-767-6738). If you are an annuitant, contact the Human Resources Shared Service Center at 877-477-3273 or email benefitsandwellness@usps.gov if you are a Postal employee, or the National Finance Center at 800-242-9630 if you pay premiums directly to the National Finance Center.
2. If your provider leaves the network and you are in an active course of treatment, you can contact the Rural Carrier Benefit Plan to request transition-of-care approval, which may allow you to continue seeing your current provider for a limited time. To make this request, call the customer service number on the back of your ID card.
3. If you are retired and have Medicare Part B and RCBP, you have low out-of-pocket costs. RCBP coordinates with Medicare to cover your copays, deductibles, and coinsurance. If you are asked by a provider to pay before a procedure or surgery, or confronted with a large bill, do not pay it. Call Aetna first: 1-800-638-8432.

Options for Medicare Eligible Retirees

1. Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug Plan (MAPD) Opt in by calling 866-241-6754
2. SilverScript Prescription Drug Plan(PDP) opt in by calling 1-833-825-6754
3. NOTE: If you choose to opt out of MAPD and/or SilverScript PDP, you will not have drug coverage benefits, and your premium will not be reduced. If you do not maintain creditable coverage, re-enrollment in the PDP EGWP may be subject to a late enrollment penalty. For assistance, call: 833-825-6754

For more information, log on to www.nrlca.org, click the tab Department/ Insurance/Rural Carrier Benefit Plan tab to find the RCBP Resources brochures.

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8) ***Open Season***

For more information, log on to www.nrlca.org, click the tab Department/ Insurance/Rural Carrier Benefit Plan tab to find the RCBP Resources brochures

RCA's Health Care

RCAs, if you did not sign up at orientation, this is the only other time to get the RCA insurance called CareFirst. Blue Cross Blue Shield provides it and it is the sole insurance provider for RCAs. You will find information at www.carefirst.com/usps/.

For assistance, call CareFirst at:

2027 Rural Carrier Benefit Plan Premiums

Active Carrier	Carrier Premium	Change from 2026
Self (79A)	$179.37	+$21.13
Self + one (79C)	$346.96	+$40.46
Family (79B)	$339.96	+$39.70
Retired Carrier	**Carrier Premium**	**Change from 2026**
Self (79A)	$388.63	+$45.77
Self + one (79C)	$751.75	+$87.66
Family (79B)	$736.58	+$86.02

For 2027, there are no changes to your co-payments, deductibles, or plan design.
While premiums did increase, RCBP's rich benefits are unchanged for our valued members.
Now more than ever, it is important to compare benefits and cost when considering your options during open season.

Safety Doesn't Stop at the Front Door

October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month



Executive Committeeman
Alicia Pressley

When we talk about safety as rural carriers, we usually think about the hazards we face on the route: traffic, dogs, heat, icy roads, falls, and the everyday risks that come with delivering mail.

But not every safety concern begins at work.

October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and it is a good reminder that domestic violence can affect anyone, including our coworkers, friends, and families. Sometimes the person standing beside us casing mail every morning may be carrying a burden we know nothing about.

Domestic violence is not always easy to recognize. There may not be visible injuries. Abuse can include physical violence, but it can also involve threats, intimidation, stalking, controlling finances, monitoring someone's phone or location, isolation, or other behaviors meant to control another person.

You may notice changes in a coworker. Maybe they seem unusually anxious when their phone rings. Their partner may repeatedly call or show up at work. They may suddenly withdraw from coworkers, miss work, or seem fearful about going home.

None of these things automatically means someone is experiencing abuse. But they can be reasons to pay attention and, most importantly, to show kindness.

If Someone Confides in You

You don't have to know exactly what to say. You don't have to solve the situation either.

Just listen. Believe them. Let them know they are not alone.

Avoid asking questions like, 'Why don't you just leave?' Leaving an abusive relationship can be complicated and, in some situations, can increase danger. Instead, something as simple as, 'I'm glad you told me. How can I support you?' can mean more than you realize.

And if you believe someone is in immediate danger, treat it as an emergency.

When Domestic Violence Reaches the Workplace

Domestic violence can become a workplace safety issue, especially when an abusive person threatens, stalks, follows, or attempts to confront someone at work.

USPS maintains a zero-tolerance policy regarding workplace threats and violence. USPS also has Threat Assessment Teams trained to evaluate threats and potential violence.

That does not mean a coworker has to investigate the situation or confront the person causing the threat. Report safety concerns through the appropriate channels and allow trained professionals to assess the risk.

USPS employees and their immediate families also have access to the Employee Assistance Program, or EAP. It is a voluntary, confidential and non-disciplinary program offering consultation, counseling, evaluation, and referrals for personal concerns that may affect well-being or work.



(Continued on page 11)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELP IS AVAILABLE

If there is immediate danger, call 911.

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOT LINE
800-799-SAFE (7233)
Text START to 88788
thehotline.org

USPS EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)
800-327-4968 | 800-EAP-4-YOU
Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Available to USPS employees and their immediate family members

POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE
877-876-2455
Workplace threats and emergencies monitored 24/7

LOCAL THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM
Ask your supervisor or check posted workplace violence prevention information.

You don't have to have all the answers to help someone.
Sometimes listening, believing, and helping someone connect with the right resources is enough.

(Continued from page 10) ***Safety***

Employees and family members affected by domestic violence or other personal challenges can use EAP services to access support, resources, and professional assistance.

Sometimes Safety Looks Like Caring

We spend a lot of time talking about looking out for one another on the road. Looking out for each other can mean something more, too. It can mean noticing when someone isn't quite themselves. It can mean listening without judgment. It can mean taking a threat seriously. And sometimes it simply means reminding someone that help is available.

You may never know what someone is dealing with once they leave the post office and head home.

A little compassion can go a very long way.

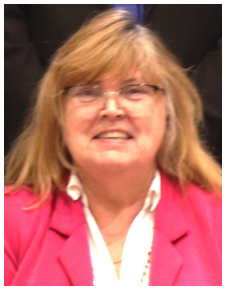
NCRLCA Dues for 2026-2027

Regular, PTF…Cash……$919.00
1187…Bi-Weekly.…….$35.35
Retired……Cash……...$115.00
1187R…Monthly……...$9.58
RCA, ARC……Cash…….....…. $306.00
1187……Bi-Weekly.……$11.77

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.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month



Secretary Treasurer
Vicki Gray

October was Breast Cancer Awareness Month. I know that this article is a month late but in case you or the women in your life did not bother to get their mammogram last month I want to remind you that it is very important to do so.

About 1 in 8 women in the United States will develop breast cancer in their lifetime.

Breast cancer accounts for about 30% of all new cancers in U.S. women each year. It is the most common cancer among women in the U.S. aside from skin cancers.

Chances are very good that you know someone that has been diagnosed with breast cancer.

I have always worn pink. It is one of my favorite colors. In October it takes on a different meaning. One that I have always supported.

Every year I see the pink ribbons, hear the reminders, and think about those women that have entered into this fight. Last year I became one of them.

Like many women, I felt healthy. I didn't feel any lumps. I wasn't experiencing any pain. Life was busy, and a mammogram was just another item on my to-do list.



But that mammogram changed my life.

It was during a routine screening, in October no less, that doctors discovered my breast cancer.

I never expected to hear those words: *"You have breast cancer."* In a matter of seconds, my world changed. Fear, uncertainty, and countless questions filled my head.

I'm grateful I kept that appointment. I didn't always. Some years I would just skip it, thinking I'll schedule it later. Then work and life would get busy, and I just never scheduled it. Don't get me wrong. Most years I would go, but I do know some years the months stretched out a bit before I went. I'm glad I didn't wait this time.

They found a tumor. They then checked my lymph nodes and found cancer in a couple of them also. I had surgery and have undergone my treatments, and I am doing fine right now. There is no telling how I would be doing if I had skipped that mammogram last year.

That's why Breast Cancer Awareness Month is more than wearing pink for me. It's a reminder to every woman that early detection matters. A simple screening can identify problems before you can see them or feel them.

Early Detection Saves Lives

I share my story because maybe it will encourage you or your loved one to make that appointment.

A mammogram found my breast cancer before I knew anything was wrong. That screening gave me a chance to fight. It gave me hope. And it gave me more time.

Please don't skip your mammogram.

It may feel like just another appointment, but it could be the appointment that saves your life. Make yourself a priority. Schedule your screening, encourage the women you love to do the same, and remember:

Early detection isn't just awareness. It's action. And action saves lives.

ARMED FORCES VETERANS CLUB



We want to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays!
Don't forget to honor our wonderful veterans on Veterans Day.

Audrey Solomon President
Josh Rigefsky Vice-President
Ralph Fernandez Sec/Treas

Epics and novels through the ages
Have been written about heroes' renown
Here in these United States
Our own heroes make us proud

Those who serve in the army
We call soldiers, a brave infantry
And those who serve in the airforce
Are the airmen who protect you and me
Those who set sail in the navy
Are sailors who keep bad guys at bay
The coast guard secures our domestic shores
And marines always lead the way

Reservists serve when they are needed
And the space force is just taking off
But, there have been many whose efforts
Are at risk of being history lost

So here's to the airmen of Tuskegee
To the bravery they showed in distress
And to the Women's Army Corps
Who served their nation in a dress
To the WASPS who flew in World War II
No matter what they were asked to fly
They trained for the mission and lead with vision
And fearlessly took to the sky

Our country has been served by so many
Who answered the call to defend
Even when society at large
Didn't treat them as equal citizens

This is why we are proud of America
Because in these United States
We have challenged the past and learned how to
Recover from prior mistakes
We respect our diverse generations
Like the Navajo who talked in the wind
All our heroes deserve an epic
All who would lay down their life for a friend
God, Family, Country priorities
Mark the life of those who would serve
So, thank you, America's heroes
Sons and daughters we do not deserve

Legislative Update



PAC CHAIR
Erik Anderson

Protect Our Letter Carriers Act H. R. 1065 / S. 463

The NRLCA supports the **Protect Our Letter Carriers Act**, legislation aimed at strengthening protection for letter carriers and the mail they deliver. Among its provisions, the legislation would:

- Replace traditional arrow keys with a modern electronic access system that can be disabled if a key is lost, stolen, or compromised.
- Strengthen sentencing guidelines for crimes committed against postal employees, similar to assaults on law enforcement officers.
- Provide additional prosecutorial resources by designating Assistant U.S. Attorneys to handle crimes against postal employees.

The NRLCA is urging members of Congress to **cosponsor this legislation and support efforts to improve the safety and security of America's letter carriers.**

Other Legislative Priorities

The NRLCA is also monitoring and advocating other legislation of importance to rural letter carriers, including:

H. R. 70 / S. 147 — Anti-Privatization Resolutions

These resolutions address the continued operation of the United States Postal Service as a public service and the importance of maintaining a strong national postal network.

H. R. 1522 — Federal Retirement Fairness Act

This legislation addresses retirement credit for certain federal employees, including eligible postal employees who previously served as temporary employees.

Protecting Rural Delivery and Postal Service

The NRLCA will continue to advocate for comprehensive postal reform that protects rural delivery and preserves dependable postal service for rural communities across the country.

Stay Informed

Legislative issues can have a direct impact on rural letter carriers, our benefits, and the communities we serve. The NRLCA will continue to keep members informed as these issues develop and will advocate for the interests of rural carriers throughout the legislative process.

The NRLCA continues to advocate for rural letter carriers and the customers we serve. Legislative issues affecting carrier safety, retirement, the Postal Service, and the future of rural delivery remain important priorities for the Association.

Become a Sustaining Donor

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

As a Sustaining Donor you help the NRLCA Budget & Plan for Long Term Legislative Commitments.

Please consider becoming one today.

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

PAC Donors Update

Thank you to all rural carriers who contributed to PAC between July 1 and August 31, 2026.
We extend special appreciation to our sustaining donors!
Below is a list of members who donated through August 31.

Elaine Althoff
Erik Anderson
Robert Barron
Debra Bennett
Brittany Blackwood
Stacy Bright
Celeste Britt
Tammy Carroll
Joanne Church
Dennis Conley
Sally Corriher
Samantha Cullifer
Christopher Derrick
Ralph Fernandez
Tamara Fisher
Phillip Fulwood
Brenda Gibbs
Shaun Gould
Vicki Gray
Tanisha Green
Tracy Greer
Matthew Gurath
Robert Gurganus
Richard Hamlett
Derek Harpe
Donna Hazel
Van Heath
Kathy Hedrick
Mary Hill
Catherine Hogan
Andrea Hollingsworth
Jerry Huffines
Eric Hunter
Robert Inman
Bonnie Johnson
KathleenJohnson
Mary Josewitz
Cynthia Klamer
Traci Lewis
Telisha Locklear
Mary Mangum
Crystal Mcintyre
Mark McKendree
Norbert Mildner
Amber Morris
James Morrison
Angela Morrow
Deborah Neal
Reginald Neal
Kristina Parks
Brenda Prevatte
David Rasnick
Cecil Reaves
Ellen Reavis
Donald Reidel
Reginald Roemmich
Clarence Rogers
Fred Schmidt
Jay Schreiber
Janelle Severson
Bethany Small
Christina Snipes
Audrey Solomon
Pam Swann
Michael Syverson
Gary Thompson
Michelle Vance
Doretha Wagoner
Sara Waisner
Jackie Wait
Bruce Watford
Mary Wertz
Brandi West
Betty Westbrook
Kristen Wilson
Jennifer Yankaitis

NRLCA
INSURANCE MARKETPLACE

Auto-Home Insurance



Auto-Homeowner Insurance Rep.
Jim Morrison

Hello to my rural carrier family. My name is Jim Morrison and I am your new Auto-Homeowner Insurance Rep (National General) for our great state of North Carolina. Just a little back ground on myself, I've been a carrier for 36 years, 4 as an RCA and 32 as a regular. I have spent my entire career in the Clayton Post Office.

I'm thankful for this opportunity to serve you.

Safety is an important part of being a rural carrier. It is our responsibility to ensure that your POV is properly maintained and can pass a state inspection. If you have an LLV, as I do, you must inspect it and report any problems or deficiencies.

An important concern is liability. If you have an accident caused by not properly maintaining your POV, it could possibly cause denial of USPS liability under the Tort claims act. So, with fall here and winter around the corner we have to make sure our vehicles are ready.

Now to share my personal experience with National General. In January of this year I was in Cherokee for the South Atlantic Conference. I stopped and talked with Linda Foran at her table. She got my relevant information and showed me the quotes. I was able to save $800 per six months on auto and $900 per year on homeowners and I became a happy customer.

I hope to see all at the Fall Booster 11/8 in Greensboro.

So remember folks a line from a favorite Doors song " Keep your eyes on the road, your hand upon the wheel".

Don't forget to get your "FREE QUOTE"!

Call National General Insurance today at 1-888-325-7727.



48th South Atlantic Conference

January 23 - 25, 2027



Embassy Suites by Hilton
Charleston Airport Hotel & Convention Center
5055 International Blvd.
North Charleston, SC 29418

$169.00 per night

Breakfast & Manager's Reception Included

Charleston
SOUTH CAROLINA

BOOK YOUR ROOM

Visit www.embassysuitescharleston.com
Click on Special Rate and use group code 92Q
or call 1-800-362-2779 and reference group code 92Q

ROOM RESERVATION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 23, 2026

ALL UNION MEMBERS ARE WELCOMED TO ATTEND!
Members of Non-SAC states will be charged a $40.00 registration fee.

CONFERENCE MEALS

SATURDAY
Low Country Banquet



- Karaoke
- BBQ Pork/Ribs/Chicken/Ham
- Includes sides & dessert

$25.00 per ticket

SUNDAY
Lunch



- Grilled Herb Chicken
- Fire & Spice Rib Roast
- Includes trimmings & dessert

$20.00 per ticket

PACKAGE DEAL – INCLUDES BOTH MEALS $40.00

MEAL TICKET DEADLINE: DECEMBER 11, 2026

TICKET ORDER FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Number of Tickets

- ☐ Saturday ($25.00) ____
- ☐ Sunday ($20.00) ____
- ☐ Package ($40.00) ____

Make check or money order payable to:
NRLCA-SAC

Mail to:
Glynda Wurtz
410 Westwood Drive
Ellaville, GA 31806

SOUTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE
Seven States • One Voice • Rural Carriers Stronger Together

RCA CORNER

12 Hour Days?



Asst. District Representative
Nathan Darden

The holidays are almost here and with it the opportunity to make overtime pay and sometimes more than we bargained for.

Generally, the Christmas overtime period has the potential to be quite the windfall. However, occasionally management pushes the envelope too far. Sometimes we are asked to do more than we should, and that is what the RCA corner is about this issue.

What do you do when you have been given a direct order to work beyond 12 hours in a day? The Employee and Labor Relations Manual or ELM is clear on Maximum Hours Allowed. 432.32 states in part "*employees may not be required to work more than 12 hours in 1 service day.*" An important point to notice in this language is "may not be required".

In other words management may ask, but management may not force you to take on work which causes you to exceed 12 consecutive hours in a day.

So, what do you do when you are exhausted and the point in the day has come where twelve hours is looming?

Let's start with what not to do.

We don't want to return to the office, drop whatever mail we have left, and go home without having a conversation first with our supervisor. Why is that? We have an obligation to communicate.

It is our job to ensure that all the mail is delivered every day. A manager cannot ensure that mail is delivered that they don't know about because it is sitting at a case. Communication is key and it avoids creating a problem where there is none.

What do we say when we do the right thing and have that conversation?

We communicate what mail is left to be delivered and where it needs to be delivered too. Then we remind management of ELM 432.32. We tell our supervisor that we feel unsafe, and not just because it is dark outside. We let management know that we feel unsafe because we are exhausted, we are going to exceed/have exceeded 12 hours that day, and that we are afraid that the exhaustion coupled with the darkness, and stress of the job could lead to an accident.

A good manager may not be happy in the moment but will know the ELM and will allow you to end your day.

Unfortunately, some may not care. These managers will elect to state "I am giving you a direct order" or something similar and tell you things that simply are not true such as "this constitutes abandoning the mail". They will say, "if you don't like what I have to say you can file a grievance."

Statements like these are designed to inflame. They are meant to scare, and it is understandable to be taken aback when you are working so hard and your work ethic is being questioned.

What do you do if this is management's response? Don't despair, and don't get angry just follow these steps.

- First, take a deep breath. This is not the time to get into a verbal altercation with management. You don't need to go there. It will only turn nothing into something that could affect your career.
- Second, you need to request a PS 1767. What is a PS 1767? It is a safety form. Like all USPS forms it can be printed on any postal computer. It is self-explanatory enough and is divided into 3 sections. The top section is for you, the reporting party, to fill out. In it you will need to state what the safety issue is, and how it affects you. In this instance you want to say what time you clocked in, what time you notified management about the 12 hours, that you are exhausted, and that you are attempting to avoid an accident. You may go into more detail with total hours worked, weather, time of day etc. When finished you should bring the completed 1767 to management request that they round date the form and make you a copy. After you have received your copy, it is time to handle anything that could be considered end of shift that may be left, clock out and call it a day.
- Finally, do not engage in any back and forth, and if management is persistent in harassing you on the subject despite providing the safety form; it is time to get in contact with your steward and let them help you address the issue going forward.

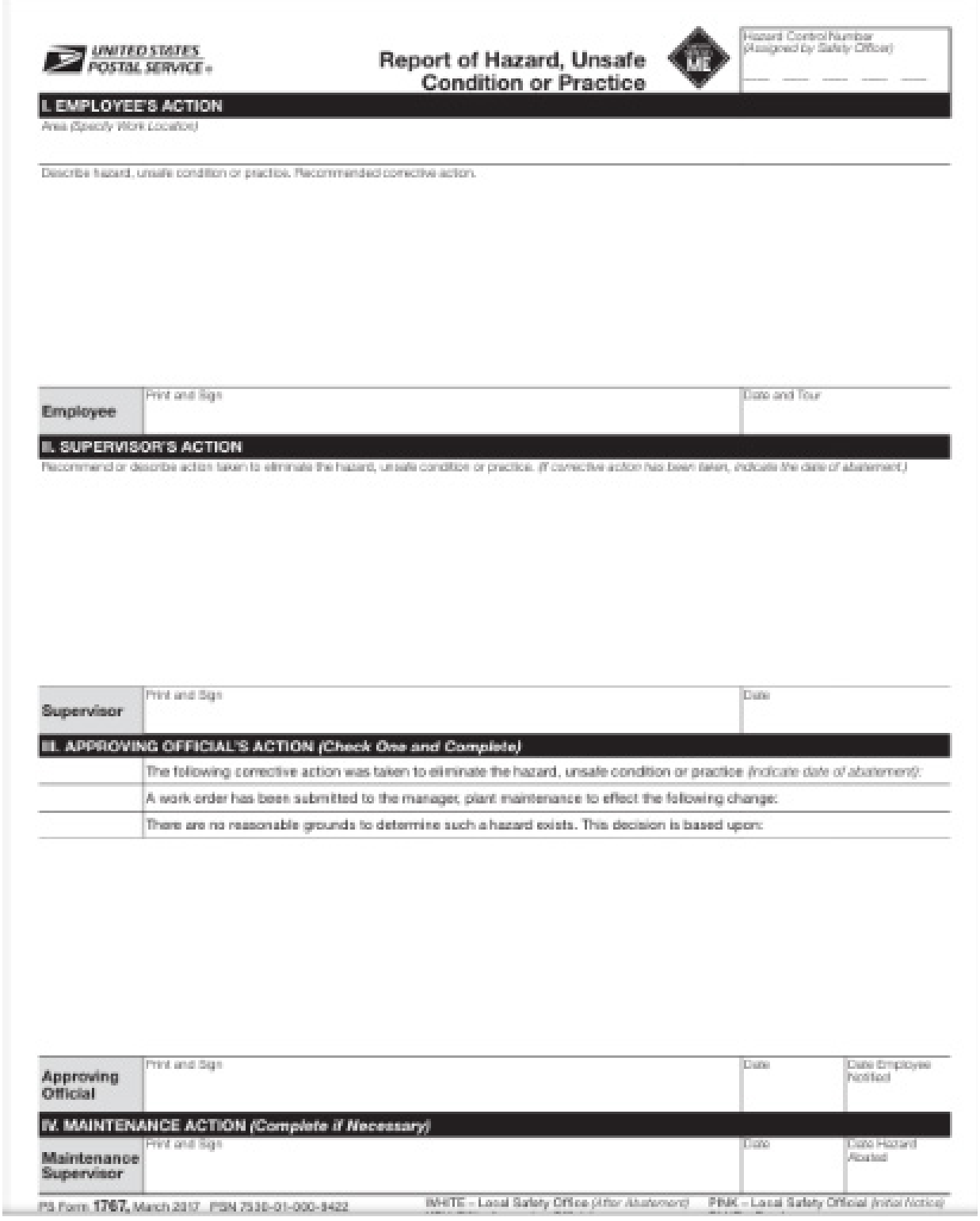
(Continued on page 19)

(Continued from page 18) ***12 Hours Days?***

The holidays are stressful, and we all know this job can be stressful, so take care of yourselves in these 12-hour situations.

If you are feeling good, and you want the hours you may choose to work, but if you are not feeling well, invoke ELM 432.32 and avoid the exhaustion or even worse an accident. Only you know how tired you are. Be true to yourself, put your safety first, and file a PS 1767 if you need to stop management's demand to work beyond 12 hours in one service day.

Have a great holiday season and stay safe out there!



UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice

Hazard Control Number (Assigned by Safety Office)

I. EMPLOYEE'S ACTION

Area (Specify Work Location)

Describe hazard, unsafe condition or practice. Recommended corrective action.

Employee	Print and Sign	Date and Tour

II. SUPERVISOR'S ACTION

Recommend or describe action taken to eliminate the hazard, unsafe condition or practice. *(If corrective action has been taken, indicate the date of abatement.)*

Supervisor	Print and Sign	Date

III. APPROVING OFFICIAL'S ACTION *(Check One and Complete)*

	The following corrective action was taken to eliminate the hazard, unsafe condition or practice *(Indicate date of abatement)*:
	A work order has been submitted to the manager, plant maintenance to effect the following change:
	There are no reasonable grounds to determine such a hazard exists. This decision is based upon:

Approving Official	Print and Sign	Date	Date Employee Notified

IV. MAINTENANCE ACTION *(Complete if Necessary)*

Maintenance Supervisor	Print and Sign	Date	Date Hazard Abated

PS Form **1767,** March 2017 PSN 7530-01-000-9422 WHITE – Local Safety Office *(After Abatement)* PINK – Local Safety Official *(Initial Notice)*

North Carolina District Representative

Eddie Moss

PO Box 1271
Gaffney, SC 29342-1271
864-504-1712
Eddie.Moss@nrlca.org

Full Time Assistant District Representatives

Gail Naillon
PO Box 12
Roxboro, NC 27573-0012
336-455-3973
Gail.Naillon@nrlca.org

Amy Russo
PO Box 01
Black Mountain, NC 28711
585-590-9243
Amy.Russo@nrlca.org

Tabitha Benfield
P.O. Box 113
Woodleaf, NC 27054-0113
704-692-7308
Tabitha.Benfield@nrlca.org

Ralph Fernandez
PO Box 155
Spring Lake, NC 28390-0155
919-508-7636
Ralph.Fernandez@nrlca.org

Nathen Darden
PO Box 94
Washington, NC 27949-2156
252-305-3079
Nathen.Darden@nrlca.org

Angela Morrow
PO Box 244
Waxhaw, NC 28173-0244
980-239-1291
angela.morrow@nrlca.org

Part Time Assistant District Representatives

Phillip Fulwood
PO Box 1002
Shallotte, NC 28459-1002
910-712-1528
Phillip.Fulwood@nrlca.org

Elissa Gonzalez
PO Box 139
Wake Forest, NC 27588-0139
919-758-6681
Elissa.Gonzalez@nrlca.org

Kathy Roberson
PO Box 1734
Matthews, NC 28106-1734
980-542-0743
kathy.roberson@nrlca.org

Area Stewards

Celeste Britt
PO Box 173
Pink Hill, NC 28505-0173
252-560-9162
celeste.britt@nrlca.org

Brian Hamlett
PO Box 1024
Yanceyville, NC 27379-1024
336-514-7406
brian.hamlett@nrlca.org

Josh Scariot
PO Box 612
Morrisville, NC 27560-0612
919-455-0959
joshua.scariot@nrlca.org

Tamara Fisher
PO Box 394
Shelby, NC 28151-0394
704-418-1078
tamara.fisher@nrlca.org

Amber Morris
PO Box 161
Aberdeen, NC 28315-0161
301-514-1041
amber.morris@nrlca.org

Lisa Talini-Zamora
PO Box 584
East Bend, NC 27018-0584
336-749-3445
Lisa.TaliniZamora@nrlca.org

Tracy Greer
PO Box 41
Vilas, NC 28692-0041
423-707-5578
tracy.greer@nrlca.org

Rhonda Sears
PO Box 414
Nags Head, NC 27959-0414
252-305-2535
Rhonda.Sears@nrlca.org

Brandi West
PO Box 246
Alexander, NC 28701-0246
828-707-4308
brandi.west@nrlca.org

Christmas Overtime: Know the Procedures, Protect Your Pay



North Carolina District Representative

Eddie Moss

As the Christmas mailing season approaches, rural carriers across North Carolina are preparing for one of the busiest and most demanding times of the year. Heavy parcel volume, longer delivery days, and additional assistance can make the Christmas period challenging. It is also a time when understanding the proper overtime and timekeeping procedures is especially important.

Every carrier should understand how Christmas overtime is earned, how work hours are recorded, and how to verify that the proper compensation is received.

Understanding Christmas Overtime

Under Article 9.2 of the USPS-NRLCA National Agreement, special compensation procedures apply during the designated Christmas period. Regular rural carriers may qualify for both Christmas overtime and Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) overtime, depending on their classification and the hours worked.

For regular carriers classified as FLSA Code B, Christmas overtime may be earned in two ways:

- **Working over the route's weekly evaluation.** Christmas overtime is calculated using actual work hours for the week compared with the route's evaluated hours. Going over the evaluation on one particular day does not automatically mean overtime is owed if the total weekly hours do not exceed the applicable evaluation.
- **Providing Christmas assistance on a relief day.** When a regular carrier performs qualifying Christmas assistance on their relief day during the designated Christmas period, those hours must be recorded in the appropriated Christmas assistance field.

FLSA overtime is separate from Christmas overtime. For regular FLSA Code B carriers, FLSA overtime generally applies to work exceeding 12 hours in a day or 56 hours in a week. These provisions must be applied according to the carrier's classification and the applicable timekeeping rules.

Christmas Assistance Must Be Recorded Correctly

Christmas assistance is additional service performed on a rural route during the designated Christmas period. Regular carriers should pay close attention to how this work is classified and recorded.

Christmas assistance hours are recorded separately from the regular weekly work hours used to calculate the route's evaluation-based compensation. Incorrect entries can affect the calculation of the carrier's pay.

It is also important to distinguish between providing Christmas assistance on a relief day and carrying an assigned route on a relief day. These are not automatically treated the same way for compensation purposes.

RCAs and Other Replacement Carriers: Know the Difference

Rural Carrier Associated (RCAs) and other replacement carriers do not necessarily receive the same Christmas overtime compensation as regular carriers.

Replacement carriers generally qualify for FLSA overtime for hours worked over 40 in a workweek, subject to the applicable rules. Carriers working auxiliary routes also have specific Christmas-period compensation procedures, including payment based on actual hours worked rather than the route's evaluation during the designated period.

Because pay rules differ by employee classification, carriers should verify that their designation, work hours, and compensation are entered correctly.

(Continued on page 22)

(Continued from page 21) ***Christmas Overtime***

Keep Accurate Records and Review Your Pay

During the Christmas rush, it can be easy to concentrate on delivering the mail and overlook the details of timekeeping. Every carrier should make a habit of keeping accurate records of actual work hours and reviewing their pay information.

Here are a few important reminders:

- Keep a personal record of actual hours worked each day.
- Record any qualifying Christmas assistance performed on a relief day.
- Review timekeeping entries for accuracy.
- Check pay statements for missing or incorrect compensation.
- Save relevant schedules, work-hour records, and other documentation if a discrepancy occurs.

Do not assume that every overtime payment is calculated the same way. Christmas overtime, FLSA overtime, relief-day compensation, and holiday pay are separate issues with specific requirements.

When in Doubt, Contact Your Steward

If you believe your Christmas overtime has been calculated incorrectly, your Christmas assistance hours were not recorded properly, or you have questions about the applicable procedures, contact your local steward or area representative.

The National Agreement, the Joint Rural Contract Administration Manual, and the current USPS Christmas Pay Procedures are important resources for resolving questions about compensation. The current Christmas-period dates and timekeeping instructions should always be verified before applying the procedures to an individual situation.

Protect Your Rights During the Busiest Season

Christmas is a demanding season for rural carriers, and the work performed to deliver the increased volume deserves to be recorded and compensated correctly. Knowing the procedures before the rush begins can help prevent avoidable pay problems and make it easier to identify discrepancies when they occur.

Stay informed, keep accurate records, check your pay, and ask questions when something does not look right. Your union is here to help you understand and protect your contractual rights.

On behalf of the North Carolina Rural Letter Carriers' Association, thank you to every rural carrier who works hard to deliver the mail to North Carolina's communities throughout the Christmas season. Stay safe, take care of one another, and have a successful holiday season!





NORTH CAROLINA AUXILIARY OFFICERS

PRESIDENT
Pamela J. Farmer
4377 5 Points Rd.
La Grange, NC 28551
252-566-9290
Pjfraypar1@gmail.com

VICE PRESIDENT
Linwood Smith
1008 Dowling Road
Raleigh, NC 27610

SECRETARY/TREASURER
Sue Kelly
4701 Main St.
Linden NC 28356
910-980-0820 or 910-890-2804
Msueky117@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Sarah Stewart
251 Cedar Drive
Stoneville, NC 27048

L.E. White
1336 School House Rd
Elizabeth City, NC 27909

Sallie Conley
294 Prentiss Bridge Road
Franklin, NC 28734

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

JUNIOR SPONSER
Heather Greer
PO Box 41
Vilas, NC 28692
423-440-0147
HeatherGreer74@gmail.com

JUNIOR OFFICERS

PRESIDENT
Allison Holt

VICE PRESIDENT
Easton Smith

SECRETARY/TREASURER
Skylee Locklear

CHAPLAIN
Trenton Greer

Six Scholarships Awarded

Auxiliary News

From
Sue Kelly
Secretary/Treasurer

The busy time of the year is upon us.

Will you be ready?

I am glad to see a bit of cooler weather as the 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 2026-2027 Program of The Call To Get Involved for Special Olympics USA. Our Rural Letter Carrier can make a huge difference in the lives of children and their families through our financial efforts. Again this year our Juniors will collect money for the program. Thanks in advance for all your support.

It is the time of the year for the Junior contest. Any entries can be mailed to Auxiliary Secretary/Treasurer. Her address is at the left of this article. All essays and posters must be on a letter-size manila folder. Each must have the following information legibly written on the back of the folder: Name, Full Address, Date of birth, Age by August 1st of that year, & Name of parent/grandparent.

Junior contests design a Poster as follows;

Ages 6-7 A Bouquet of Favorite Flowers

Ages 8-9 The Olympic Rings and/or Gold, Silver, Bronze Medals

Ages 10-11 Sports Collage, Multiple Sports in one Poster

Ages 12-14 Team Spirit

Ages 6-20 Special Education Fun is For Everyone

Write an Essay

Ages 15-17 The Challenges and Rewards of Volunteering in my Community

Ages 18-20 The importance of Inclusion in Modern Society

This year our Scholarship committee awarded 6 young adults scholarships. They are as followers;

	In memory of	From
1. Zoe DePue	Malamie Shultz	Burke/Caldwell
2. RileyAdams		McDowell Cty.
3. Hailey Huskins	James/Nancy Cole	Smokey Mtn.
4. Riley Parker		Wake Cty.
5. Callee Perry	James Reavis	Yadkin River
6. Sarahgrace Keel	Leo Wagoner	Brushy Mtn/Union

June 1st is the dead line for the North Carolina scholarship applications. Applications are available on the NCRLCA website, in the upcoming Magazine or contact one of the Auxiliary board members for more information. Any child or grandchild of the NCRLCA membership attending college under the age of 22 by August 1st of the year they are applying would be eligible.

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

Time to Start Planning for SAC

January 23-25, 2027
Embassy Suites by Hilton
5055 International Blvd.
North Charleston, SC 29418

Room Rate $169+ tax
Group Code 92Q
call 800-362-2779
Reserve by December 23, 2026

Full details on page 17