



Volume 43 Issue 2 Circulation 5000 Edited in Spring Lake NC September October 2026

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

Inside This Issue

National
Convention
News

Is Your
Retirement
Money Working
For You?

Get Ready For
Open Season

North Carolina Delegates, Alternates and Family Members at the 120th National Convention In Grapevine, Texas



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 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 Luv_F@LL!

The password will be
changed to the above on
September 31, 2026.

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

Cover Photo

**North Carolina
Chairbacks at the
National Convention**

*By
Tiffany Radcliff*

Table of Contents

AFVC	12
Auto-Home Owners Insurance	11
Auxiliary News	19
Chaplain's Message	5
COLA	12
District Representatives & Area Stewards	16-18
Dues Rates	8
Emergency Hotline Number	3
Fall Booster Announcement	20
NCRLCA Website & Password	3
Obituaries	5-6
Officer Assignments	2
PAC	10
President's Message	4
RCA Corner	14-15
RCHBP	8
Relief Day Work List Dates	17
Retirement	7
Rural Carrier Moments	
Safety	9
Steward Appreciation Week	18
Sunday/Holiday Volunteer List Dates	14
Vice President's Message	6

Important Dates

September 7	Labor Day Holiday
October 12	Columbus/Indigenous People's Holiday
November 3	Election Day
November 8	Fall Booster
November 11	Veterans Day Holiday
November 26	Thanksgiving Day Holiday
December 25	Christmas Holiday

120th National Convention

The National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA) successfully concluded its historic 120th National Convention, which took place from August 18 to August 21, 2026, at the Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center in Grapevine, Texas. Bringing together hundreds of rural letter carriers, union stewards, and North Carolina's 51 state delegates and 1,062 delegates from across the country. The four-day event centered heavily on navigating changing postal infrastructure, finalizing leadership transitions, and addressing member compensation and better benefits.

Post Master General David Steiner spoke to the convention about transparency and receiving feedback from employees. He brought up on having a focus group since he doesn't know there is a problem until he hears about it and carriers volunteering to be a part of the solution.

A primary highlight of the convention was the major leadership transition for the association. President Don Maston officially announced his retirement after the election cycle on Friday, August 21. Patrick Pitts was chosen as the new NRLCA President to lead the union into its next chapter. Joining Pitts on the 2026–2027 National Board as in residence officers are Vice President Kirby Ricketts, Secretary-Treasurer Tommy Turner, Director of Labor Relations John Adams, and Director of Steward Operations Michael Merola. Two newly elected executive committeemen, Connie O'Brien (four years) and Justin Edens (one year) join Bethany Small (two years) and Natasha Patterson (three years) to fill the rest of the National Board into our next contract negotiations.

Contractual and financial concerns dominated the floor discussions. Coinciding with the final days of the event, the union highlighted details regarding the fourth Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)

under the current National Agreement. It was announced that pay increases are set to take effect shortly after the convention on September 5, 2026. Delegates also analyzed operational challenges related to the Rural Route Evaluated Compensation System (RRECS), preparing for the upcoming mini mail survey scheduled to run from August 22 through September 4, 2026.

Beyond administrative items, the convention floor served as a crucial hub for union strategy. Attendees participated in intense debates over the proposed 24 constitution amendments and 375 resolutions designed to protect rural routes and increase wages and benefits. Speakers emphasized the United States Postal Service's universal service obligation, explicitly vowing to resist any infrastructure changes that might marginalize rural delivery networks, working-class communities, or postal employee safety.

Ultimately, the 120th convention focused on transparency for the union access to RRECS data and the NRLCA's collective commitment to its membership. With a newly minted leadership board, guaranteed upcoming COLA wage hikes, and strategy aligned for impending mail surveys, rural carriers departed Grapevine unified and equipped to face the operational challenges of the postal ecosystem if management can fill vacancies.

The one thing everyone I talked with brought up was participation in the union and carriers saying they didn't have time to attend meetings. Ten seconds out of a members day is all it would have take to vote on the contract. Maybe two or three minutes to vote on delegates to this convention next year in Indianapolis, IN.

Let your voice be heard!



President
Jay Schreiber



North Carolina RLCA President Jay Schreiber during the flag ceremony at the National Convention in Grapevine, Texas.



Chaplain

Jesse Ray Farmer Jr.

As many of you know, my mother passed away in May, the week of Mother's Day. This season has been bittersweet as our family has worked through her affairs, making sure everything was taken care of and handled appropriately.

Over the past month, our family has begun dividing my mother's belongings among us. In many ways, it has been a sweet and joyful experience. I have watched my children, nieces, and nephew choose cookware, clothes, jewelry, furniture, and other things that once belonged to their grandmother.

They loved her deeply, and it has been wonderful to see them discover little treasures that remind them of her. Each item carries a story. A piece of jewelry, a kitchen utensil, or a piece of furniture may seem ordinary to someone else, but to them, it represents a memory and a connection to someone they loved. These possessions have become little pieces of her legacy that they can carry forward.

But dividing a family's belongings doesn't always go this way.

Sometimes, what should be a time of remembering becomes a source of conflict. Feelings can get hurt. People can become focused on who received what, what they thought they deserved, or what they believe someone else took. Something as simple as dividing up a grandmother's possessions can create bitterness and even family division that lasts for years.

That makes me think about our own lives. One day, our families may divide our belongings. Someone may take our favorite chair. Someone else may have our jewelry. Our dishes may end up in another kitchen, our tools in another garage, and our clothes in another closet. And that's okay. Those things can be meaningful because they remind people of us. But they aren't our greatest legacy.

Our greatest legacy is found in the way we loved people, the way we served others, the faith we demonstrated, the kindness we showed, and the difference we made in the lives of those around us.

And I think that is especially meaningful for those of

Family Yard Sale

us who spend our days serving others.

As rural letter carriers, you don't simply deliver mail. You become a familiar face in people's lives. You notice when someone hasn't picked up their mail. You may know which house has a new grandbaby, which family is going through a difficult season, or which elderly customer looks forward to seeing you every day.

You may not realize it, but those small interactions can become part of someone's story.

Long after we are gone, people may not remember the things we owned. They may not remember what was in our bank account or what kind of car we drove. But they will remember how we made them feel. They will remember that we showed up. They will remember that we cared. They will remember that we treated them with kindness. At the end of our lives, our family may divide our possessions—but our legacy is something we give away every day.

So as we think about what we will one day leave behind, let's remember: The things we own may be divided, but the love we give becomes our legacy. And unlike the possessions in a family yard sale, that is something we can begin giving away today.



Obituaries

Brandi Byrd Reynolds, age 35 of Roaring River passed away Friday, June 26, 2026.

Brandi was born May 19, 1991, in Wilkes County to Alvin Boyd and Kathy Castevens Byrd. She was a member of Roaring River Baptist Church. Her two daughters; Bayla and Addy were her whole world.

In addition to her father, she was preceded in death by her husband; Brent Andrew Reynolds.

She is survived by two daughters: Bayla Faith Reynolds and Adalyn "Addy" Hope Reynolds, her mother; Kathy Byrd, two sisters; Tesca Byrd McNeil and Jessica Byrd Bauguess (Anthony) and several nieces and nephews.

(Continued on page 6)

State of the Union

The NRLCA was established on September 12, 1903, to strengthen the morale of rural carriers, encourage the exchange of ideas, uphold the dignity, integrity, and fairness of the Constitution, and promote a fraternal spirit among its members.

In 1903, 14 states and approximately 100 carriers were in attendance. One hundred twenty-three years later, 48 states and 1,119 members are represented.

Carriers categories attending as national delegates are listed below:

* Regulars:	774
* Retired:	323
* PTF:	6
* Designation 74:	2
* Designation 78:	11
* Designation 79:	3

Today, we remain strong, stable, and committed with 107,056 members, while facing issues our founders could not have imagined. Many of these challenges require immediate action from Congress. Letter carriers should not have to fear being attacked, murdered, or dying from heat exhaustion. Their focus should be on completing their routes and returning safely to their families each night. We need stricter penalties for attacks on carriers and vehicles with air conditioning to help prevent heat exhaustion and heatstroke. That is why you need to contact your representatives and senators and urge them to support the ***Protect Our Letter Carriers Act***.

RCAs often work for many years without contributing to the TSP, and those years do not count toward retirement. We need to support the ***Federal Retirement Fairness Act***, which would allow them to buy back those years and strengthen their financial stability in retirement.

Our financial stability and future depend heavily on parcel delivery. The ***Shipping Fairness Act*** would allow USPS to ship alcohol, as our competitors already do.

When Congress considers changes that could negatively affect our craft, it is important to have a strong PAC. Brian Young is our new Director of Governmental Affairs, but we cannot stop there. Sustaining PAC donors are essential to our success. We need a real PAC budget so we can spend strategically during elections and midterms. Please become a sustaining donor today, participate in union functions, and stay informed.

#UNIONSTRONG



Vice President

Tracy Greer

(Continued from page 5) Obituaries

Myles Patrick Bennett

The family announces the passing of Myles Patrick Bennett of Calabash, North Carolina on June 28, 2026. Myles, born on September 6, 1990, was part of many shared moments and relationships throughout life.

Myles will be remembered for the time spent with loved ones and the moments that brought joy to those around him. Friends and family will honor Myles by reflecting on shared memories and the positive influence he had in their lives. Though Myles is no

longer present, the bonds he created and the experiences shared will endure. Myles's memory will continue to be a source of comfort for all who knew him.

He was predeceased by: his mother Debbie West Bennett; and his grandfather Marvin B. Bennett.

He is survived by: his father Terry Wayne Bennett (Rita Pigott Bennett) of Shallotte; his wife Brooke Babson-Bennett; his son Zachary Bennett; his brother Dustin Bennett (Monica) of Gibsonville; and his grandmother Betty Varnam Bennett.



**Executive
Committeeman**
Telisha Locklear

IS YOUR MONEY WORKING AS HARD AS YOU DO?

Every payday, you work hard for your money. The question is: Is some of that money working for your future?

THINK OF IT THIS WAY: Your bank account is your 'just in case' money. Your TSP is your 'someday I'm retiring' money.

Two accounts. Two important jobs.

1. BANK SAVINGS

- * Best for emergencies and short-term needs
- * Easy access when an unexpected bill arrives
- * Eligible deposits may be FDIC-insured
- * Usually earns interest, but no employer match

2. THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN

- * Built for long-term retirement income
- * Eligible FERS employees receive USPS contributions
- * Investments may grow but can also rise or fall
- * Early withdrawals may bring taxes or penalties

The USPS match can make a big difference.

For eligible FERS employees, USPS automatically contributes 1% of basic pay and provides matching contributions when you contribute. To receive the maximum available agency contribution, you need to contribute at least 5% of basic pay every pay period.

Do not leave money behind!

If you contribute less than 5%, you miss part of the available USPS match.

THE THREE-LEGGED STOOL: Your FERS pension, Social Security, and TSP work together to support your retirement.

Give each part of your retirement accounts a job.

Bank savings: Emergencies and short-term needs.

TSP: Long-term retirement savings and investment growth.

FERS pension: Monthly retirement income based

mainly on service and high-3 salary.

Social Security: Another possible source of monthly retirement income.

BUILD YOUR FUTURE, ONE PAYCHECK AT A TIME

Small steps now can create more choices later. Small contributions can grow.

You do not have to become a retirement expert overnight. Start with what you can afford. If possible, contribute at least 5% to receive the full available match. Consider increasing your contribution when you receive a pay raise, step increase, or reduction in monthly expenses.

Even a 1% increase can make a meaningful difference when the money has years to grow.

Remember: TSP money is invested

The G Fund focuses on preserving principal. The C, S, and I Funds invest in stocks and carry more market risk. The F Fund invests in bonds. Lifecycle Funds hold a mixture of TSP funds and automatically adjust as their target date approaches. *Investment returns are never guaranteed.*

Try not to treat your TSP like an ATM

TSP loans and hardship withdrawals may be available, but taking money out can reduce what remains or retirement. Withdrawals may also create taxes and possible penalties. Before borrowing or withdrawing, ask: 'Is this an emergency, or can I protect this money for my future?'

Take one step today

- * Check how much you are contributing each pay period.
- * Confirm whether you are receiving the full available match.
- * Review which TSP funds hold your money.
- * Make sure your beneficiary information is current
- * See whether you can increase your contribution by 1%.

Invest now for your future retirement.



**Executive
Committeeman**
Elaine Althoff

Preparing For Open Season

Open season is approaching faster than you think. Are you prepared? Keeping your stress levels down during our busiest time of year starts with planning, and open season is just one

The process can feel overwhelming, but starting early makes it easier. Look at your current plan and compare it with the RCBP plan and all it offers. You can log on to RCBPhealth.com and select “Official Plan Documents: under “Member Resources: to view the 2027 Official Plan Brochure once released (should be mailed out in the next two months) and to help you better understand the benefits and resources available to you and how to access them.

of those.

Start comparing your plan options early. Get any questions that you might have answered as early as possible. The new Plan options and premiums will be in my next article once they are released.

Whether you are a new employee eligible to enroll, a current employee, or retired, maybe you had a qualifying life event this past year and need to make additional changes, take a few minutes to sit down and compare your options.

No matter who you are, you will need to think carefully about your choice and plan that fits you and your family’s health care needs going forward into the coming year. Here are some things to consider:

Compare out-of-pocket costs, co-pays, what is covered, what is not. Do you need to add a Vision and/or Dental plan, Life and/or Disability Insurance? Do you even need to make changes at all to your current plan? All questions you need to ask yourself.

If you do plan to make coverage changes, check that your current physicians participate with your new plans as well.

2027 Benefit Changes

- * Mandatory Weight Management Program for anti-obesity medications
- * Prior Authorization changes for MAPD and RCBP
- * Added Chemotherapy and High-tech imaging (CT, MRI, MRA)
- * Increased the MAPD Part B premium reimbursement to \$100 per month

If you have questions, my email is NCRLCAHealth@gmail.com

Better Health for a Brighter Tomorrow.

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.

Changing Seasons, Changing Hazards

September and October are some of my favorite months to deliver mail in North Carolina. The mornings are cooler, the leaves begin to change, and after a long summer, it feels good to be outside again.

Fall also brings a few different challenges. Children are back in school, farm equipment is traveling our rural roads, deer are more active, mornings can be foggy, and wet leaves begin covering driveways, walkways, and even the yards we cross every day.

None of those things are unusual, but together they can change the way we approach our day. A little extra awareness goes a long way this time of year.

slower speeds, needs extra room to make wide turns, and may take up more of the roadway than you're used to. A little extra patience and awareness can help keep everyone safe.

This is also the time of year when deer seem to show up everywhere, especially around sunrise and sunset. Keep your eyes moving and scan the sides of the road. If you spot one deer, there's a good chance another isn't far behind.

Not every fall hazard is on the road. Morning



Executive Committeeman
Alicia Pressley

dew, wet leaves, and uneven ground can catch us by surprise too. Before stepping out of your vehicle, take a quick look at where your feet are going to land. That extra second could prevent a slip or fall.

The scenery may change with the season, but our goal stays the same. We want to deliver the mail safely and go home at the end of the day. A little extra

awareness this fall can help make that happen.

Have a safe fall, and thank you for everything you do for the customers and communities you serve!

An infographic with a background of autumn leaves. On the left, a large orange maple leaf has the text "New season. Same goal." in a script font, followed by "MAKE IT HOME SAFE." in large, bold, white capital letters. Below this is a small white heart icon. On the right, there are four circular icons with corresponding text: a school bus icon for "KIDS ARE BACK.", a tractor icon for "HARVEST IS HERE.", a deer icon for "DEER ARE ACTIVE.", and a maple leaf icon for "FALL HAZARDS.". Below these is a larger section with the text "STAY AWARE. TAKE CARE." and "We all want to make it home." in a script font, accompanied by a small red maple leaf icon.

KIDS ARE BACK.
More buses. More kids.
More stops. Stay alert.

HARVEST IS HERE.
Expect farm equipment.
Give extra room and
a little extra patience.

DEER ARE ACTIVE.
Most active at dawn
and dusk. Stay alert
and scan the road.

FALL HAZARDS.
Wet leaves. Uneven ground.
Watch your step.

STAY AWARE. TAKE CARE.
*We all want to make
it home.*

With school back in full swing, you'll notice more buses on your route and more children along our roads, especially in the mornings and afternoons. Whether it's a child crossing the road or a bus making frequent stops, this is a good time of year to be a little more aware.

Harvest season brings more activity to our rural roads. Every now and then you'll find yourself behind a tractor or combine. On a busy day, it may test your patience. We've all been there.

Keep in mind that farm equipment often travels at

New PAC Chair

Hello, my fellow rural carriers!

My name is Erik Anderson, and I am honored to serve as your new PAC Chair. I am a rural carrier in Winterville, North Carolina, and I also serve as a local Steward and President of the Tidewater District.

I look forward to serving you and working alongside the board. I am excited about the opportunity to represent our members, support our union, and help make a difference for rural carriers.

Stay engaged, stay informed, and sure you support the NRLCA PAC. Our PAC is an important way for rural carriers to make their voices heard and help protect the future of our craft.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve. I look forward to working with all of you!



PAC CHAIR

Erik Anderson

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

Any and All donations are appreciated! Thank you.

Do You Need Hurricane or Flood Insurance?

Hurricane season in North Carolina typically runs from June 1st to November 30th, with the peak of the season occurring between **mid-August and late October**. North Carolina is vulnerable to hurricanes due to its location along the Atlantic coast,. Our state has experienced numerous devastating storms in the past, such as Hurricane Matthew in 2016, Hurricane Florence 2018 and most recently the devastating flooding in western North Carolina caused by Hurricane Helene in 2024.

There a difference between typical homeowners insurance and hurricane insurance and wind and hail insurance?

Most homeowners have insurance coverage that pays to repair or replace damaged property; including your house and belongings.

Home insurance generally covers damage due to fire, wind or snow. It does not include damage caused by hurricanes, floods or earthquakes. Homeowners insurance also covers your liability if you hurt someone else or damage their property.

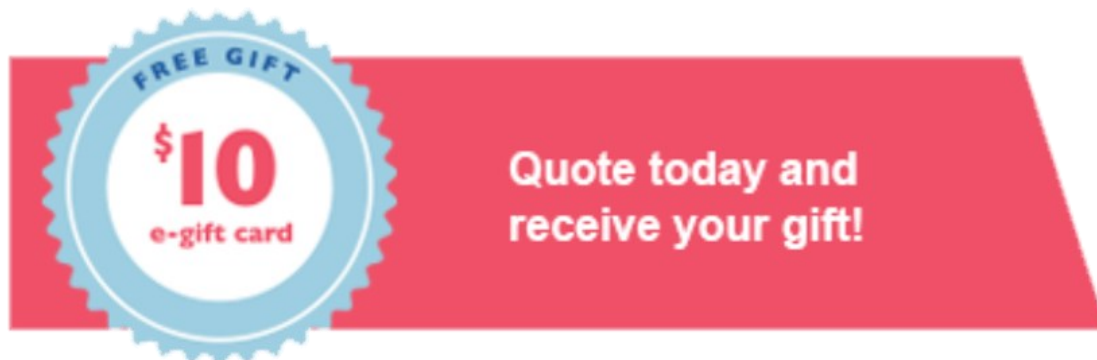
Hurricane insurance typically covers damage caused by “named” hurricanes, including high winds, storm surge, and some water damage. Hurricane insurance is usually included in a homeowners insurance policy if you live in an area prone to hurricanes. It typically **does not cover** flooding from rising water.

Flood insurance usually takes a separate policy and must be an additional purchase or a rider attached to your policy.

Residents of North Carolina should take precautions and be prepared for the possibility of hurricanes during the season. This includes having a plan in place, stocking up on emergency supplies, securing their homes, and staying informed about weather updates and evacuation orders.

It is so important to review and understand your insurance coverage. Research your coverage, including hurricane insurance, flood insurance. Do you need this type of additional coverage? Make sure you are adequately protected in the event of a storm.

Do not hesitate, give National General Insurance a call today at 1-888-325-7727 and one of the knowledgeable representatives will be glad to help you with your questions or concerns!





ARMED FORCES VETERANS CLUB



"The Armed Forces Veterans Club was established at the NRLCA national convention in Baltimore in 1932. The North Carolina chapter was chartered in 2019. The purpose of the club is to raise money to provide scholarships for children and grandchildren of AFVC members. Membership in the AFVC is open to not only veterans but to anyone who supports their goals. Membership dues are \$10 per year, \$5 for national dues and \$5 for the state chapter, and the membership year runs from July 1st through June 30th of each year.

If any of you have children or grandchildren who are high school seniors or are in secondary education, they are eligible to apply for the AFVC Scholarship. You only need to be a member of the AFVC. Applications will be available after the first of the year. Scholarships are awarded by random drawing at both the state and national level.

Remember that Veteran's Day is November 11th. Thank a Veteran for their service!

Audrey Solomon President

Josh Rigeftsky Vice-president

Ralph Fernandez Secretary-Treasurer

Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) Effective September 5, 2026

Pursuant to the release of the July 2026 Consumer Price Index - Urban Wage and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), and in accordance with Article 9.1.E, the fourth COLA adjustment of the 2024-2027 National Agreement will result in a \$1,414.00 increase for eligible rural carriers.

This COLA adjustment will be effective September 5, 2026, (PP 2026-20).

All COLA adjustments are based on a 40-hour evaluation with proportional application to those route evaluations over 40 hours. The increase should appear in paychecks dated September 25, 2026.

In accordance with Article 9.1.E.3, full COLA adjustments will apply to Table One and Step 15 of Table Two. COLA adjustments to Steps 1 through 14 of Table Two will be adjusted proportionally to each step's percentage of Step 15.

NOTE: All leave replacement employees will receive an additional 1% salary adjustment annually in lieu of COLA adjustments.

RURAL CARRIER MOMENTS

Kyle Toothman Retires!



Kyle Toothman started at the Post Office in 1998. He became a career carrier in 2005. Kyle has worked in the Benson, North Carolina Post Office his entire career.

His supervisor Andrew Sanders (in photo on left) threw a retirement party for him and the entire office on July 28 2026.



Happy Birthday America!

Virgina Willoughby dresses the part for the 250th birthday of the USA!

Virgina works out of the Elizabethtown Post Office.

Understanding Evaluated vs. Hourly Pay, Flexible Schedules, and the PS Form 3971



**Asst. District
Representative**

Angela Morrow

Rural carriers operate under a compensation and scheduling system unlike almost any other job in the country, and unlike almost any other position in the Postal Service. Understanding how our system works starts with three fundamentals: evaluated vs. hourly pay, the absence of a fixed schedule, and the proper use of the PS Form 3971 (leave form).

Career rural carriers are not paid strictly by the clock. Instead, compensation is based on a route-evaluation system, where pay is tied to the route's evaluated hours. In practice, this means a carrier is paid for the route as evaluated – whether the work takes more or less time on a given day. However, PTFs and RCAs are treated differently: since you don't hold a permanent evaluated route, your pay is generally calculated from the evaluation of whatever route you cover in a given day unless your work hours total more than forty (40) hours in one week- even by one minute. With that said, under RRECS (The Rural Route Evaluated Compensation System) route measurements

draw on scanner data, GPS tracking, and the MMS (mini-mail survey) to set evaluations. The means your pay is directly related to performing your duties accurately and capturing that work with the MDD scanner.

Because evaluated pay and hourly pay work so differently, comparisons to city carriers who are always hourly employees, are common but often misleading. The rural carrier's route may be evaluated well below the hours you actually work, and that gap is why understanding how you are paid is so important!

PTFs and RCAs work without the fixed daily schedule that hourly employees expect. Route length, volume swings, seasonal mail and packages, as well as down routes all mean start times, actual hours, and which route an PTF/RCA delivers can vary day to day along with which days you work. This flexibility cuts

(Continued on page 15)

Sunday/Holiday Parcel Delivery Volunteer List

The sign up list for volunteers for Sunday/Holiday Parcel Delivery will be posted in each delivery unit on Saturday, September 12, 2026 and remain up through Friday, September 25, 2026.

The new Volunteer list will be effective on **October 3, 2026**.

Remember: "When it is necessary to schedule rural carrier leave replacements for Sunday/holiday parcel delivery, management will first utilize any ARCs assigned to the hub location or associated 'spoke' offices. If there are no ARCs assigned to these locations or an insufficient number of ARCs, management at the hub location will then select leave replacements from the volunteer list on a rotating basis. If there is an insufficient number of leave replacements on the volunteer list, management will schedule leave replacements from the non-volunteer list, also on a rotating basis."

(Continued from page 14) **RCA Corner**

both ways: it can mean lighter days when volume is low, but it can also mean you are expected to absorb workload swings without advanced notice. You should keep personal records of hours worked so you are able to flag discrepancies and file a grievance if necessary.

Except for designation code 74 (those assigned to a hold down), RCAs and PTFs request time off in hourly increments. As an RCA/PTF, the approved PS Form 3971 (leave slip) is your only guarantee to receiving a specific day off.

The PS Form 3971 is the required paper trail for nearly all leave. A few points every member should know:

Submit leave in writing, on the 3971 or through eLRA, and always get a dated receipt or acknowledgement. Both the submitted 3971 and management's response indicating approval or disapproval must actually be received. Informal or undocumented exchanges don't count!

Know the response deadline. Under Article 10.7.B, failure to return a request for leave within three (3) days of receipt will result in the request being automatically approved, provided the rural carrier has obtained proper acknowledgement of the leave request submission.

Keep your copy. If a request is denied, altered, or ignored, your dated 3971 is your evidence for a grievance should you decide to file.

The bottom line is that understanding how evaluated pay, variable schedules, and how the 3971 process works all interact and affect you. A carrier who doesn't track actual hours or properly document leave requests can lose expected pay without realizing it. Our website, www.nrlca.org has a wealth of knowledge, such as how to read your paystub (type payroll in the search bar).

Knowledge is power but please remember this article is for member education and not a substitute for consulting your local NRLCA steward or the current USPS-NRLCA National Agreement for your specific situation.



North Carolina District Representative and Assistant District Representatives

Left to right: Front row; Angela Morrow, Tabitha Benfield, Elissa Gonzales Jackson, Amy Russo and Gail Naillon.

Back Row; Ralph Fernandez, Philip Fulwood, Eddie Moss, Nathan Darden and Kathy Roberson.

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
Georgia.Kline@nrlca.org

Brandi West

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

A New Year Ahead

As another union calendar year of service ends, I want to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the National Board for entrusting in me with the responsibility of serving as the North Carolina District Representative. The opportunity to serve the rural carriers of North Carolina is not to be taken lightly. I strive to make my time as the District Representative one in which every carrier believes they have the best union representation in the country.

No District Representative succeeds alone. I am incredibly fortunate to work alongside an exceptional team consisting of six full-time Assistant District Representatives, three part-time Assistant District Representatives, nine Area Stewards, and more than 80 Local Stewards across our state.

Their dedication, countless hours of service, and unwavering commitment to our members are the foundation of everything we accomplish. I am honored to serve beside each of them, and I offer my heartfelt thanks for everything they do.

During the union calendar year of June 30, 2025, through June 30, 2026, our team processed an extraordinary volume of cases on behalf of the rural letter carriers of North Carolina:

- 1,576 Pre-Disciplinary Interviews (PDIs)
- 1,574 Individual contractual grievances
- 353 Individual disciplinary grievances
- 73 Class Action grievances
- 9 Step 3 appeals



North Carolina District Representative

Eddie Moss

In total, our team processed **2,003 grievances** during the year, while traveling more than **100,000 miles** to ensure our members received the representation they deserved. Those numbers do not include the many additional grievances that were handled and resolved by our Local Stewards throughout North Carolina. Every grievance represents a member who needed assistance, every mile represents a commitment to service, and every successful resolution reflects the strength of our union working together.

At the time this report is being published, a new

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishing the Rural Route Evaluation Dispute Process has not yet been finalized. While we expect to have a dispute process as we have had in the last Mini Mail Surveys, we are not sure if there will be changes to the dispute form and/or process.

I encourage all carriers to regularly visit the NRLCA website and check the "What's New" section for the latest updates regarding the dispute form and any changes to the dispute process.

When submitting a MMS dispute, please include copies of **PS Form 4241-A** and **PS Form 4241-M**, along with as much

(Continued on page 18)

Relief Day Work List (RDWL)

The RDWL will be posted in each delivery unit three weeks prior to the beginning of the new guarantee period. The new guarantee period begins on October 3, 2026.

The RDWL should be posted for sign up on Saturday, September 12, 2026 and remain open through Friday, September 25, 2026.

The new RDWL will be effective on October 3, 2026.

Steward Appreciation Week October 18-24, 2026

Please take this opportunity to say, “*Thank You!*” to the stewards that work for you. Use this week to show your appreciation and recognize the stewards who serve you and this Union.

The stewards across North Carolina deserve our thanks for the job they do for all of us. Whether it is the steward in your local office, your area steward, the Assistant District Representative or our District Representative, please let them know that you are grateful for all they do.

Being a steward is a tough job. Please know that your steward listens to many, many complaints on a daily basis. Know that they work diligently to try to resolve the issues presented to them in your favor. Our stewards work consistently to help ensure that we have the best working environment possible. Not an easy task in today's workplace.

They receive very few compliments for what they do. As we all know, an “Atta boy” or a “pat on the back” can mean the world sometimes. So please, take a moment to stop and recognize your steward. It will mean more to them than you realize.

North Carolina wants to say **Thank You to ALL of our Stewards!**

(Continued from page 17) NC DR Report

supporting information as possible. A clear, detailed explanation of the issue will greatly assist in the review and handling of your dispute.

If you file a dispute, make sure that management fills out their section of the dispute form. It is almost impossible for Labor to argue against giving you credit when management writes on the dispute form that they agree with the carrier. Far too often, carriers turn in their dispute and management's section of the form is left blank.

Finally, I want to remind every rural carrier of the importance of updating your **DPM/LTM** each month between the **23rd and the 30th**

Keeping this information current is essential to ensuring the most accurate route evaluation data possible and protecting the integrity of your route. We prefer that this update be done under “*end of shift duties*”, so that the time is built into our evaluations. If that is not possible, then the carrier should be compensated for the actual time.

I still receive phone calls after each MMS from carriers complaining about mapping each month not being done correctly. If your local

management is not complying with the required monthly process, please file a grievance to hold management accountable in allowing you the opportunity to update DPM/LTM and notify your assigned steward immediately.

You must submit your edit book every month between the **1st and the 10th** for the updates to DPM/LTM to be correct. You will not be able to properly update DPM/LTM with any changes, nor will the information be saved if you have not updated your edit book first.

The challenges facing rural letter carriers continue to evolve, but so does the determination of this union. We have weathered contract negotiations, route evaluation changes, staffing shortages, and countless workplace issues because we have remained united on our purpose. Our strength has never come from one individual- it comes from members who support one another, stewards who commit their time and effort, and representatives who are willing to answer the call whenever they are needed.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your District Representative. It is an honor to represent the rural letter carriers of North Carolina, and I look forward to continuing our work together in the year ahead.

NORTH CAROLINA AUXILIARY OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

PAMELA J. FARMER
4377 5 Points Rd.
La Grange, NC 28551
252-566-9290
Pjfrayparl@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

Good Times in Grapevine Texas

Auxiliary News

From
Sue Kelly
Secretary/Treasurer

We had hot summer days at the beautiful Gaylord Texan Resort in the state of Grapevine Texas. This was our 98th National Auxiliary Convention. Seeing new and old friends is always a treat.

We had a busy week participating with nomination of officers and candidates, In the poster and essay awards. With the scholarship awards. In the participation and voting on binding resolutions and constitution changes of the Auxiliary of the NRLCA.

We had two first time attendees by the names of Wes Swann and Tim Roberson.

We welcome them and look forward to working together with them. They went to work just like they knew what they needed to do.

The convention allowed some fun time. This gave you time to visit with those from other part of the country. It even gave you time to go down town and watch the cows walk the streets. that was something that happened in the morning and afternoon.

Our Program Of Support "Bananas Foster" was decided on by our president Michelle Wertz. All Auxiliary delegates were given Bananas Foster jerseys to wear on Wednesday for our support to her program. She had a successful program.

As we say goodbye to one program and move on to another it is always a little bitter sweet.

Our Program for 2026-2027 will be "*The Call To Get Involved*".

The Humanitarian:
Special Olympics USA

We will talk more about this years program in the up and coming articles and at district meetings.

The Fall Booster is just a short time away. Try to make plans to attend. A friendly reminder that the North Carolina Scholarships will be awarded at the Fall Booster.

Looking forward to cooler weather. Be safe.



Auxiliary Member of the Year
Tammy Warren



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



Fall Booster

November 8, 2026

Koury Convention Center Sheraton Four Seasons
3121 West Gate City Blvd
Greensboro, NC 27407

Phone 336 292 9161
Room rate \$149 +tax/night
Rooms must be reserved by October 8th

The Fall Booster begins at 8:30 am and will end by 5:00 pm.