



Since July 25, 1890

November 2025

Queen City Letter Carriers - NALC Branch 43 News & Views

NALC Branch 43 Proudly Serving

Amelia - Batavia - Bethel - Blanchester - **Cincinnati** - Cleves - Georgetown
Greenfield - Harrison - Hillsboro - Lebanon - Loveland - Manchester - Mason
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Ted Thompson
President

From the President's Desk

Armistice Day is commemorated every year on November 11th to mark the armistice signed between the Allies of World War I and Germany,

which called for the cessation of hostilities on the Western Front on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. In America, President Eisenhower officially changed the name of the holiday from Armistice Day to Veterans Day in 1954. The Postal Service is the largest employer of veterans in the country, with hundreds coming from Branch 43. This year, Branch 43 will once again honor our veteran members on November 11th.

After a five-year absence, the Robert Keller Memorial Retiree Veterans Day Breakfast is back (ad on page 5). The intent of this event is to honor Branch 43 veterans and retirees who reach significant years of membership. Historically, this is a very well attended event and is open to all branch members to attend. This year, our guest speakers are headlined by OH-1 Congressman Greg Landsman. In the last congress, Greg was the only member of the House of Representatives to either sponsor or co-sponsor every NALC priority legislative bill. This would be a great opportunity for you to get to meet and hear from Greg himself. Personally, Greg has been the best congressional representative of my career to work with. With our new

branch office located in Ohio House District 28 for the State House, State Representative Karen Brownlee will also be in attendance. From the labor side, guests will include Ohio State Association of Letter Carriers President Jeff Kranz, NALC Region 11 Administrative Assistant and former Branch 43 President Dave Kennedy, and my friend Brian Griffin, Executive-Secretary Treasurer of the Cincinnati AFL-CIO Labor Council. At the time of this writing, while the invitation is out, I am unsure on whether NALC President Brian Renfroe will be able attend. Again, all members are invited and encouraged to attend, we just ask that you contact the branch office to reserve a spot as seating is limited.

Also, every year, the NALC Postal Record honors veterans by state and branch. Inevitably, we receive a call from a member who is dissatisfied that their name was omitted. The reason for this is simple – every member must notify the NALC of their veteran status. Upon hire with the Postal Service, that information is not shared with the NALC. Therefore, if you are a veteran, I ask that you join the NALC Veterans Group. You can do this through the members only portal at nalc.org, or by filling out the card below (available at the office) and mailing it to NALC Headquarters. If you need any assistance please contact the branch office. Another side note to veterans, whether early in your career or late, if you plan to retire from federal service, it is worthwhile to look into making deposits for your military service. Generally, military veterans can increase their

Continued on following page

**NEWS & VIEWS**

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 Queen City Letter Carriers
 NALC Branch 43
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 Cincinnati, Ohio 45240

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 Corey Isham, Natasha Never, &
 & 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

President cont.

years of service, and thus their retirement pension, by making a deposit for their time in the military. In the Postal Service, the amount of the deposit is three percent of basic military pay. Financially, this is a solid investment. I do individual retirement consultations at the branch office, and more frequently I am seeing military veterans that either did not make a deposit for their service or are doing recently before retirement. To avoid penalties for delaying a deposit, please contact the branch office to discuss this benefit if you are unaware. The process can be somewhat bureaucratic but it's not complicated. To our veterans, please take advantage of this benefit.

You continue to serve your country—
THANK YOU!

NALC Veterans Group

Complete this form and mail it to:
 NALC Veterans Group, c/o NALC,
 100 Indiana Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2144

NAME: _____	ADDRESS: _____
CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____	NALC BRANCH NUMBER: _____ BRANCH OF SERVICE: _____
I BELONG TO THE FOLLOWING VETERAN GROUP(S): <input type="checkbox"/> AMERICAN LEGION <input type="checkbox"/> DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS <input type="checkbox"/> VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____	

The Postal Service announced the 2026 open season for benefits as November 10th through December 8th. This is the once-a-year opportunity to elect benefit changes for the following year without having a qualifying life event. One benefit for which members may elect are Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA). At the end of October, the Postal Service notified the NALC that it will increase the annual tax-free contribution limit for Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts (DCFSA). Effective January 1,

2026, the new annual contribution limits for DCFSAs are \$7,500 for single individuals and married employees filing jointly (an increase from \$5,000), and \$3,750 for married employees filing separately (an increase from \$2,500). These FSAs can be used on childcare expenses such as daycare. For example, if you expect to pay a certain amount on daycare, elect for one of these FSAs as these amounts are not taxed so you save money. Please look at these, and other FSAs available to you.

For health benefits, I leave tomorrow for the NALC Health Benefit Seminar along with our branch Health Benefit Representative Bill Stratman. We will be able to give an update on that seminar prior to the open season. For now, I challenge everyone to at least take a look at the NALC Health Benefit Plan. Compare benefits and prices. This plan is owned by the NALC and operated by NALC members. The NALC Health Benefit Plan is not for profit like other benefit plans where hundreds of millions are paid in CEO salaries and benefits are denied whenever possible. The NALC Health Benefit Plan focuses on the members and their families, not profit. Currently, the NALC Health Benefit Plan partners with the Cigna network which is accepted by most health care providers. Regardless of your benefit choices, educate yourself on them and choose accordingly. Hope to see you all at the Veteran's Day Breakfast!

Fraternally,
 Ted Thompson



Pat Dougherty
Vice President

From the Vice President

Delivering Mail and Darkness

Daylight Savings Time concludes at 2:00 am on Sunday, November 2, 2025, when the clock will "fall back" one hour. Days continue to get shorter and with shorter day-

light hours, and later starting times, carriers are once again dealing with delivering mail after dark. This causes issues every year. So, what is safe? Safety depends on you and your route. There is no blanket policy regarding delivery after dark because the core issue to contend with is whether a particular carrier on a particular route can safely make mail delivery. Bottom line each carrier must weigh individual circumstances about the type of delivery to be carried (door-to-door walking, mounted, apartments, cluster boxes, etc.), surroundings (unfamiliar territory, high crime area, many steps, and hills, etc.) and the individual carrier needs to consider their past experiences with after dark deliveries.

Arbitrators have ruled that **darkness alone does not make conditions unsafe**. Therefore, do not tell your supervisor that you will not return to your route simply because it is dark. There is no contractual provision that prohibits management from scheduling carriers to work outside daylight hours. If instructed to continue, you must go back out and attempt to deliver the mail.

While darkness can **contribute** to unsafe conditions, it **cannot be the sole reason** for stopping delivery. For example, if you are on a walking route that is poorly lit and you trip over a crack in the sidewalk or stumble over an extension cord powering a large inflatable Santa Claus, you may declare that specific relay unsafe and move on to the next one. The same principle applies as you continue your route: if the area is well lit, continue delivering. If you encounter unsafe conditions due to poor lighting, stop and proceed to the next relay.

There are several precautions you can take

to stay safe while delivering in the dark: If you are on a walking route and lighting is poor, **do not cut across lawns**. Instead, stay on **sidewalks or driveways**, which are generally safer. When it is too dark to see addresses clearly, **do not finger mail while walking**. Since poor lighting reduces your peripheral vision, **watch where you step** carefully. You may also face challenges delivering on **cluster box, dismount, or mounted routes** after dark.

For example: If you must turn on your vehicle's overhead light to sort mail, give your eyes time to readjust to the dark before driving to the next stop. At cluster boxes, lighting may be inadequate for sorting. You might need to sort mail in your vehicle and then walk to the boxes to deliver. For dismount delivery, treat it like a walking route — if it's too dark to safely sort while walking, stop and ensure you can see properly before proceeding. Finally, keep in mind that **delivering mail in the dark will take longer** than during daylight hours. Take the necessary precautions to stay safe while completing your route.

With the staffing levels in the Cincinnati Installation, you will find yourself delivering mail in the dark on a route you are not familiar with. Everyone needs to look out for one another and case in the dog warning cards. It becomes more difficult to tell where the barking dog is when it is dark. You are the only one who can keep yourself safe. If you choose to bring back undelivered mail, let your supervisor know and list the reason on PS Form 1571 and have the supervisor sign it. You will more than likely need to be able to defend the decision with specific safety problems on the territory you brought back undelivered mail or parcels. It is important to note it is not the intent to endorse or encourage the unnecessary curtailment of any mail. It is about each carrier's safety and the protection of the mail in our charge and management's responsibility to manage. It very simply is the responsibility of each carrier to measure safety and report to supervisors any unsafe conditions encountered during their shift. It is management's responsibility to provide a safe



Dave Utz

Formal A Rep

STEWARD CORNER

Guidance for the Busy Season

As we begin another busy season, I'm asking our veteran carriers to share their experience and guidance with the junior carriers. Too often, senior carriers are the first to criticize the younger ones—but let's take this opportunity to lift them up and help them succeed in this job.

With the upcoming time change, it will start getting dark around 5:30 p.m. here in Cincinnati. At carriers' request, management will be providing headlamps and reflective vests. Be sure to ask your supervisor for these items, they make a big difference in visibility and safety when working after dark.

While I personally believe we shouldn't be delivering mail in the dark, that decision isn't ours to make. The union doesn't determine delivery hours. However, remember this: carriers are responsible for their safety at all times, not just at night.

Attendance and Discipline

Management has been issuing attendance-related discipline across the city. If you're called in for an attendance interview, make sure you have a solid explanation. Doctor's notes can help, but management will still review all absences. If you qualify for FMLA (after 12 months of service and at least 1,250 hours worked), apply for it. Always use your FMLA case number when calling in and keep a record of the hours you use.

The Value of Sick Leave

Carriers earn sick leave as we work - but some use it as soon as they earn 8 hours. If you're truly sick, of course you should use your leave. However, think long-term: the sick leave you earn today will be far more valuable in the future.

For example, if you currently make \$25 per hour, that same leave could be worth \$30 or even \$40 per hour as your pay increases. I know from experience—one carrier in Cincinnati was able to take eight months off with pay, and I personally

took three months off with pay, because we had both banked our sick leave.

You never know what life may bring. Maintaining a healthy sick leave balance gives you one less thing to worry about when unexpected events occur.

I know this article touches on several topics, but here's another worth mentioning. Recently, Amazon cut 14,000 managerial positions, about 13% of its global management. Earlier this year, UPS eliminated 48,000 jobs, including 14,000 corporate and management roles. UPS even offered generous buyout packages—\$10,000 per year of service on top of retirement benefits.

It's clear that the USPS also needs to trim management. I believe that number could easily exceed 14,000 positions nationwide. In this age of technology, why do some stations still have five supervisors sitting at computers or on the phone all day? (I'm sure they're hard at work on USPS issues - ha.ha.)

Meanwhile, in some offices, assistance work sits on the floor until the end of the day for carriers to drive back and pick up. That's not efficiency, it's waste.

In Solidarity,
Dave Utz



Burt Hughes

Secretary

OFFICER CORNER

I'm happy to report that we just held our first Veterans & Retirees Breakfast since 2019! With all the help I received, things went very well. I'll share more details in the December *News*. [™]

Views.

Now, I need your HELP. When our carriers retire, I will do my best to stay in touch with them. When someone becomes eligible for their 50-year gold card or 60-year pin, I try to reach out - but often the phone numbers or addresses we have are no longer valid. Without updated contact information, it's

Continued on page 9

Robert Keller Memorial Retiree / Veterans Day Breakfast



Tuesday, November 11th, 2025

Doors open at 9:00, Breakfast at 10:00

Branch 43 cordially invites all members to attend this breakfast in honor of our veterans and retirees. Call the branch office to reserve your seat.

Guest Speakers

**HONORING OUR
VETERANS**

**VETERANS
DAY 2025**



**The Honorable
Greg Landsman
Congressman OH-1**



Jeff Kranz

President, Ohio State Association of Letter Carriers



Brian Griffin

Executive Secretary - Treasurer Cincinnati AFL-CIO

Queen City Letter Carriers

Ted N. Thompson

President

Patrick M. Dougherty

Vice President

2026

NALC Branch 43

www.branch43.org

phone:513-542-6400

fax: 513-542-0043

January							February							March						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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31						

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October							November							December						
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E	F	A	B	C	C		F							B	C	D	E			

 USPS Holiday  CCA Holiday ♦ Branch Meetings \$ Paydays ★ Y.O.P.C

2026 Leave Year: Jan. 10, 2026 - Jan. 8, 2027. 2026 Annual Leave will be credited on Jan. 30, 2026 pay date

December Exclusionary Period: November 29, 2025 - December 26, 2025 (PP 26 and PP 01)

Motions made at the October Membership Meeting

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

To endorse Mark Jeffreys for Cincinnati City Council. **Carried**

To endorse Karen Brownlee for Ohio House District 28. **Carried**

To pay the bills. **Carried**

To adjourn. **Carried**

Vice President cont.

working environment.

We have been taking phone calls from carriers inquiring about the maximum hours on a service day they can be required to work during the month of December. If you are a carrier on the Overtime Desired List (ODL) the 12 hours in a service day and 60 hours rule in a service week does not apply for the month of December. Additionally, Article 8.5.G provides that the limits do not apply during December when full-time employees on the overtime desired list may be required to work more than 12 hours. These exceptions do not apply to City Carrier Assistants (CCAs), Part Time Flexible (PTFs), or full-time carriers who are not on the overtime desired list, all of whom are effectively limited to 11.5 hours of work per day by Employee Labor Manual (ELM) Section 432.32, even during December. So, in closing only the ODL carriers can be required to work more than 12 hours in a service day for the month of December. The 60-hour service week rule for all full-time employees does not apply for the month of December. All CCAs, PTFs, and full-time carriers not on the overtime desired list reach their maximum hours in a service day at 11.5 hours worked even in the month of December. That would be a total of twelve (12) consecutive hours including your lunch. If you start at 8am you can clock out at 8pm, that would be twelve (12) consecutive hours, and 11.5 hours worked in a service day.

The penalty overtime exclusion period this year runs from November 29 through December 26, 2025.

Article 8, Section 4.G is a new section of the contract added to the 2023 National Agreement in accordance with Arbitrator Dennis R. Nolan's award dated March 21, 2025. This section states: G. For any hours worked beyond twelve (12) hours in a service day or sixty (60) hours in a service week the employee is to be paid at the rate of two and one-half (2 ½) times the base hourly straight time rate. (The preceding paragraphs, Article 8.4.F. and 8.4.G., shall apply to City Carrier Assistant Employees.) Unlike the penalty overtime exclusion period, there are no exceptions to Section 4.G. This provision, which provides pay at two and a half times the base hourly straight-time rate for work beyond 12 hours a day or 60 hours a week for all letter carriers, is applicable even during the penalty overtime exclusion period.

Finally, Veterans Day is a suitable time to remember that our freedom isn't guaranteed. It's protected by the men and women in our armed services. Happy Veterans Day to our soldiers, both past and present. We owe you our thanks, but more than that, we owe you, our freedom!

In Solidarity,
Pat Dougherty



PSHB High Option Plan Rates

The NALC High Option Plan offers competitive premiums for Postal employees and retirees.

Below are the 2025 & 2026 biweekly and monthly rates

2026 Open Season Rates

Consider the NALC Health Benefit Plan this Open Season

Tier & Plan	Self Only	Self + One	Self + Family
Code	77A	77C	77B
Biweekly Plan Share	2025 - \$109.98 2026 - \$121.14	2025 - \$266.08 2026 - \$293.31	2025 - \$238.42 2026 - \$267.42
Monthly Your Share	2025 - \$238.29 2026 - \$262.47	2025 - \$576.50 2026 - \$635.51	2025 - \$516.58 2026 - \$579.41

Officer Corner cont.

difficult to reach you.

So, I'm asking all members - if you move or change your phone number, please let us know. Many of our records still have old landline numbers, but since most people now use cell phones, having your current number helps us stay connected. If you know of a retiree who has passed away, please inform us and provide any information you can to help verify it. This is greatly appreciated.

I also want to offer an apology to Bill Lipp. Bill, I'm sorry for the misunderstanding. I did correct your information in our records—the issue was that your birthday was listed in the wrong column—but I failed to follow up with Ted to make a statement in the next *News.™.Views*. If I told you I would do that, I apologize for dropping the ball.

Please remember, the only way we know when a Life Member passes away is if someone notifies us. This isn't just a branch issue - the national office also relies on members to report this information. Your help truly matters.

Normally, I don't respond to unsigned letters with complaints or inaccurate statements, but I'll make an exception this time. The person who responded to Bill's letter in the July issue of *News.™.Views* should be aware that Roger Giblin is a retired member in good standing with the union.

To anyone questioning the work done here at the office, I invite you to stop by and lend a hand with *News.™.Views*. You'll see firsthand how hard the men and women here work for you and for all members in every way they can.

We recently held a hall cleanup to prepare for the branch breakfast, to prepare for winter, and to take care of some small repairs around the building. Thank you to all who volunteered. In the future, we're also looking into adding a flagpole outside and possibly installing more lighting in the parking lot.

Sincerely,
Burt Hughes
Financial Secretary

Michael	Beeler
David	Benter
Glen	Brashears
Richard	Briede
Carl	Brinck
Mike	Brooks Sr
Danny	Butler
Steve	Cassini
Kenneth	Chancey
Ronald	Chapman
Michelle	Doud
Janice	Eischen
Roger	Flener
Michael	Holzinger
Kenneth	Horn
David	Hutchison
Grady	Jobe, Jr.
Gary	Kohne
David	Lenahan
Jim	O'Hara Jr
Kenneth	Pflanz
Edwin	Redmond, Jr.
Richard	Schloemer
Larry	Searle
Patrick	Shay
Julia	Smith
Henderson	Smith
Kevin	Spires
Matthew	Steenken
Betty	Van Horn
John	Vanderpohl
James	Velosky

November Retiree Birthdays

October YOPC Attendees

Names
 Deborah Bryant
 Sue Egbers
 Diana Enwright
 Art Holt
 Burt Hughes
 Dick Keller
 Robert Wilkinson

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



November Gold Carders

Lorraine	Bresett
John	Brotherton
Gary	Clore
Robert	Douglass
Michael	Ehlinger
Thomas	Feist
Michael	Kleintank
Paul	Mason
John	Ryan
George	Taylor
Larry	Wells

MEMBER BENEFITS

You've earned them.
 Now enjoy them!

Check out all 40 great cost-saving benefits created exclusively for union workers and their families.



Join fellow retirees for lunch

1:00 pm - 1st Monday of each month

December 1st

Hebron Grille

1960 N Bend Rd
 Hebron, KY 41048

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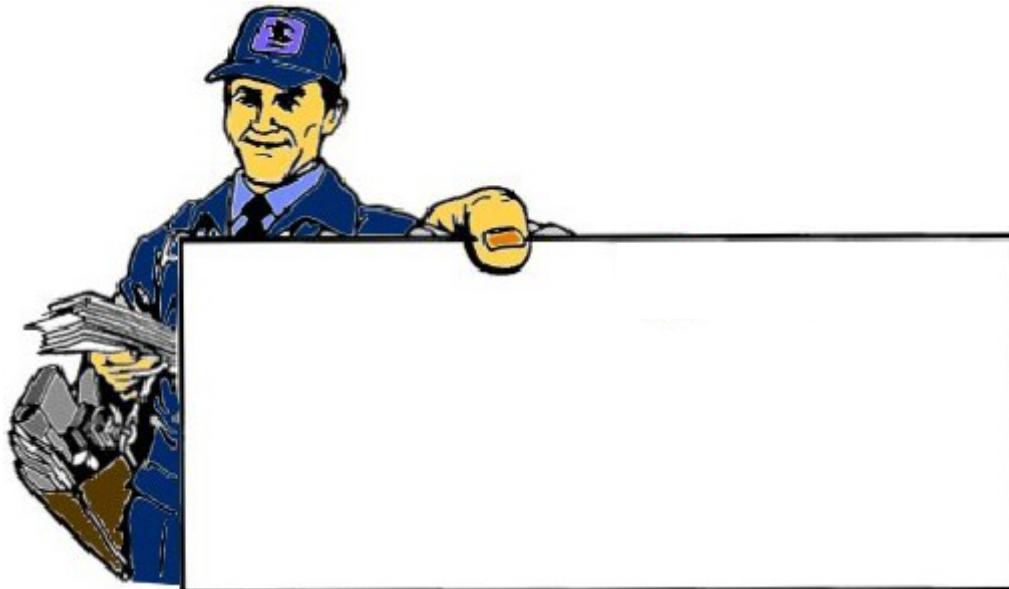
*Balance must be at least \$10,000 or greater to qualify. For loan balances below \$10,000 only the 90 day deferment will be offered. Member must qualify for the loan under normal underwriting guidelines. Minimum rate floor of this offer is 2.99% APR. Interest will accrue over the 90 day deferment period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

NALC Branch 43
11070 Southland Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45240

"ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED"

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Cincinnati, Ohio
PERMIT No. 6919



Upcoming Events

- NALC HB Seminar** - Nov. 3rd-5th
- Hall Clean Up** - Sun. Nov. 9th, 9:00 AM
- Veteran & Retiree Breakfast** - Tuesday, November 11th, 9:00 AM
- Officers Meeting** - Nov. 13th, 6:00 PM
- Branch Meeting** - Nov. 13th, 7:30 PM
- NALC RAP Session** - Nov. 21st-23rd
- Thanksgiving Holiday** - Thur. Nov. 27th
- December YOPC** - Wednesday, Dec. 3rd

