

MEMO

To the Branch 2184 Leadership Council, June 8, 2021



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Jackie McGregory
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Scott Watts
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Felicia Davis
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Kris Shaw
Mark Owen
Bryon Hendricks
Jillian Hudgins
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Symone Coleman
Yvonne Jackson
Karl Tamburro
Denise Viola
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

This month's Leadership Council Memo will begin as usual with a Branch administrative update. As pandemic restrictions ease the Branch will be making a measured return to some but not all of our previous operating policies and procedures. Look for further updates from Branch President Walt McGregory regarding future meetings and other Branch functions.

On Sunday, May 23, nominations were taken at a special meeting for Branch 2184 officers, stewards and convention delegates for the 2021-2023 term of office. Those nominated for positions that are uncontested are considered as elected to these positions, with the term of office scheduled to begin with the installation ceremony at the regular Branch meeting scheduled for Wednesday, September 1. Further details about this meeting will be announced by Branch President McGregory.

An election by mail ballot for the contested positions (two Branch officer positions as well as steward positions in four stations) will be conducted under the procedures outlined in our Branch Bylaws. An election committee appointed by Branch President McGregory is currently in the process of preparing the information for the ballots to be printed. These will be mailed to the current address of record for all Branch 2184 members (active and retired) in good standing. Ballots for the station steward contests will only be mailed to the active members in good standing in those stations.

Candidates for contested positions will be notified of dates, times, and locations for ballot preparation and mailing as well as the opening and counting of returned ballots. The results will be announced at the Branch executive board meeting on Monday, July 26.

The Branch continues to receive numerous calls and questions involving parttime flexible (PTF) career letter carriers. Branch 2184 PTF numbers have recently increased significantly as a result of the terms of and accompanying Memorandums in the new (2019-2023) Contract. Stewards, if you have not already done so, please print the updated PTF Q & A from the May 2021 Postal Record that was included with the documents on the Branch website for the May steward meetings, and keep them handy for reference. Contrary to what some in postal management (as well as some of the newly converted PTFs) believe, a PTF is NOT "a glorified CCA." PTFs have all of the benefits as well as many though not all of the rights of fulltime career carriers. We must ensure that those rights are protected and enforced.

The major aspects of the terms of the 2019-2023 National Agreement have been well publicized and made available by the NALC at the National level. However, as with all newly negotiated or arbitrated NALC/USPS Contracts, there are also some other less publicized, more "under the radar" changes in a few of the Contract Articles. Some are minor tweaks, but a few others are more significant. One of the more significant changes in the new Contract is found in Article 27 – Employee Claims.

Article 27 has always been somewhat of a "hybrid" Article in that the standard Article 15 grievance process is not utilized for employee claims. Rather, the claim – which still must be filed within 14 days on an employee's loss or damage to personal property while on duty, requires a different process.

The employee documents the loss, which cannot be caused by a negligent or willful act of the employee, and submits it directly to the employer at the local level, along with recommendations by a NALC steward. Local management then makes their own recommendation, and sends the claim along with accompanying recommendations to the Step B Dispute Resolution parties, who will adjudicate the claim or impasse it if agreement cannot be reached.

The significant change in the new Contract occurs in the first five words of the first sentence in Article 27. Since the 1970s, a minimum loss of \$10 had been the threshold necessary to file and employee claim. This has been changed to \$60, effective with the current National Agreement. This change will likely have the net effect of eliminating many potential employee claims for loss or damage to personal property.

Another contractual change will take effect with the next paid holiday for letter carriers (Independence Day) is the annual leave in lieu of holiday pay option, which has been added to Article 11, sections 4 and 8 of the 2019-2023 Contract. Early indications are that there is considerable misunderstanding about the procedures and specifics of this option. Stewards, please be sure to carefully read (and print) the "Contract Talk" item in the June 2021 *Postal Record*. Among other specifics concerning this new contractual provision, it specifically and only applies to work on a holiday or a designated holiday. It does NOT apply where a fulltime career employee works his or her nonscheduled day as part of a holiday schedule. Additionally, this option does apply to CCAs that are scheduled to work on the day of a holiday itself.

As the economy heats up while recovering from the pandemic recession, prices are soaring at a rate not seen since the 1970s. Because of this, the next COLA adjustment for career letter carriers is on a pace to be one of the largest ever, which is not necessarily good. Following the release of the April 2021 Consumer Price Index (CPI), the next adjustment stood at \$915 annually, with two months to go in the current six-month COLA cycle. Although a substantial increase in career letter carrier pay is all but certain with the next COLA adjustment, which will be announced in July and become effective in September, the steady increase in overall prices negates the actual value of this. Moreover, as has occurred before, once the current economic expansion cools down, letter carriers can expect a few years of minimal or no pay increases from COLA adjustments.