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April 2026

Queen City Letter Carriers - NALC Branch 43
News & Views

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Ted Thompson
President

From the President's Desk

Change is coming. Maybe not this month or this year, but structural, operational, and financial change is coming to the Postal Service.

On March 17th, Postmaster General (PMG) David Steiner testified before the Congressional House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, specifically to the Subcommittee on Government Operations. In his testimony, he stated that he is not sure the American public is aware the Postal Service is at a critical juncture. He further emphasized that the Postal Service will be without cash in less than 12 months. So, less than a year from now the Postal Service will be unable to deliver the mail if we continue to maintain the status quo. He characterized that since 2006, the Postal Services' highest mail volume year of record, that Congress has thrown the Postal Service overboard and instead of handing us a life jacket they threw us an anchor. His testimony depicted the anchor that is holding us down.

First issue is that we are regulated worse than a monopoly because even a monopoly is allowed to make money. With our regulatory oversight – he argues we can not make money under current product pricing. Second, he testified that the Postal Service is

required to pay a disproportionately high share of Civil Service Retirement Benefits (CSRS). This incorrectly calculated pension amortization payment costs the USPS about 3 billion annually. Third, USPS is only allowed to invest retirement funds in Treasury notes which severely reduces rates of return. Fourth, USPS is not allowed to manage our own workers' compensation claims that costs up to 800 million annually if USPS were allowed to operate like private sector best practices compared to federal practices. Fifth, USPS is mandated by law to deliver to every address six days a week. PMG Steiner testified, "The simple solution would be to cut the number of days of delivery, and Post Office locations, which I don't believe is anybody's preference. But if we are expected to deliver six days per week, absent the volume or pricing authority to justify or afford it, some source of funding beyond postal revenue needs to pay for it." Lastly, he stressed the USPS borrowing limit of 15 billion, an amount we reached years ago, and that was established more than three decades ago when we were half the size we are today. While he detailed in depth all these issues, he stressed the short term future.

PMG Steiner testified, "So, all those costly inequities amass to an incredibly burdensome anchor that plagues our financial trajectory. But in the short term, in order to ensure our survival beyond next year, we need to

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NEWS & VIEWS

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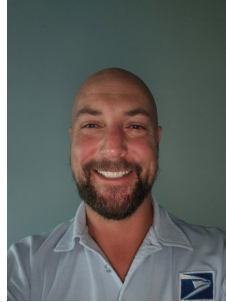
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EDITOR'S (Ted Thompson) NOTES
Branch 43 members are encouraged to
send articles to the *News & Views*. Items
of interest about your station, current
events, etc. are welcome. The following
guidelines apply:

- (1) We may edit your article for grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.
- (2) If it should prove necessary to edit an article for space or coherence, every effort will be made to preserve the substance and intent of the article.
- (3) Unsigned articles will not be printed. Letters, criticism and suggestions for improving the *News & Views* are also welcome. If your letter is not intended for publication, please state so. Letters held to 150 words are less likely to be edited.
- (4) Articles must arrive at the Branch office by the 15th in order to make the next month's issue. Digital format is preferred. Send items to: thompson@branch43.org

Printed in House



FOOD DRIVE

Every second Saturday in May, communities across the country come together for one of the largest one-day food drives in America: the NALC Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. On May 9th, letter carriers don't just deliver mail, they help deliver hope.

The NALC Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is a powerful example of how everyday routines can create extraordinary impact. As mail is delivered along our routes, residents are encouraged to leave non-perishable food donations by their mailboxes. Letter carriers collect these donations while continuing their regular delivery duties, transforming neighborhoods into hubs of generosity. It's simple: fill a bag, leave it by the mailbox, and your letter carrier takes care of the rest.

This year's drive as in years past will directly benefit the Free Store Foodbank, helping provide meals to families facing food insecurity. Every canned vegetable, box of pasta, jar of peanut butter, or bag of rice placed by a mailbox becomes part of a larger mission, ensuring no neighbor goes hungry. For many local families, these donations mean full cupboards, balanced meals for children, and a sense of stability during uncertain times. With the rising inflation and cost of living expenses this will benefit greatly the 10-30% of food insecure families in the Cincinnati metro area, where some neighborhoods experience as high as 60% food in-

security.

In addition to collecting food, letter carriers will also be delivering informational cards in the mail leading up to May 9th. These reminder cards serve as both an invitation and a call to action. They explain how the food drive works, what types of items are most needed, and when to place donations by the mailbox. The cards represent more than just printed paper, they symbolize community connection. When residents receive that card, they are reminded that small acts of kindness can add up to tremendous change.

The beauty of the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive lies in its simplicity and accessibility. There is no need to drive to a drop-off location or schedule a special pickup. Participation fits seamlessly into daily life. As people check their mail, they have the opportunity to contribute to something bigger than themselves. It's a moment where routine meets compassion.

For the letter carriers, May 9th is a day of extra effort and extra pride. In addition to delivering letters and packages, it is a reflection of service beyond the job description, rooted in community care and solidarity.

The Free Store Foodbank will sort and distribute the donated food to individuals and families across the region, stretching every contribution to reach as many people as possible. Together, residents, letter carriers, and local food banks create a powerful chain of support. Please see the food drive ad on page 4 of this *News & Views* and share with your family, friends, neighbors, and community partners.

In Solidarity
Jacob Bingham



Corey Isham
Formal A Rep

STEWARD'S CORNER

So far in 2026, 16 members have been placed on Emergency Placement. This action is intended only for the serious circumstances as described below in Article 16.7 of the National Agreement:

Section 7. Emergency Procedure

An employee may be immediately placed on an off-duty status (without pay) by the Employer, but remain on the rolls where the allegation involves intoxication (use of drugs or alcohol), pilferage, or failure to observe safety rules and regulations, or in cases where retaining the employee on duty may result in damage to U.S. Postal Service property, loss of mail or funds, or where the employee may be injurious to self or others. The employee shall remain on the rolls (non-pay status) until disposition of the case has been had. If it is proposed to suspend such an employee for more than thirty (30) days or discharge the employee, the emergency action taken under this Section may be made the subject of a separate grievance.

An employee placed in an off-duty status under this Section may utilize their accrued annual leave during this period.

However, management has begun applying Emergency Placement to minor infractions, such as accidentally hitting a mailbox, having a disagreement with management, and even as extreme as not having proper uniform.

In one recent case, a newer carrier with less than six months of service was placed on Emergency Placement for loading packages into a vehicle on a cold day while the engine was running and they were in the back. The carrier was unaware this was a violation. Situations like this raise an important question: why wasn't the carrier simply informed of the rule and given an opportunity to correct the behavior? It is management's responsibility to make every reasonable effort to correct actions before resorting to disciplinary measures. The immediate use of Emergency Placement in

this instance reinforces the concern that it is being used as a disciplinary tool, something it was never intended to be, nor bargained by either party to be. Numerous arbitrators have consistently supported the union's position on this issue.

This misuse is especially troubling at a time when the Postmaster General is testifying before Congress regarding the Postal Service's financial challenges. Each improper use of Emergency Placement often results in a grievance, which carries significant costs. The Postal Service must pay the parties involved in processing the grievance, and when a grievance is sustained or settled, it must make the employee whole compensating them for time they were not permitted to work.

In practice, management appears to be using Emergency Placement as a way to "teach the carrier a lesson," which is inconsistent with our bargaining agreement and contrary to the values the organization should uphold. Leadership should not adopt practices that withhold employees' pay as a form of punishment for mistakes or for failing to conform to management's preferred methods.

Returning to the Postal Service's financial challenges, even a simple calculation shows how costly improper Emergency Placements can be. As noted earlier, Branch 43 has had 16 members placed on Emergency Placement so far this year. For the sake of illustration, assume each employee missed just one day of work. At 8 hours per day, that totals 128 hours. Using an average hourly rate of \$35, the cost of those lost hours alone comes to \$4,480.

However, the expense doesn't stop there. I know that my next point may be surprising to carriers in the offices seeing mail cut for little reason, but the Postal Service must still ensure mail delivery, meaning additional labor is required to cover those absences. When that cost is factored in, the total effectively doubles to \$8,960. This estimate is very modest and conservative. In at least one case mentioned earlier, a carrier was improperly placed out of work for two days.

Even using the most modest assumptions,

Continued on page 7

THIS SPELLS
HELP FOR LOTS OF
FAMILIES THIS
YEAR!



LETTER CARRIERS' FOOD DRIVE

Saturday, May 9th, 2026

Please donate any non
perishable food items at your
mailbox and your letter carrier
will pick it up and deliver to a
local food bank in your
community



STEWARDS' CORNER

Stewards everyday receive calls and reports from letter carriers who are subjected to mistreatment and harassment by their supervisors and managers on a regular basis at certain offices in Cincinnati. This mainly comes in the form of disrespectful and unprofessional communication by management who can be categorized as abusive bullies. Some have made threats to carriers' job security, threats of discipline and even humiliation on the workroom floor in front of other employees. Most of this harassment involves making their "numbers." By "numbers" I mean the computer-generated reports management uses to tell you the carrier how long your route is going to take. This also includes the assignment of pivot time, even after you inform them you do not have time to do so and finish your route in 8 hours. The abuse typically occurs when these demands are not met but there are other situations where reported harassment to carriers occurs. This is leading to low morale and a poor working environment.

In these stations the way the employees are being treated is an environment that is unhealthy and unacceptable which can be labeled as hostile or toxic and it has to stop! In all cases it is wrong and cannot be tolerated. Stewards need your help in this matter to prove when a violation has occurred. This help is a descriptive well written statement. The National Agreement brings certain handbooks into the contract, these are a few citations which through Article 19 of the National Agreement are arbitrable and must be followed:

M-39, Section 115.4 Maintain a Mutual Respect Atmosphere

The National Agreement sets out the basic rules and rights governing management and employees in their dealing with each other, but it is the front-line manager who controls management's attempt to maintain an atmosphere between employer and employee which assures mutual respect for each other's right and responsibility.

Management not only has the right, but al-

so the responsibility to manage. Inherent in this responsibility is the obligation to set the tone as to how all employees will be treated. Management must maintain an atmosphere of dignity and respect.

ELM, Section 665.24 Violent and/or Threatening Behavior

The Postal Service is committed to the principle that all employees have a basic right to a safe and humane working environment. In order to ensure this right, it is the unequivocal policy of the Postal Service that there must be no tolerance of violence or threats of violence by anyone at any level of the Postal Service. Similarly, there must be no tolerance of harassment, intimidation, threats, or bullying by anyone at any level. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including removal from the Postal Service.

The Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace also contains language which prohibits such behavior. It reads in part:

We openly acknowledge that in some places or units there is an unacceptable level of stress in the workplace; that there is no excuse for and will be no tolerance of violence or any threats of violence by anyone at any level of the Postal Service; and that there is no excuse for and will be no tolerance of harassment, intimidation, threats, or bullying by anyone.

We also affirm that every employee at every level of the Postal Service should be treated at all times with dignity, respect and fairness. "Making the numbers" is not an excuse for the abuse of anyone. Supervisor's actions that violate the above provisions by use of harassing, intimidating, threatening, and bullying techniques cannot be tolerated.

So, what do you do when you feel you are being harassed or disrespected by management or if you witness it happening to your fellow carriers? First off, always keep your cool. Don't react and don't let the aggressor upset you. If the harassment is taking place on the workroom floor, request your steward. If harassment occurs on the street, keep calm. Next, as soon as possible, document everything that occurred in a detailed

Continued on page 7

From the Front Lines: A Veteran's Take on Postal Leadership

By: James Elliott / Anderson Branch

As a retired First Sergeant, I've learned that a mission is won or lost by the quality of its leadership. In the military, the troop is the asset; in the Postal Service, management has traded leadership for "dashboard monitoring." This "failure to lead" would cripple any combat unit.

The primary issue is a lack of Ground Truth. Non Commissioned Officers (NCOs) lead from the front, but postal supervisors are often tethered to desks, obsessed with "stationary time" while ignoring the tactical reality of weather and volume. They manage by metrics, not morale. Furthermore, many in today's management teams lack basic social communication skills - a byproduct of a "text-only" generation that struggles with face-to-face leadership.

To fix this, the Service should return to proven military principles like S.T.E.P. (Select, Train, Educate, and Promote). We once had the Associate Supervisor Program (ASP), but today, we have untrained supervisors training new ones. This creates a domino effect where inefficiency breeds in-

efficiency. Until management stops treating carriers like data points and starts treating them like a platoon of professionals, the mission will continue to suffer.

Call to Action: Reclaiming the Professional Standard

It's time to hold management to the standard of leadership we deserve. We aren't just numbers on a spreadsheet; we are the backbone of the postal mission. To bridge this gap, we must:

Document the "Ground Truth": When directives ignore reality, use your 3996s and official statements to create a "paper trail" of the tactical obstacles you face.

Demand Clear Intent: Don't accept vague or conflicting orders. Ask for the "why" and ensure management acknowledges the safety and volume constraints of your route.

Lead from the Bottom Up: Use our collective voice in the union to demand that supervisors get off the desk and onto the street to see the mission they claim to manage.

The mission only moves when we do. Let's make sure they respect the boots on the ground.

STEWARD SEMINAR

Thursday, May 21st

Dinner begins at 6:00 with training beginning at 7:00. Please call the office to reserve your spot.

In accordance with Article VII, Section 5 of the Branch 43 by-laws...Steward Seminars will be conducted two times per year. Stewards will be informed in advance for scheduling. Stewards or their designee will be required to attend one (1) of the two (2) steward seminars given each year. Failure to attend a steward's seminar will result in the forfeiture of one half (50%) of the steward dues reimbursement paid annually.

Motions made at the March Membership Meeting

To dispense with the roll call of Officers and reading of the previous months minutes. **Carried**

To accept the year end and December financial reports and pay the bills. **Carried**

To adjourn. **Carried**

Steward's Corner Isham cont.

the takeaway is clear, within Branch 43 alone, management's improper use of Emergency Placement has added at least \$9,000 to the Postal Service's financial burden, all in the name of "teaching a lesson." I know management is reading this article, and I hope it has been worthwhile. I also understand the likely response from them will be *"that incidents such as carriers hitting mailboxes can result in damage to Postal Service property and financial loss"*. However, the key point being overlooked is the standard outlined in Article 16.7, **whether retaining the employee on duty may pose a risk**. How many of these incidents are intentional? How many carriers are deliberately striking mailboxes? The answer is none. These are mistakes, not willful acts.

If Emergency Placement were meant to punish every mistake, it raises an obvious question, *how often would that same standard be applied to management, such as failing to adhere to Article 8 of the National Agreement? Causing grievances to be filed, and sustained. Thus, causing more financial cost for the postal service?* The inconsistency highlights the punitive use of the emergency placement.

Ultimately, this article is intended to educate all parties that Emergency Placement under Article 16.7 is reserved for specific, serious situations **not** as a general disciplinary tool.

In Solidarity,
Corey Isham

Steward's Corner Moore cont.

statement. Be very descriptive but keep to the facts. An effective statement will contain thorough answers to as many of the following questions as possible:

Who was involved?

When did the event occur?

What happened?

Exactly what did the witness see and hear?

Exactly where was the witness when the event happened?

By providing a good writing statement you can help your shop steward assess the situation

immediately. This will help them determine if the situation is an issue that can be addressed and corrected or if there is a need to file a grievance over the situation. When writing your statement leave out any personal opinions or feelings and just stick to the facts. Include how harassment makes you feel. Always write your statement in chronological order, and legibly. This will help the person reading the statement to follow from start to finish. It will give them an understanding of exactly what happened as if they were there witnessing it themselves. Include names of anyone that was around and may have also witnessed the incident. If you are a witness, please help your fellow carriers out by providing a detailed witness statement to your steward.

Statements are important at the informal and formal levels but become crucial in the event that a grievance is sent to DRT or appealed to arbitration. For your steward it's not what you know but what you can prove and a well written statement is vital in showing a violation occurred in the grievance process. In summary, make sure your statement is:

Legible

Sufficiently detailed

Easy to understand to let the reader know about the people or particular circumstances in the office

Signed including your printed name

And dated

Finally, remember just because it's not happening to you now doesn't mean it may never. Your statement today may prevent yourself or your fellow carriers from being harassed or disrespected by management in the future. Help each other out at your offices and look out for the newer employees and PTF'S. They don't always know their rights or understand how the process may work. Report anything you see or hear to your shop steward so they can investigate and always be willing to write a statement for the case.

In solidarity,

Aaron Moore

Step A Formal Representative



Alex Harper
AFL-CIO

AFL-CIO REPORT

“A fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work,” or, as we often hear it, “A fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay,” is a motto of the AFL-CIO, under which the NALC operates. Regardless of how fair we feel that wage to be (particularly in the lower steps of the pay scale) for the work we do, we can infer that Management feels that our compensation is more than fair, as I’m sure many of you have heard at some point in your career. Personally, I have heard letter carriers referred to as “thieves, pirates, robbers,” etc., (not unanswered by me, for the record), which speaks to the value management places on the work we do every day, and how easy or frivolous they perceive it to be. I do not need to convince any of you how asinine that sounds, and I won’t comment on the value I think management provides to this company. But, with contract negotiations having officially commenced, I wanted to take a moment to remind the membership of bargained benefits that were achieved by the Union, Nationally, Regionally, or Locally.

At the National Level, your Union has consistently bargained for higher wages (at a company which regularly finds itself in the red; we may not make as much as those working at a private company, but we are also virtually guaranteed not to be laid off. UPS workers are not as lucky at the moment) Annual Leave AND Sick Leave (carriers, ask your non-USPS friends if they are able to take sick leave and not detract from their PTO, or Annual leave in Postal terms), work hour limits, penalty over time pay, COLAs which help stabilize our paychecks, better experiences for new employees, including a guaranteed day off during the service week, and many other things that we often take for granted.

At the Regional Level, we have several Arbitration Awards that regularly benefit Branch 43 members, touching on subjects such as Light Duty Assignments, Job Safety, Route classifications, and multiple discipline cases, which is perhaps

one of the greatest benefits that is afforded to us as members of the NALC—management cannot adjudicate their own discipline. The NALC protects its members from unjust discipline!

Branch 43 is particularly adept and dedicated to that cause, and in our Cincinnati Local Agreement, Management must alert the Union Hall or have a Steward present whenever they issue ANY discipline. I do not know of any other local agreement that stipulates this, and it is a massive benefit that Branch 43 bargained for you. Branch 43 also successfully sought to get its membership vacation days in December, to **guarantee** incidental annual leave, to guarantee at least one light/limited duty assignment at each station in the city, to guarantee time to consult with a steward to each aggrieved member daily, among other things. All of this is solely to benefit the hard-working membership of Branch 43.

We live in a time when Unions are increasingly under attack, as we saw with the dissolution of several CBAs last year, including that covering the TSA and the AFGE. Unions exist to benefit and protect you and those who depend on you. I frequently hear members discussing what we lack, but I rarely hear any appreciation for what we have gained and what we sometimes take for granted.

If you would like to be a part of shaping your working environment, ensuring that your and others’ rights are upheld, and ensuring that our Union continues to grow and strengthen, or just to experience the camaraderie of your Branch 43 Brothers and Sisters, please come down to the monthly membership meeting. We would love to have you. I also want to let all members know that the AFL-CIO is having a “Union Day” before the FC Cincinnati game at 6:00 in Washington Park on Saturday, April 18th. Discounted tickets are available for purchase, scan the QR code below.

In solidarity,
Alex Harper

Discounted Tickets





Burt Hughes
Secretary

SECRETARY REPORT

First, I hope that by the time you're reading this, the snow is finally gone!

We have an upcoming event for letter carriers - a Cornhole Tournament on **June 14th** at the Branch Hall. Mark your calendars and plan to join us! The entrance fee is **\$30 per team**.

If you have moved, changed your phone number, or disconnected your home phone line, please make sure to update your information with us. Also, if you have any questions about your membership, don't hesitate to reach out. Send your updated contact information or questions to **branch43@branch43.org**, and I will get back to you as soon as possible, or you can update your information through our branch website **www.branch43.org**.

I also need your help locating some of our members. The contact information we currently

have on file is not accurate. If you know any of the following individuals and can provide updated contact information so I can reach out to them, it would be greatly appreciated: James Durham, Donald Clay, Andrew Filusch, John Fields, James Gerke, Thomas Rieskamp, Gary Volz, James Gaylor, Clifford Ritzi, Larry Yung, William Hemmerle, Andrew Camele, John Walker, Noah Mathias Jr., Chester Cox, William Stigler, Gilbert Bird, and George Wagner. Thank you again for your assistance.

For a building update, we're waiting for warmer weather to complete a few projects. A flagpole has been generously donated to the union, and we also have a new parking lot lights ready to be installed once the weather improves. Additionally, we will need volunteers to help with outdoor cleanup during our Spring Cleanup on April 19th. Please join us for this as well. Thank you for your time reading, I hope this information helps keep you informed about what's coming up!

Burt Hughes
Financial Secretary

RECORDING SECRETARY REPORT

GIVE YOURSELF A 5% RAISE

When you contribute 5% of your pay to your TSP account the post office will match your contribution up to 5%. That is like a 5% raise!

You can decide which fund you want your money to be in. You can opt for the very safe funds, which will earn smaller rewards. You can go middle of the road, earning slightly higher rewards. Or, you can opt for the stock market, a little riskier, but an opportunity to gain very healthy

returns.

When you retire, you will have extra money to spend as you please. Vacations, helping your kids, whatever you want to spend it on. Let's be honest. Your pension and social security are great, but they cover only the bare minimum. Having another source of income is a big help. And, by contributing to this plan, you are giving yourself a 5% raise! Who doesn't want a raise?

Sue Egbers
Recording Secretary

President cont.

increase our borrowing capacity so that we don't run out of cash. The failure to do this could lead to the end of the Postal Service as we know it."

I am not sharing this as doom and gloom because it is not, but change will come. For the NALC, we put out our support for several of these commonsense changes for years, especially a re-

allocation of CSRS pension obligations, increasing the borrowing limit, and better investment of pension funds. However, we will never support limitations on letter carriers workers' compensation benefits. PMG Steiners complete testimony is available to read on our branch website.

Fraternally,
Ted Thompson

John	Ambrose
Frances	Carpenter
Jose	Colon Sr
Mark	Franxman
Charles	Grant
Richard	Grimes
Kristi	Henry
Thomas	Horn
Russell	Kater
John	Landers
Patrick	McGowan
James	Merritt
Paul	Meyer
Michael	Molloy
Cynthia	Mulvaney
Kevin	Murphy
Lewis	Reffitt
Carmelo	Romito III
Virginia	Schomaker
Paul	Schotte
Dennis	Shields
Michael	Siemer
Lewis	Southall
Alan	Steely
Gary	Wilson
Thomas	Winters
Michael	Young

April Retiree Birthdays

**March YOPC
Attendees**

- Deborah Bryant
- Liz Darby
- Sue Egbers
- Diana Enwright
- Art Holt
- Burt Hughes
- Dick Keller
- John Macon
- Ken Pflanz
- Angela Stone
- Robert Wilkinson

Join fellow retirees next month for sharing old times, playing cards and lunch

**April
Gold Carders**

Joseph	Brock, Sr.
Stan	Burch
Melvin	Cain
Chester	Cox
John	Fields
Paul	Heger
Larry	Irvin
James	Jenkins
Thomas	Keane
Kelly	Marshall
Daniel	Mugavin
Theodore	Ridder
Charles	Williams
Willard	Woodall



**Gilbert Bird
Robert Creutzinger
James Gaynor
William Hemmerle
Noah Mathias**

YOU WILL BE
missed

**Join fellow retirees
for lunch**

**1:00 pm - 1st Monday
of each month**

May 4th

Price Hill Chili

4920 Glenway Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45238

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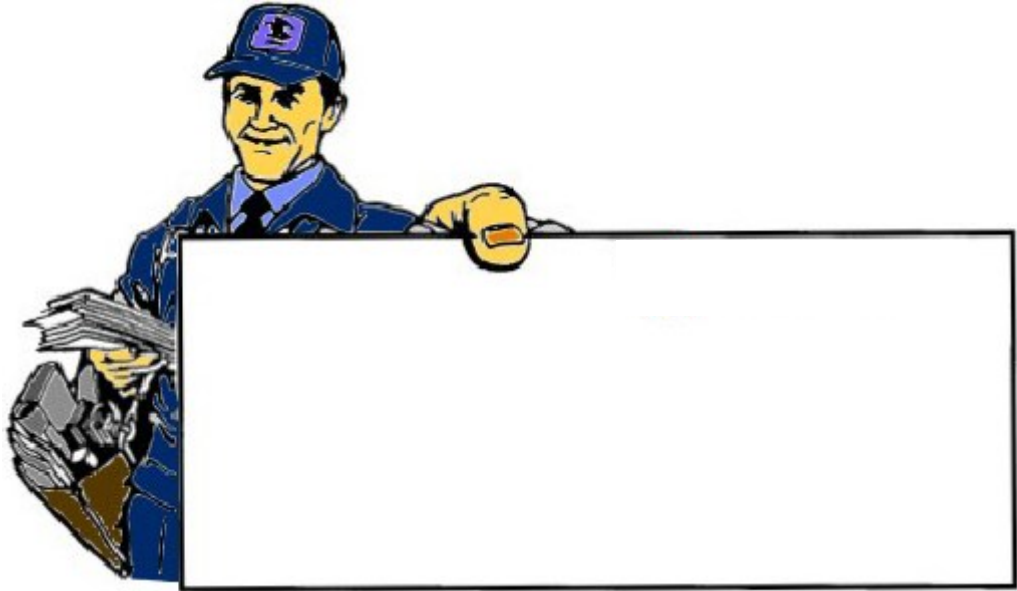
*Balance must be at least \$10,000 or greater to qualify. For loan balances below \$10,000 only the 90 day deferment will be offered. Member must qualify for the loan under normal underwriting guidelines. Minimum rate floor of this offer is 2.99% APR. Interest will accrue over the 90 day deferment period regardless of balance. Member must be able to provide verification of existing rate. Existing PFCU loans are excluded. This institution is not federally insured. **MEMBERS' ACCOUNTS ARE NOT INSURED OR GUARANTEED BY ANY GOVERNMENT OR GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED AGENCY**

Queen City Letter Carriers

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11070 Southland Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45240

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"ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED"



Upcoming Events

Budget Meeting - April 9th, 5:00 PM

Officers Meeting - April 9th, 6:00 PM

Branch Meeting - April 9th, 7:30 PM

Hall Clean Up - April 19th, 9:00 AM

Workers Memorial Day - April 23rd

May YOPC - Wednesday, May 6th

