



Since July 25, 1890

February 2026

Queen City Letter Carriers - NALC Branch 43 News & Views

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Ted Thompson
President

From the President's Desk

On Sunday, January 25th, the Tri State region was hit with a winter storm creating hazardous conditions and record-breaking snow totals throughout the region and every office Branch 43 represents. Snowfall totals varied throughout the region, but they were all record-breaking totals. Personally, my house was hit with between 13-14 inches of snow. At the Branch 43 office, I estimated our total was around 9-10 inches. Obviously, this storm created numerous problems with Branch 43 members and the Postal Services response to the storm.

On Monday morning, January 26th, I called the USPS Employee Emergency Hotline. As typical, I was notified to report to work as usual, no operations have been cancelled. My neighborhood roads have only been plowed once by this point, and I had no idea how the main roads or highway road conditions may be. Thankfully, I have a four-wheel drive truck, so I headed to the Branch office. Before 8:00 am, calls were flooding in from stewards and members informing me Post Office parking lots have not been cleared or have been poorly cleared along with other various conditions specific to their station. I

spoke with the Cincinnati Postmaster who informed me that no mail was delivered to the offices, carriers were to be instructed to do what work was available. After that, they could use their leave or stay to get their eight hours of pay. The 7:01 rule was not offered, and administrative leave was not offered. However, our contract calls for administrative leave for acts of God.

To be considered an act of God, three criteria must be met. First, it must create a community disaster. Second, the event must be general rather than personal in scope and impact. Third, the event must prevent groups of employees from working or reporting to work. Section 519.215 of the ELM explains that career letter carriers may receive administrative leave when they are either unable to report to work or prevented from working due to an act of God. Therefore, Branch 43 will be filing a city wide class action grievance for the city of Cincinnati requesting administrative leave as all reports I am hearing are carriers were prevented from reporting to work due to the road conditions and those that did report to work did not have enough work available to fulfil their tour. If any member has questions, please contact your steward or the branch office on this. At the February membership meeting I will discuss this in detail.

Faternally,
Ted Thompson



NEWS & VIEWS

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NALC Branch 43
11070 Southland Road
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www.branch43.org
Phone: 513-542-6400
Fax: 513-542-0043

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Corey Isham, Natasha Wever, &
& David Utz

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



Dave Utz
Formal A Rep

Stewards Corner

I want to cover some important topics in this article, especially for newer carriers, but honestly, this applies to a lot of carriers. Many of you know that I will be retiring soon, and I've been checking my TSP balance to see how retirement is shaping up. I feel pretty good about where I'm at.

All carriers need to understand how important it is to invest as much as possible in your TSP. If you're over 55 years old, take advantage of the catch-up contributions. This is a major part of our retirement, and it's one area you actually control. A little money invested now can grow into a lot by the time you retire.

I understand that children, bills, and life in general can affect how much you're able to invest. For me, I consistently put \$200 to \$500 per pay period into my TSP. During COVID, when we were working like dogs, I maximized my contributions and also made catch-up contributions. I knew how important this was, and I wanted a solid nest egg upon retirement.

If you don't invest, what's the plan when you're 60, 70, or even 80 years old? Work until you die. Not me. The hit to your budget now can give you financial freedom later, while you're fishing at Nalcrest. Okay, fatherly speech over. On to the OIG Audit Report.

An audit report dated 1/15/26 titled "*Grievance Management*" (#25-0680R26) is a good

read. From fiscal years 2022 to 2024, the USPS paid more than \$866 million to resolve nearly 3.5 million grievances. The stated objective of the report is improved grievance management.

In Ohio 2 District alone, over-time-related grievance payments totaled \$15.2 million, the highest in the country. By comparison, California 1 District paid less, and the entire states of Colorado and Wyoming paid less than Ohio 2 District. Keep in mind, Ohio 2 District only covers about half of the state of Ohio (Southwest Ohio which includes Cincinnati, Columbus, and Dayton).

Some of the findings include the need for remedial or refresher training, local management developing and implementing improvement action plans to reduce grievances, and better understanding of local memorandums. This isn't brain surgery. How about simply following the guidelines in Article 8 of the National Agreement! Doing that alone would substantially reduce the amount of money paid out. Follow the local memorandums (LMOU) of all Installations and reduce the amount of money paid out. Instead, management at all levels creates its own interpretation of the contract, which leads directly to grievances.

What I find crazy is that nowhere in this report does the OIG recommend holding management accountable for their actions! For example, when there are continual violations of the contract, why isn't management required to explain why Article 8 is being violated on a regular basis? Hold management bonuses until they abide by the contract. If they had to explain themselves to the

Continued on page 9



Pat Dougherty
Vice President

From the Vice President

Route Inspections

Each year, many USPS installations conduct route inspections. These inspections often create anxiety for letter carriers, especially when misinformation circulates about “pace,” “standards,” or pressure to rush. Route inspections are governed by Chapter 2 of Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services, and Chapter 9 of Handbook M-41, City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities. These USPS handbooks are enforceable through Article 19 of the National Agreement. A number of national settlements and memorandum of understanding are also applicable and must be complied with. This column will explain a few basic principles of route inspections established in these documents. There are several city offices that have been scheduled for Winter/Spring route inspections. Now is a great time to go over some important information to help you protect your route and what to expect during the route inspection process.

M-39, Section 242.11 establishes the goal of all route inspections: to adjust routes as near to eight hours as possible. It states: The proper adjustment of carrier routes means an equitable and feasible division of the work among all of the carrier routes assigned to the office. All regular routes should consist of nearly 8 hours’ daily work as possible. Along the same lines, **Section 911.2 of the M-41 states:** The count of mail is used to gather and evaluate data to adjust routes fairly and equitably to ensure that the workload for each route will be as near as possible to an 8-hour workday for the carrier.

In order to adjust a route, management must first evaluate the time of the route using the procedures in Chapter 2 of the M-39 Handbook. The data collected during the week of mail count and inspection is then used to evaluate the time of each inspected route. The procedures require separate and distinct methods for determining the

office and street time components of the total route evaluation.

Office time is based on the time used by the regular carrier during, or the standard time computed from the count week. Street time is based on the average times of the regular carrier and auxiliary assistance provided, either during the week of mail count and inspection or from a random analysis of weeks throughout the year. Office time is based on the lower of two computations: 1) Average actual office time of the regular carrier during a week of mail count and inspection, minus time spent counting mail and completing the 1838-C (line 23) and time, if any, spent performing unusual activities not done in a normal work week (line 22.) This time is based on actual clock rings, less hand-recorded lines 22 and 23 times; or 2) The average standard office time of the regular carrier during a week of mail count and inspection. This time is based on hand-recorded counts of volumes and times. Calculations are then made, including the 18/8/70 standard. The carrier-only standard in the office is casing 18 letters per minute, 8 flats per minute, and pulling down 70 pieces per minute from the case in preparation for street delivery.

Street time is based on one of two computations: 1) The average street time of the regular carrier, including any street auxiliary assistance, during the week of mail count and inspection; or 2) The average street time of the regular carrier, including any street auxiliary assistance, from an 8-week timecard analysis. Management may not choose a street time based solely on the fact that the time is the lowest. **M-00304 states: In keeping with the principle of a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay, it is understood that there is no set pace at which a carrier must walk and no street standard for walking.**

Management is required to perform certain activities and procedures before the week of mail count and inspection. Management must conduct a route and unit review at least once each year. That review includes work hours, volumes, possible deliveries, and certain operational conditions. When management determines from that

Continued on page 8

Proposed Bylaw Changes to be discussed at February Meeting

ARTICLE V, DUES, CURRENT

Section 1 Each member shall pay monthly dues equal to two hours base pay for an NALC grade 2, Step P letter carrier employed by the United States Postal Service. The dues of each retired member shall be thirty-seven dollars and twenty cents (**\$37.20**) per annum. Per the National Constitution all 1189 for deduction of dues, unless retired on OWCP.

ARTICLE V, DUES, PROPOSED

Section 1 Each member shall pay monthly dues equal to two hours base pay for an NALC grade 2, Step P letter carrier employed by the United States Postal Service. The dues of each retired member shall be sixty dollars and zero cents (**\$60.00**) per annum. Per the National Constitution all 1189 for deduction of dues, unless retired on OWCP.

ARTICLE V, DUES, CURRENT

Section 3 (a) Seven percent (**7%**) of the net dues shall be set aside monthly in a “delegates fund” for the sole purpose of defraying the expenses of delegates to the National Convention. Two percent (**2%**) of the net dues shall be set aside monthly in a “delegates fund” for the sole purpose of defraying the expenses of delegates to the state convention. All remaining net dues will be set aside in the “Treasurer Account” for expenses.

ARTICLE V DUES PROPOSED

Section 3 (a) Six percent (**6%**) of the net dues shall be set aside monthly in a “delegates fund” for the sole purpose of defraying the expenses of delegates to the National Convention. Two percent (**2%**) of the net dues shall be set aside monthly in a “delegates fund” for the sole purpose of defraying the expenses of delegates to the state convention. All remaining net dues will be set aside in the “Treasurer Account” for expenses.

ARTICLE VI, OFFICERS’ DUTIES, CURRENT

Section 12 (NONE)

ARTICLE VI, OFFICERS’ DUTIES, PROPOSED

Section 12 The ***Director of Communication*** will be responsible for all branch media including, but not limited to, social media, branch website, and Branch 43 publication of notifications. The ***Director of Communication*** will assist the Branch 43 President, Financial Secretary, or Treasurer with any service providers or vendors utilized by Branch 43 as requested. Further, the ***Director of Communication*** will perform any and all other duties assigned by the President.

ARTICLE VII, STEWARDS, CURRENT

Section 2 Stewards shall be elected by the members of their respective station/unit every two (**2**) years. Elections will close the last working day (Monday thru Saturday) in the month of November during odd numbered years.

Section 2a A nomination notice will be posted thirty (**30**) days prior to the election. Members will then have ten (**10**) days to declare themselves as candidates. Nomination notices will be withdrawn after ten (**10**) days and sent to the office for preparation of ballots. Ballots will be returned to the station/unit for distribution fifteen (**15**) days prior to the election. Ballots will be cast at the station/unit.

PROPOSED Article VII, STEWARDS, continued on following page.

Proposed Bylaw Changes to be discussed at February Meeting

ARTICLE VII STEWARDS PROPOSED

Section 2 **IN OFFICES OF 16 OR MORE MEMBERS STEWARDS** shall be elected by the members of their respective station/unit every two (2) years. Elections will close the last working day (Monday through Saturday) in the month of November during odd-numbered years. **IN OFFICES OF 15 OR LESS MEMBERS, STEWARDS SHALL BE APPOINTED BY THE BRANCH PRESIDENT.**

Section 2a A nomination notice will be posted thirty (30) days prior to the election. Members will then have ten (10) days to declare themselves as candidates. Nomination notices will be withdrawn after ten (10) days and sent to the office for preparation of ballots. Ballots will be returned to the station/unit for distribution fifteen (15) days prior to the election. Ballots will be cast at the station/unit.

ARTICLE IX, ELECTION OF OFFICERS, CURRENT

Section 1 The following list of offices are to be filled by popular vote each three (3) years by members in good standing of Branch 43, NALC:

President, Vice President, Financial Secretary, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, HBR/MBA, Sgt-at-Arms, Trustees (5), Director of Retirees, AFL-CIO delegates (5), Compensation IOD, Director of Legislative and Political Affairs

Prior to nominations and elections, the Financial Secretary will fulfill the requirements of Article 5 section 4 of the NALC National Convention Nomination of officers shall take place at the regular meeting in **November** following the 1988 National Convention and every three years thereafter, with election and installation of officers following in their respective months of December and January, the term of office running three (3) years, thirty-six months.

Any member desirous of becoming a candidate for office for Branch 43 must signify in writing not earlier than **45** days and no later than the adjournment of that **NOVEMBER** meeting.

ARTICLE IX, ELECTION OF OFFICERS, PROPOSED

Section 1 The following list of offices are to be filled by popular vote each three (3) years by members in good standing of Branch 43, NALC:

President, Vice President, Financial Secretary, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, HBR/MBA, Sgt-at-Arms, Trustees (5), Director of Retirees, AFL-CIO delegates (4), Compensation IOD, Director of Legislative and Political Affairs, **Director of Communication**

Prior to nominations and elections, the Financial Secretary will fulfill the requirements of Article 5 Section 4 of the NALC National Convention Nomination of officers shall take place at the regular meeting in **OCTOBER** following the 1988 National Convention and every three (3) years thereafter, with election and installation of officers following in their respective months of December and January, the term of office running three (3) years, thirty-six months.

Any member desirous of becoming a candidate for office for Branch 43 must signify in writing not earlier than **45** days and no later than the adjournment of that **OCTOBER** meeting.

PROPOSED Bylaw changes continued on following page.

Proposed Bylaw Changes to be discussed at February Meeting

ARTICLE XI, BENEFITS, CURRENT

- Section 1** Branch 43 will provide death benefits as determined by the membership at the February, 1973 regular Branch meeting. The death benefit fund is presently self-sustaining
- Section 2** Any eligible beneficiary of deceased member must present the death certificate within one (1) year of the date of death.
- Section 3** Branch 43 shall provide a spiritual gift, to the family deceased member.

ARTICLE XI, BENEFITS, PROPOSED

- Section 1** Branch 43 will provide death benefits as determined by the membership. **DELETE REST**
- Section 2** **DELETED**
- Section 3** Branch 43 shall provide a spiritual gift to the family deceased member.

ARTICLE XIII, SALARIES AND REMIBURSEMENTS, CURRENT

- Section 11** The Compensation & I.O.D. officer shall receive a salary of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per year payable quarterly.
- Section 11a** The Director of Legislative and Political Affairs will receive a salary of five hundred dollars (\$500.00).
- Section 11b** (NONE)

ARTICLE XIII, SALARIES AND REMIBURSEMENTS, PROPOSED

- Section 11** The Compensation & I.O.D. officer shall receive a salary of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per **annum**, payable quarterly.
- Section 11a** The Director of Legislative and Political Affairs will receive a salary of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) **per annum, payable quarterly.**
- Section 11b** **The Director of Communication shall receive a salary of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per annum, payable quarterly.**

All bylaw changes written on this, and the previous pages, were written in the following manner:

All current language was written in regular font.

All proposed language was written in bold font.

PLEASE attend the February membership meeting to discuss these proposed changes to our Bylaws!

2026 Pay Period Chart				
Pay Period	Begins	Ends	Pay Date	Holidays
1	12/13	12/26	1/2	12/25 (Thur)
2	12/27	1/9	1/16	1/1 (Thur)
3	1/10	1/23	1/30	1/19 (Mon)
4	1/24	2/6	2/13	
5	2/7	2/20	2/27	2/16 (Mon)
6	2/21	3/6	3/13	
7	3/7	3/20	3/27	
8	3/21	4/3	4/10	
9	4/4	4/17	4/24	
10	4/18	5/1	5/8	
11	5/2	5/15	5/22	
12	5/16	5/29	6/5	5/25 (Mon)
13	5/30	6/12	6/19	
14	6/13	6/26	7/3	6/19 (Fri)
15	6/27	7/10	7/17	7/4 (Sat)
16	7/11	7/24	7/31	
17	7/25	8/7	8/14	
18	8/8	8/21	8/28	
19	8/22	9/4	9/11	
20	9/5	9/18	9/25	9/7 (Mon)
21	9/19	10/2	10/9	
22	10/3	10/16	10/23	10/12 (Mon)
23	10/17	10/30	11/6	
24	10/31	11/13	11/20	11/11 (Wed)
25	11/14	11/27	12/4	11/26 (Thur)
26	11/28	12/11	12/18	
27	12/12	12/25	12/31	12/25 (Fri)
2026 Leave Year				
Begins: PP 03-2026 (Jan 10, 2026)				
Ends: PP 01-2027 (Jan 8, 2027)				

2026 Carrier Bid Schedule			
opens	1/16/2026	1/30/2026	closes
	2/27/2026	3/13/2026	
	4/10/2026	4/24/2026	
	5/22/2026	6/5/2026	
	7/3/2026	7/17/2026	
	8/14/2026	8/28/2026	
	9/25/2026	10/9/2026	
	11/6/2026	11/20/2026	
	12/18/2026	1/1/2027	

Vice President cont.

review the necessity to adjust one or more routes, the results of the review must be shared with the regular carriers serving those routes. Management must review certain operating procedures and correct unsatisfactory conditions prior to the start of mail count and inspection. Those procedures include adequacy and condition of carrier case equipment and labels to be replaced if needed.

Management must provide instruction and practice in completing a sample 1838-C prior to the count week. The 1838-C is the form you will complete each day during count week. This practice session is called a dry run. All carriers in the unit must receive this training. The dry run must be completed within 21 days of the start of the count. A notice giving the schedule of the count week and day and date of inspection for each route must be posted at least five (5) working days before the start of the count. One day advance notice must be given if management decides to inspect on day(s) other than the scheduled day of inspection.

The overtime provisions of Article 8 remain in effect during the week of count and inspection, with two exceptions: 1) On the day during the week of inspection when you are accompanied by a route examiner, management may require you, even if you are not on any overtime desired list, to work overtime on your own route in order to allow for completion of the inspection. 2) On the other days during the week of inspection when you count the mail, management may require you, even if you are not on any overtime list, to work overtime on your own route for time necessary to count the mail.

On the day of inspection, the route examiner will count the mail and fill out the Form 1838-C worksheet. The examiner will also follow you on the street, completing a Form 3999. Upon request, you have the right to verify the inspector's count. This includes all DPS, S999, and any machine counted mail as well. The examiner must act as an observer and not a supervisor. You should not be told to change the way you usually

deliver your route. NALC and the USPS have agreed that there is no standard or minimum street pace that a carrier is required to maintain. Do not allow yourself to be intimidated into speeding up on the day of inspection. In addition to your lunch and break periods, you may take any comfort stops reasonably necessary while performing your street duties. Reasonable comfort stops will not be deducted from your actual time. In fact, the examiner may not suggest or forbid any rest or comfort stops.

After the mail count and inspection week management is required to consult with the regular carrier assigned to a route, concerning both the evaluated time of, and any proposed adjustment to, the route. Management must give the carrier completed copies of Form 1838 at least 5 calendar days in advance, and a partially completed copy of Form 1840 at least one day in advance, of the evaluation consultation. The Form 1840 must have the front side completed and the reverse side must include any proposed time disallowances and related comments. At the evaluation consultation, management must discuss mail volume, the evaluation of the route, and proposed evaluated street time adjustments. If management proposes to adjust a route, management must hold an adjustment consultation and discuss the proposed relief or addition, the reasons for the proposed adjustment, whether the carrier agrees or disagrees, and the comments and recommendations of the carrier. When route adjustments or changes are implemented, management must complete a new Form 3999 to reflect the current authorized route travel pattern and schedules, etc.

In Solidarity,
Pat Dougherty



Steward's Corner cont.

Postmaster and MCSO, they'd pay attention really quick (maybe).

Maybe management needs to go back to college and take "Article 8 for Dummies," but the real problem is that USPS doesn't hold management accountable.

While I was writing this article, a major snowstorm hit on Sunday, and once again, no one in management could tell carriers to stay home. Despite all the telecoms on Friday, management couldn't come up with a plan. My son works for FedEx, and they called employees on Sunday and told them it was not safe to come into work.

A fellow carrier, Jason Thompson, posted on social media about management's ineptitude -

- no plan, buried vehicles, no mail at stations, yet carriers were still required to report to the Fairfield Post Office. Carriers showed up across the entire area, only to have nothing to do. Jason was placed on emergency placement for making that post, which shows how USPS at least in Cincinnati and surrounding offices—treats their employees.

To the newest carriers: learn from this. Stop giving management your 30-minute lunch and your breaks. Use your comfort stops and not just for the restroom breaks, but this February, use them to get warm.

In Solidarity,
Dave Utz

Motions made at the January Membership Meeting

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

To give Skip Grant a \$1,000 gift card for service above and beyond the call of duty. **Carried**

To send up to six people, at the President's discretion, to the Region 11 RAP Session in Columbus, Ohio, to include wages, per diem, hotel, and travel expenses. **Carried**

To accept the November financial reports and pay the bills. **Carried**

To adjourn. **Carried**

Printed at the request of St. Bernard Letter Carrier Carol Cutright

We honored the life and legacy of Lashelle Smith, a dedicated mail carrier who served for several years at the St. Bernard station in Cincinnati. Lashelle's life was cut short on December 28, 2025, after a long and arduous battle with breast cancer. Throughout her career, she demonstrated exceptional strength, resilience and leadership. Those qualities made her a natural choice to serve as the St. Bernard safety captain and as a trainer for new CCA and PTF carriers; a role she carried out with pride, integrity, and unwavering commitment. Known as the station's mama bear, Lashelle looked out for her coworkers, held high standards, and always brought a "Get the job done" attitude. Her presence guidance and dedication shaped the St. Bernard station in ways that can never be replaced. Lashelle will be deeply missed and forever remembered.

(Disclaimer from the editor. Carol- thank you for sharing these kind words. Losing family, friends, coworkers, and even pets can be difficult. As individuals, we are all unique with our own feelings and how we grieve. I encourage anyone emotionally or physically suffering to make a call with the USPS Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or your healthcare provider.

Charles	Adkins
Robert	Baty
David	Bellemore
Terrence	Brinck
Alice	Combs
Timothy	Coning
Steven	Docter
Michael	Donoghue
Dennis	Fangman
Charles	Fletcher
Sandra	Franklin
Gregory	Graber
Ruby	Griffey
Vernita	Hallee
John	Hyland
Steve	Jaggers
James	Kelly
Richard	Martin
Darren	McCants
Timothy	Olson
David	Pitman, Sr.
Lewis	Raugh
James	Rodgers
Linda	Schreiber
Kenneth	Shepherd
Donald	Sloan
Kimberly	Winters
Donald	Wolf, Jr.

February Retiree Birthdays

January YOPC Attendees

Deborah Bryant
Liz Darby
Sue Egbers
Diana Enwright
Jerry Giesting
Burt Hughes
Dick Keller
Ken Pflanz
Angela Stone
Robert Wilkinson

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



February Gold Carders

James	Clemons
Robert	Daugherty
Raymond	Deidesheimer
Michael	Eaton
William	Hartlaub
Henry	Jones
John	Singleton



**Lashelle M. Smith
Robert P. Tierney**

YOU WILL BE
missed.

**Join fellow retirees
for lunch**

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

March 2nd

LaRosa's Pizza

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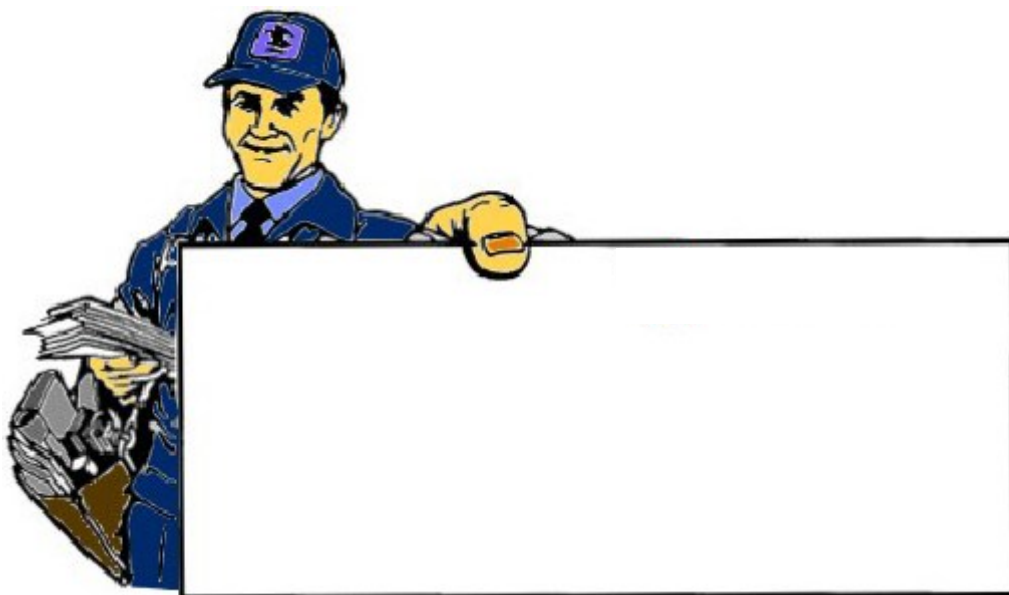
*Balance must be at least \$10,000 or greater to qualify. For loan balances below \$10,000 only the 90 day deferment will be offered. Member must qualify for the loan under normal underwriting guidelines. Minimum rate floor of this offer is 2.99% APR. Interest will accrue over the 90 day deferment period 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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Upcoming Events

Officers Meeting - Feb. 12th, 6:00 PM

Branch Meeting - Feb. 12th, 7:30 PM

Pres. Holiday - Monday, February 16th

Fair Contract Rally - Sunday, February 22nd. Final details TBD.

March YOPC - Wednesday, March 4th

