

MEMO

To the Branch 2184 Leadership Council, July 6, 2021



Walt McGregory
Mark Judd
Jackie McGregory
Mel MacDonald
Cathy Tondreau
Jim Powell
Scott Watts
Joe Golonka
Gloria Warthen
Felicia Davis
Leonard Zawisa
Kris Shaw
Mark Owen
Bryon Hendricks
Jillian Hudgins
Darryl Clay
Symone Coleman
Yvonne Jackson
Karl Tamburro
Denise Viola
Shaun Fowlkes
Lillian Bogosian
Phil Ashford
Scherrie Lacey
Dave Reise
Erik Venzke
Shavon Alexander
Valerie Watkins
Tamara Bosman
Diego Forshaw
Kristie Nelson
Otis Barney
Keith Benedict
Tracy Mitchell
Nakia Whitfield
Katrina Jones
Ananias Epps
Ramon Robinson
Paul Bordine
Mike Tredway
Danita Smith

As we reach the middle of the summer months, this Leadership Council Memo will begin with an update on Branch administrative matters. Regarding overall Branch 2184 operations, the status is quo at the present time. Steward and executive board meetings will continue to be conducted telephonically during the summer months. We will also continue to conduct business with our members telephonically wherever feasible.

Branch President Walt McGregory has also announced a planned and tentative return to in-person meetings effective with the scheduled regular membership meeting on Wednesday, September 1. The installation of Branch 2184 officers and stewards for the balance of the 2021-2023 term of office will take place at that meeting. Of note, the September meeting has in recent years also been an occasion to honor our most recent NALC Gold Card members, those that have achieved 50, 60, or 70 years of membership during the past year. That will not be done at the September meeting this year. However, this will occur at a future meeting or other Branch function, to be determined.

Also tentatively resuming in September will be in-person steward and executive board meetings at the Branch office. The scheduled steward meetings in September are at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, September 14 and Monday, September 20. The executive board meeting is at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, September 27.

On Saturday, June 19 the Letter Carrier Pay Schedule was updated to reflect the elimination of Step CC in Table 3, the City Carrier Assistant Schedule. Step BB and its pay rate (currently \$18.51 an hour) became the new entry step for new CCA hires. The new waiting period from Step BB to Step AA for CCAs is now 52 weeks. All CCAs will receive an additional 2.3% pay increase, effective on Saturday, November 20, 2021.

The next pay increase for career city carriers (PTFs and fulltime regulars) will be a COLA increase that becomes effective the second full pay period after the release of the July 2021 Consumer Price Index (CPI). This will most likely occur on the first day of Pay period 19, 2021, which is Saturday, August 28. As discussed in last month's Leadership Council Memo, this COLA increase will be one of the largest ever, because of a sharp increase in prices for most consumer goods and services. The next regular contractual pay increase will be 1.3%, effective on Saturday, November 20, 2021.

The Postal Service is continuing the calculation of retroactive pay for active carriers and recent retirees for the period of November 19, 2019 through April 9, 2021. This covers five pay increases, two contractual pay raises and three COLA adjustments. Although a specific pay date has not yet been announced, it is expected this should be during the next one to two months. The retroactive pay will come in the form of an adjustment to a regular paycheck, with its own separate set of deductions for taxes.

With the ongoing conversion of CCAs to career PTF status in Branch 2184 following the attainment of 24 months of relative standing in their current installation, stewards should be aware of an important National level arbitration decision that came out of the Mailhandler Craft. This involves disciplinary actions for non-career employees being "carried over" and cited in subsequent discipline for the same employee after they have converted to career status.

National Arbitrator Shyam Das ruled that non-career employees that are converted to career status are “new employees.” As such, disciplinary actions issued to these employees while still in a non-career status could not be “carried over” to their subsequent career employment. Although this grievance originated in the Mailhandler Craft, the National Level resolution of the dispute in a manner which is favorable to the union makes this an important decision for all postal unions to use in any situation where management attempts to cite disciplinary action issued to an employee while in a non-career status as a basis or consideration for subsequent discipline issued following a career appointment. A copy of Arbitrator Das’s decision is at the Branch 2184 office.

A situation occurred in one of our Branch 2184 stations where a letter carrier attempted to “rescind” a bid made on PS Form 1717 for a posted vacant assignment they had bid on. However, the carrier did not attempt to do so until after the bidding period had ended and the assignment had been awarded to them as the senior bidder. Although any career regular letter carrier can rescind a bid already made on a vacant assignment while the bidding period is still open, simply by completing and then submitting another PS Form 1717 with such notification, **a bid cannot be rescinded following the opening of the bids and awarding of the assignment.** The senior bidder must assume the bid-for assignment and can only return to the previous assignment by successfully bidding back on it when it is posted.

As Branch Vice-President Jackie McGregory wrote about in her May/June article for the Branch paper, the designation of Juneteenth (June 19) as a federal holiday caused an extensive amount of misinformation and misunderstanding pertaining to how and when letter carriers and the Postal Service observe holidays. As NALC union officials know (but that apparently a lot of our members do not know) the ten designated postal holidays are negotiated into the NALC/USPS Contract, and they are specifically the subject and content of Article 11. The negotiated method for scheduling letter carriers to work as part of a holiday schedule in Branch 2184 is found in Item #13 of our Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU). Even fewer of our members seem to even know that we have a local contract. Thus, misinformation runs rampant.

As Jackie noted, the inclusion of Juneteenth as an additional USPS holiday must be negotiated with the postal unions. If and when it is added to the current ten holidays, this would occur either through a National Level Memorandum of Understanding or through Contract negotiations. Of note, the next round of Contract negotiations between the NALC and USPS should take place in early 2023, given the expiration date of the current Contract on May 20, 2023. As a bit of history, prior to 1987 there were only nine postal holidays. Beginning in that year, the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday was added – through contract negotiations.

Letter carriers requesting EFEL/Covid-19 leave should be advised that they must fill out PS Forms 3971 completely, including the appropriate number (1 through 8) as a qualifying reason for the use of the leave. This is in addition to completing the other required forms and meeting the other documentation requirements as required by OPM for this leave.