

National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update



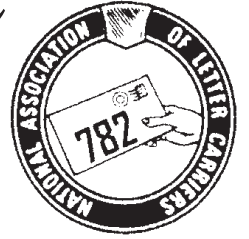
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CORONAVIRUS BULLETIN #2

MAY 2020

Our Job Has Always Been Dangerous

by Eric Ellis, CSALC District 4 Officer

Once upon a time, a group of wildcat strikers brought the nation to its knees. Prior to the great postal strike of 1970, the American economy ran, in large part, through the post office. Virtually all Americans paid their bills by mail. Letter writing was in vogue. Even stock market transactions, to some degree, depended on the flow of mail. Because of the leverage we had at the time – as well as the fact that almost 90 percent of the American public sympathized with the underpaid postal community – Richard Nixon had to agree to reorganize the old Post Office Department. And with that, the modern United States Postal Service was born, with collective bargaining and all.

Fifty years later, a different mover and shaker is bringing America to its knees. As was the case in 1970, the economy is at a standstill. Except in this case, it comes in the form of a pandemic and it has the potential to kill millions. And as I write this article, the coronavirus has forced several states, including California and New York, to essentially shut down what used to be normal human activity. That is to say: church services, business meetings, dining out at restaurants, taking the family to an amusement park, and the like are, for the time being, now considered too dangerous due to the contagious nature of this virus. And as a result, many of our friends and neighbors find themselves out of work. The stock market, which was going up like gangbusters, recently, lost *in one day* over ten percent of its value! Additionally, this is a good time to remind all of you the difference between a recession and a depression. A “recession” is when your neighbor loses his or her job. A “depression” is when *YOU* lose *YOUR* job. Letter Carriers, we’ve never had that problem. My grandmother, who lived through the Great Depression often reminded me, “Letter Carriers were considered very fortunate during the 1930s as they worked while others didn’t.”

Which brings me to the following: It has come to my attention that some feel that the USPS should do as other businesses and either shut down or curtail mail delivery to less than current levels. That would be the worst mistake ever, at least in my opinion. Let’s discuss mail delivery frequency. The Trump Administration favors opening the mailbox to private competition. In layman’s terms, any Tom, Dick or Harry could put his hand in a mailbox on a day we don’t work. If we lose a day of delivery, that’s what would happen. Amazon is in the process of hiring 100,000 workers. UPS and FedEx could also fill the void. We are not the only game in town, folks. If we stay at home for a protracted amount of time as others do now, we may come back to no job.

Branch 782 Officers

President	Mike Towery	(661) 331-9171
Vice-President	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
Recording Secretary	Kim Gerdes	(661) 301-9676
Treasurer	Teresa Ortega	(661) 391-8026
Financial Secretary	Anita Holderman	(661) 487-5353
HBP & MBA Rep.	Mark Ramirez	(661) 204-5592
Sargeant-at-Arms	Ryan Woommavovah	(661) 322-7624
Chief Trustee	Mike Meza	(805) 625-4541
Trustee	Paul Salazar	(661) 303-3603
Trustee	David Treto	(661) 865-8922

And yes – as Letter Carriers, we work outside. And yes – because of our working with the public we face possible exposure to the growing pandemic. I know this may sound cold and unfeeling, but that’s *always* been part of our job as Letter Carriers; that is to say: exposure to “THE elements”. And I can speak with some experience on this topic. In my 28 plus years as a Letter Carrier, I have been physically assaulted, harassed in multiple ways, received death threats, been bitten by dogs on multiple occasions, etc. Whenever we put the Letter Carrier uniform on and perform our duties, we – to some degree – put our lives on the line as anything can happen out on the street. And, I am certain that I am not the only one within eyesight of my article who can testify to this.

And while our economy is not as heavily dependent on us as was the case 50 years ago, we still fit the definition of essential workers. When there’s a government shutdown, *we deliver the mail!* When our nation is attacked by terrorists, *we deliver the mail!* When it’s raining cats and dogs or 110 degrees, *we deliver the mail!* And when a pandemic hits, such as the Spanish flu of 1918 or today’s coronavirus, *we deliver the mail!* And as long as the job of Letter Carrier exists, we will do as we’ve always done regardless of circumstance. And as such, we will continue to work for the agency with the highest favorability rating in the federal government and keep our jobs as a result.

Latest Covid-19 updates from the NALC? See the national NALC website. Also, stay in touch with your Branch 782 Officers if you have questions!

Dear Carrier Activists~

As you are probably aware, the Postmaster General in recent days has requested that Congress provide emergency funding to the USPS. She has projected a loss of at least \$13 billion this fiscal year and losses of over \$50 billion over the next few years due to the coronavirus pandemic.

We are asking that you click on the link below and follow the steps to send a form letter to your congress person and both senators.

<https://app7.vocusgr.com/WebPublish/Controller.aspx?SiteName=NALC&Definition=ContactLegislators&IssueID=2512&submit=Take+Action>

Taking this action will:

1) A direct public service appropriation of at least \$25 billion to the USPS to help it weather the storm.

2) Authorize an emergency public service appropriation for the duration of the crisis.

3) Provide funding to reimburse the USPS for the

cost of leave (sick leave and FMLA leave) used during the pandemic.

4) Provide hazard pay for USPS employees.

5) Removes any conditions that the federal government may impose on the USPS (end to collective bargaining for example).

Also, for those of you who are Stewards, please post the following white paper put out by the NALC on your bulletin board in your break rooms. The white paper can be found at:

<https://www.nalc.org/government-affairs/legislative-updates/text/COVID-19-white-paper.pdf>

The information will explain in detail what we are asking for and why.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. We are facing an immediate crisis unlike any we have previously faced and we need all active and retired letter carriers to take immediate action.

In unionism,

ERIC ELLIS

California State Association of Letter Carriers District 4 Officer
(559) 708-0033

2020 NALC HBP Info At a glance...



NALC Health Benefit Plan	1-888-636-6252
*Hospital Pre-Certification	1-877-220-6252
Mental & Substance Precertification	1-877-468-1016
Prescription Drug Program	1-800-933-6252
CVS/Caremark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
Durable Medical Equipment	1-855-511-1893
"24/7 Nurse Hotline"	1-877-220-6252
CVS/CareMark Pharmacist	1-888-636-6252
Solutions for Caregivers (24/7)	1-877-468-1016
CIGNA PPO Locator Line	1-877-220-6252
CIGNA Organ Transplant Approval	1-800-668-9682
Quit for Life (Tobacco Cessation)	1-866-784-8454
CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts)	1-800-558-9443
CIGNA Plus (Dental Discount)	1-877-521-0244
Disease Management Program	1-800-227-3728
OPM Retirement Info Center	1-888-767-6738
Federal Information Center	1-800-333-4636
Social Security Administration Info	1-800-772-1213
PostalEase Human Resources USPS	1-877-477-3273
Quest Lab Services (Bakersfield)	(661) 631-8520
LabCorp Lab Services Bakersfield	(661) 631-9258
Shared Services Option 5 live person	1-877-477-3273
Medicare	1-800-633-4227
Suicide Hotline	1-800-784-2433
Suicide?? Talk With Someone...	1-800-273-8255

NALC Health Benefit Plan
20547 Waverly Court
Ashburn, Virginia 20149

NALC Prescription Mail Order Drug Program
P.O. Box 94467
Palatine, Illinois 60094-4467

NALC Drug Prescription "Claims" Filing
P.O. Box 521926
Phoenix, Arizona 85072-2192

OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions
P.O. Box 30755
Salt Lake City, Utah 84130-0755
Questions: 1-877-468-1016

NALC Consumer Driven Health Plan and Value Option*
P.O. Box 18223
Chattanooga, TN 37422-7223 Phone: 1-855-511-1893

MARK RAMIREZ

NALC Branch 782 Health Benefit Plan Representative
(661) 204-5592

**Latest Covid-19 updates from the NALC?
See the national NALC website. Also,
stay in touch with your Branch 782
Officers if you have questions!**

From: Ra Najera <ranajera71@yahoo.com>

Sent: Tue, Apr 21, 2020 9:38 am

Subject: 2020 04-17 CDC - Mail and Parcel Delivery Drivers pdf

(Source – <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizatio>)

To everyone,

Here is a summary of guidelines and other helpful information for mail and parcel delivery services. This guide is the latest information we have from the CDC. Please read over this document thoroughly. Anything that is NOT being followed bring it to the attention of your immediate supervisor and also please inform your Shop Stewards immediately. If necessary (as in you don't get any action from your local management team for your concerns), fill out a PS form 1767. If this doesn't yield results bring it to my attention via email so it can be addressed up the line with the post-master or district officer. Follow the chain of command when possible and give management a fair chance to correct any perceived deficiencies – but do not allow them to drag out or delay any needed action.

Richard Najera, NALC Branch 231 President

The following links to articles of interest are courtesy of Caz Drozd, NALC Branch 44 member in New Hampshire

<https://www.businessinsider.com/trump-usps-hike-amazon-prices-or-lose-bailout-2020-4>

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/04/25/coronavirus-deliveries-mail-carriers-fedex-ups-workers-busier/5138433002/>

<https://www.cnbc.com/2018/04/12/trump-issues-executive-order-to-reform-usps.html>

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/trumps-comments-usps-rates-may-131032738.html>

<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-threatens-block-coronavirus-funding-postal-service-raise-prices>

<https://www.foxnews.com/tech/10-covid-19-scams-spreading-right-now-that-people-are-falling-for>

This is an excerpt from a recent April 25, 2020 three-page message from NALC President Rolando:

“The entire world continues to navigate through uncharted territory as we work and live through the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. What was once considered normal or routine just a few weeks ago is very different from the realities we currently face. What used to be certain has quickly become challenging. So much has changed in our lives, and it seemingly changes each day. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, I doubt many people considered the possibility of a state or local municipality requiring them to wear a mask when they go out in public. In some areas, that is now reality...

... By now, you have undoubtedly heard plenty about the financial situation the Postal Service is currently facing due to the impact on its revenues related to the pandemic and the shutdown of the U.S. economy, amongst other things. We will remain tirelessly committed on a daily basis to continue work with our congressional representatives regarding proposed provisions for future stimulus packages related to the COVID-19 virus. Provisions which would include providing appropriations to the Postal Service in order to ensure it has the resources necessary to continue operations and delivery services for the American people through this pandemic...

... We drafted a white paper — a roadmap laying out a pathway on how to provide financial relief to the Postal Service from the pandemic. The white paper is posted on our website on the front page and in the “Government Affairs” section under “News & Updates.” [<https://www.nalc.org/government-affairs/legislative-updates/text/COVID-19-white-paper.pdf>] It includes the necessary provisions that must be included in the next stimulus bill to sustain the Postal Service though the pandemic. I also provided a very detailed explanation of our plan in my April 17, 2020, statement which can be found on the “COVID-19” page on the NALC website.

The Postal Service's existence predates the founding of our country and is authorized by the Constitution of the United States. Ignoring its immediate and long-term financial needs necessary to survive through the effects of this national emergency is unacceptable. I have said it before and I will say it again, Congress, and ultimately the White House, must put their politics and agendas aside, and step up to provide financial appropriations to the Postal Service; just like it did in March for private companies damaged by the pandemic induced recession with a \$2.2 trillion relief package that did not include any appropriations to the Postal Service.

Even as our members heroically serve on the frontlines of the COVID-19 crisis, we continue to face politically based attacks. The *Washington Post* reported yesterday that the Treasury Department wants to take control of collective bargaining, set pricing policy, and decide senior executive appointments in return for the Postal Service's access to a \$10 billion line of credit to deal with the pandemic. When asked about this issue at a press event later that day, President Trump said that ‘the Postal Service is a joke,’...”

Read the entire source document at <https://www.nalc.org/news/nalc-updates/body/4-25-20-statement.pdf>

Mourn the Dead and Fight to Save the Postal Service

Continued from back cover...

The Postal Board of Governors, the postal service's bi-partisan governing body, has called on Congress to appropriate \$25 billion immediately and sufficient additional funds over time to sustain the service.

Yet, the Trump administration has threatened to veto any stimulus package that provides genuine support to the postal service. This administration is on record pushing for privatization of the USPS, which would result in big profits for the private owners, but higher prices and less service for the public. Allowing the USPS to go broke would be a set-up to sell it off.

Source: <https://labornotes.org/blogs/2020/04/postal-workers-plan-workers-memorial-day-vigils>

“On behalf of the NALC, we mourn the loss of each of these Letter Carriers.” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. Our deepest sympathies and heartfelt prayers go out to each of their families, loved ones, friends, co-workers, and customers.

Sadly, NALC has learned that Alex De Mateo, Branch 70 member and La Mesa, California Letter Carrier was involved in a vehicle accident while delivering his route on Tuesday, April 7 and passed away later that day at the hospital. He was 59 years old.

California Letter Carrier Alex De Mateo involved in fatal vehicle accident while delivering his route

NALC is deeply saddened to learn that Letter Carrier Angela Summers, an Indianapolis Branch 39 member and Shop Steward at the Linwood Station, was shot while delivering her route on Monday, April 27 and passed away that evening.

Indianapolis Letter Carrier Angela Summers killed on her route

John Consilvio, Ivoral Davidson, Angela Hampton, Tamika Shields, Kevin Urquhart

Letter Carrier deaths due to coronavirus now up to 10. NALC is deeply saddened to learn it has now confirmed that six more Letter Carriers have recently passed away due to complications related to coronavirus.

Our Job Has Always Been Dangerous



National Association of Letter Carriers
“Golden Empire Branch 782”
2628 “F” Street
Bakersfield, California 93301
(661) 331-9171

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E.A. BAKER UNION UPDATE
Special Edition
Covid-19
Bulletin #2
More to follow??

Latest Covid-19 updates from the NALC? See the national NALC website. Also, stay in touch with your Branch 782 Officers if you have questions!

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From medications to stimulus checks, from census forms to ballots, from medical supplies (including test kits and the coming vaccine) to online orders, the postal service is indispensable to the American people, especially veterans, seniors, small businesses, and those in rural areas.

At the same time, the Covid-19 economic collapse has caused a 30% drop in mail volume with an expected 50% drop by summer. Postal revenues are falling precipitously. The Postmaster General predicts that the USPS will run out of money by September. The postal service needs to be unbundled from the catastrophic pre-funding requirement and must receive a big infusion of funds to continue serving the American people, as it has since 1775.

50-75% loss of personnel due to infection and quarantine. In some NYC neighborhoods, the mail is not being delivered. Across the country, some postal facilities are experiencing testing, paid leave, and hazard pay. In New York City, where 15 have died of Covid-19, some postal facilities have closed. Postal workers, across the country, continue to struggle for Personal Protective Equipment, social distancing, fectons. Oregon has not been spared, with postal workers, and their families, around the state experiencing quarantine and in-

The national officers, staff and NALC representatives throughout the country are in constant communication April 28th is Workers Memorial Day, a day that the labor movement mourns the workers who have died on the job in the previous year and vows to fight on for health and safety at work. This year is especially painful for frontline, essential workers like postal workers. 45 postal workers, nationwide, have died of Covid-19, just in the past month. 1,800 are confirmed with the disease. 9,000 are in quarantine.

Mourn the Dead and Fight to Save the Postal Service