



Since July 25, 1890

December 2022

Queen City Letter Carriers - NALC Branch 43
News & Views

NALC Branch 43 Proudly Serving

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Ted Thompson
President

From the President's Desk

While most Americans have seen stagnant wages and reduced purchase power with high inflationary prices for products and services, the 2019-2023 National Agreement has already brought higher wages to letter carriers than any other four-year period in my career. With still one Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) left, the last six COLAs have brought topped out city carriers an annual wage increase of \$6,490.00. On November 19th all career city letter carriers received a 1.3% general wage increase. At the same time all CCAs received a 2.3% general wage increase. Also at the same time, Step P was created for those with or over 13.3 years of service. Together, with the three prior general wage increases, a topped out Step P city carrier now earns \$75,091.00 annually. For Carrier Technician (T-6), that salary is increased to \$76,668.00. When the 2016-2019 National Agreement expired, topped out city carriers earned \$65,037.00. In just a four-year period of time, those same topped out city carriers now earn over \$10,000 more annually. For career carriers just starting their career in Table 2 Step A of the wage scale, their salary has increased by almost \$6,000 dollars. For CCAs, wages have increased almost 9%. With all general wage increases under our current contract being awarded, and with only one COLA left, these will be the wages we earn while the NALC enters into another round of collective bargaining with the Postal Service. While I don't want to come across as ungrateful for these last four years, I am going to offer my humble opinion that our wages are not enough. The reason I state that is not because of Table 1 or Table 2 Step P, but

rather the difference between Table 1 and Table 2 Step A, along with CCA and PTF starting wages.

Carrier staffing has been the number one problem for Cincinnati for over two years. For members of Branch 43, carrier staffing has mainly impacted the Cincinnati Installation. That issue is now becoming even more prevalent in our associate offices. From Middletown to Batavia, suburban areas are now dealing with a harder time recruiting, hiring, and retaining city carriers. Carrier staffing is now not at risk of becoming a troubling trend, but rather a pandemic issue throughout the country. A newly converted career carrier in Table 2 Step A earns \$22.07 per hour. That wage equates to \$45,911.00 annually, or roughly 61.14% of what a top step carrier earns. For newly hired CCAs, that wage is even lower. When comparing Table 1 and Table 2 Step A, a newly converted carrier in Step A Table 1 would make \$29.75 per hour, or \$61,870.00 annually. That is a difference of \$7.68 hourly and \$15,959.00 annually.

There are many jobs locally that offer at or near Table 2 Step A wage starting off. While I firmly believe the Postal Service offers a more comprehensive benefit package than most employers, most new employees I speak to are more concerned about what they earn, than their benefits. While I preach to them the importance of saving for retirement with the matching the Postal Service offers through the Thrift Savings Program (TSP) and explain the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) annuity they will receive if they choose the Postal Service as a career job, along with the excellent health benefits the Postal Service offers, other local employers have also been offering a 5% match to a 401k along with health benefits starting off. While these benefits might not be a good as those the Postal Service offers, the Postal Service

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NEWS & VIEWS

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EDITOR'S (Taylor Whitt) 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: taylorwhitt777@gmail.com

Printed in House

President cont.

has undoubtedly lost its competitive advantage in hiring. With young adults now staying on a parent's health care plan until age 26, many target employees now have doubts about making the Postal Service a career and do not look at the Postal Service long term as a viable employer for them with low starting wages, at times endless work hours and schedules, high employer demands or expectations, non-flexible work schedules, and chaotic work environments. The Postal Service has now not just lost its competitive advantage to hiring that it had years ago, it has also lost its ability to retain its employees at a halfway acceptable rate as a result of the above. It is hard to recruit quality applicants with average, or slightly above, starting wages for other employers in the local job market and even more difficult to retain them once they are exposed to the rigors and demands of the job, work schedules, and the environment on the workroom floor. Again, I am extremely grateful for my wages and everything the Postal Service has financially provided for me and my family. However, Table 2 starting wages, along with the starting wages of CCAs and PTFs are no longer adequate and must be addressed. All carriers should care and take pride in providing quality service to our customers, because, without the customer, there is no Postal Service. However, this is also a delicate balance, because, with no letter carriers, there is no viable Postal Service and the Postal Service needs to recognize that the letter carrier is its greatest asset and treat us that way. While the Postal Service recognizes staffing is an issue, their agreement to hire directly career in many installations is simply inadequate with all the mitigating factors. Whether they properly recognize, address, and award city letter carriers in the next contract is debatable considering the Postal Service still continues to lose millions annually.

On November 10th the Postal

Service released its financial report for fiscal year 2022, which ran from October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022. The USPS reported that total revenue grew by 1.9 percent over the 2020 fiscal year, with first class mail revenue increasing by 3.3 percent and marketing mail increasing by 9.7 percent. This recent report also announced that shipping and package revenue fell by 2.2 percent. In total, the Postal Service reported an adjusted loss of \$473 million for the year. This adjusted income loss excludes the impact of the Postal Service Reform Act (PSRA) of 2022. Also stated in the report is that adjusted loss increased from the prior fiscal year due to inflationary impacts on several operating expense categories (COLAs, transportation (gas) expenses, etc.). As of this writing, the NALC has yet to release a statement on this report. Locally, I can report that our district spent over \$10 million in grievance payments throughout the fiscal year. This year, like others in the past, omits disclosing any financial liability for grievance violations.

No doubt, December is always a challenging month to be a letter carrier. With the increase in mail and parcels, this quarter is always the Postal Service's most profitable and carries us throughout the remainder of the year. December brings the same, and new, challenges every year. Whether the weather, the staffing, the work hours, or the volume, this is our time to shine and compete with our direct competitors. Some new hires of PTF carriers in Cincinnati will now forgo the carrier academy until the new year to strictly deliver parcels. With the increase in parcels, Detective Charles Zopfi with the Cincinnati Police Department recently reported that he believes there are several hundred porch pirate cases within the city. The letter carrier job is to deliver, but most of us feel as part of the community. If you know of any theft or unusual activity on your route, report it to your supervisor, and if need, the Postal Inspection Service. Finally, after all of

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Pat Dougherty
Vice President

From the Vice President

What Is the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?

The Postal Service EAP is a free, voluntary, and confidential program that offers assessment, referral, short-term counseling, and work/life consultation to USPS employees and their families. The EAP can help you resolve your personal concerns, so you can be your best at work and at home. The EAP is designed to help you identify and resolve personal, family, and workplace concerns. Among other things, the EAP can help you with work stress, grief/loss, coping with change, family issues, relationship problems, financial concerns, parenting issues, depression, anxiety, substance abuse and many other issues. EAP services provide the opportunity for employees to better balance their work and personal lives, thereby increasing their job satisfaction and productivity.

All EAP counselors have a minimum of a master's degree in counseling or social work, as well as clinical experience in dealing with a wide range of personal and workplace concerns. Your privacy is protected by strict federal and state confidentiality laws and regulations and by professional ethical standards for counselors. Information you share with the EAP may not be released to anyone without your prior written consent, except in these situations: 1) As required by law (for example, when a person's emotional condition is a threat to himself, herself, or others; or if child or elder abuse is suspected). 2) When a court order is issued upon a showing of good cause.

Getting help is easy, convenient, and confidential. Just call 1-800-327-4968 (1-800-EAP-4YOU) to speak with an EAP representative at any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Crisis counseling is always available to ensure that you get the help you need when you need it. Whether there is an immediate personal crisis or a need in the workplace, the EAP is ready to provide services to meet your needs. Counselors at the national service center are always available to talk with you by telephone about your concerns, or to help you schedule an appointment with an EAP counselor. The www.EAP4YOU.com website is also available. The website has lots of information on a variety of wellness topics and resources for employees and their

families.

The EAP counselor will help you to clarify the problem and issue for which you are seeking help. This dialogue ensures that your concern is being addressed. Together, you and the counselor will explore alternatives for addressing the problem. EAP counselors provide an objective point of view and can offer suggestions that you may not have considered. The counselor helps you to develop your own individualized plan. The plan may involve short-term counseling through the EAP or a referral to a helpful resource in the community. Family members may also be included in counseling as part of the action plan for problem resolution. In all cases, the decision of how to oversee your concern and manage your life is your choice. The EAP is not just for crisis situations. It is a life-management tool, designed to help you sort through life's ups and downs. Call the EAP when you need a new perspective on things or when you need help identifying your options and making informed choices. You will gain maximum benefit from the EAP service by taking a proactive approach. Address your issues and concerns before they become bigger problems and interfere with your personal or work life.

For those facing a situation of concern that does not require counseling, the consultation services offered may be just what you are looking for. EAP consultations are a way to talk to a professional about a specific topic to get advice, information or just have someone listen to your concerns. Getting a second opinion, guidance or information may be extremely helpful and the EAP offers a professional and objective viewpoint. Life coaching has become a highly sought-after and successful way for people to set and achieve goals in both their personal and professional lives. EAP coaches have a keen understanding of life transitions, extensive experience in helping people communicate more effectively and a belief in your potential. Coaching will help promote self-awareness, clarify your visions, values, intentions, goals, and enhance skills in all areas of your life.

When it is all said and done, seeking counseling is about self-betterment and self-improvement. Feeling stressed out or overwhelmed is common in today's world. The ability to cope and deal in a healthy, positive, and constructive manner is often the difference between success and failure in life. As human beings, we all face challenges and tough times. Everyone can benefit from learning healthy coping mechanisms. Loneliness is a prob-

Tis the season for.... Cold Stress.



Protecting Workers from Cold Stress

Cold temperatures and increased wind speed (wind chill) cause heat to leave the body more quickly, putting workers at risk of cold stress. Anyone working in the cold may be at risk, e.g., workers in freezers, outdoor agriculture and construction.

Common Types of Cold Stress

Hypothermia

- Normal body temperature (98.6°F) drops to 95°F or less.
- **Mild Symptoms:** alert but shivering.
- **Moderate to Severe Symptoms:** shivering stops; confusion; slurred speech; heart rate/breathing slow; loss of consciousness; death.

Frostbite

- Body tissues freeze, e.g., hands and feet. Can occur at temperatures above freezing, due to wind chill. May result in amputation.
- **Symptoms:** numbness, reddened skin develops gray/white patches, feels firm/hard, and may blister.

Trench Foot (also known as Immersion Foot)

- Non-freezing injury to the foot, caused by lengthy exposure to wet and cold environment. Can occur at air temperature as high as 60°F, if feet are constantly wet.
- **Symptoms:** redness, swelling, numbness, and blisters.

Risk Factors

- Dressing improperly, wet clothing/skin, and exhaustion.

For Prevention, Your Employer Should:

- Train you on cold stress hazards and prevention.
- Provide engineering controls, e.g., radiant heaters.
- Gradually introduce workers to the cold; monitor workers; schedule breaks in warm areas.

For more information:



U.S. Department of Labor
www.osha.gov (800) 321-OSHA (6742)

OSHA 3156-02R 2014



How to Protect Yourself and Others

- Know the symptoms; monitor yourself and co-workers.
- Drink warm, sweetened fluids (no alcohol).
- Dress properly:
 - Layers of loose-fitting, insulating clothes
 - Insulated jacket, gloves, and a hat (waterproof, if necessary)
 - Insulated and waterproof boots

What to Do When a Worker Suffers from Cold Stress

For Hypothermia:

- Call 911 immediately in an emergency.
- To prevent further heat loss:
 - Move the worker to a warm place.
 - Change to dry clothes.
 - Cover the body (including the head and neck) with blankets, and with something to block the cold (e.g., tarp, garbage bag). Do **not** cover the face.
- If medical help is more than 30 minutes away:
 - Give warm, sweetened drinks if alert (no alcohol).
 - Apply heat packs to the armpits, sides of chest, neck, and groin. Call 911 for additional rewarming instructions.

For Frostbite:

- Follow the recommendations “**For Hypothermia**”.
- Do not rub the frostbitten area.
- Avoid walking on frostbitten feet.
- Do not apply snow/water. Do not break blisters.
- Loosely cover and protect the area from contact.
- Do not try to rewarm the area unless directed by medical personnel.

For Trench (Immersion) Foot:

- Remove wet shoes/socks; air dry (in warm area); keep affected feet elevated and avoid walking. Get medical attention.

For more information:



U.S. Department of Labor
www.osha.gov (800) 321-OSHA (6742)



Matt Bauer
Compensation

From the Compensation Officer

ECOMP – ARE YOU REGISTERED?

Over 98% of injured federal workers file all their workers’ compensation paperwork online at www.ecomp.dol.gov except for the US Postal Service employees. Currently, less than 45% of the Postal

Service employees use this platform to file their paperwork. This causes issues from the start. Too many times, management will hold on to the paperwork too long and cause delays that are avoidable by processing your paperwork online.

When you file your paperwork online you get a document tracking number immediately before your immediate supervisor reviews it. Your supervisor will receive an email immediately to fill out their portion of the form. The ability to track your paperwork online is a benefit that we didn’t have in the past. It is important to take advantage of this.

No one ever expects to be injured on the job, but that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t be prepared. Please register **NOW** at www.ecomp.dol.gov so that you can be familiar with the process. You can scan the QR code below to be directed to the registration page.



Remember that you should immediately notify your supervisor of your injury and your intent to file the claim using ECOMP. At this time, you should request your supervisor’s email address that you can use while submitting your form online. If you are filing your claim within 7 days of your traumatic injury (CA-1 form), request a CA-16 form from your immediate supervisor (Authorization for Examination and/or Treatment). Your supervisor has 4 hours to supply this form to you. If this does not happen, please reach out to your steward immediately.

The Postal Service is required by law to provide a CA-16 to you within 4 hours by law. You can

use the CA-16 to see the doctor of your choice. If your doctor refers you to a specialist, the CA-16 will also cover the specialist.

Please also request a CA-17 from your immediate supervisor. The Postal Service is required to fill out the job requirements on this form (side A). It is also advisable that you ask for several copies of this CA-17, so that you can provide this form to every medical appointment. Your doctor should fill out their portion of the form at each doctor visit (side B). This will list your medical restrictions. Once your doctor fills this portion of the form, provide a copy of this to your supervisor.

If you have any questions regarding workers’ compensation, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at OWCP@branch43.org

Matt Bauer – Compensation Officer



Employees’ Compensation Operations and Management Portal (ECOMP)



Motions made at the November Membership Meeting

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

To send the President and Vice President to the Region 11 President's meeting in Lorain Ohio on December 5th & 6th to include hotel, travel expenses, and per diem. **Carried**

To authorize up to two people, at the President's discretion, to attend the national instillation of officers in Washington DC on December 17th to include registration, travel, hotel, and per diem. **Carried**

To provide all YOPC members, who attended at least 6 meetings in 2022 a \$50 gift card. **Carried**

To provide office manager Skip Grant a \$500 gift card for all his volunteered time in 2022. **Carried**

Pay the bills. **Carried**

To adjourn. **Carried**

Vice President cont.

lem many people face. Feeling isolated can often contribute to an already overwhelming situation. A strong support system can be helpful in facing the challenges life often presents, and without that system, in place, additional stress may be added to life. Having someone to talk to, turn to, and confide in can make an amazing difference. Some people struggle overcoming past trauma. If issues from the past are not dealt with, they can linger, fester, and adversely impact your day-to-day life. Working through past trauma is not easy. It is natural to feel hesitant or uneasy about discussing prior traumas and upsetting events. Certain issues going on in your present life may be the result of prior trauma, and by addressing that root cause, you may be better equipped to move forward. It will take time, but with your dedication and willingness, you will overcome any situation life throws your way. Some people seek help to improve relationships. The right relationships can make us better people while the wrong relationships can wreak havoc and drag us down. To have the best quality of life, we need to enjoy positive, mutually beneficial relationships. People also seek help in purging bad habits. Bad habits tend to make adverse situations even worse than they already are. By getting rid of bad habits, you will be on a path to enjoying and experiencing a better quality of life.

The past several years has been extremely difficult for many individuals and families dealing with the global pandemic Covid-19. The staffing levels in the Cincinnati Installation and several of our associate offices has also added stress in both our professional and personal life to many of our members in the form of forced overtime. Long hours at work and missing personal time with loved ones and kids. Remember, if life becomes too overwhelming and you need help or someone to talk to, reach out to EAP it is a tremendous benefit. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness, it is a display of courage and strength. Continue to look after your fellow brother and sister on the workroom floor and stay safe on the street.

Finally, I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy new year!

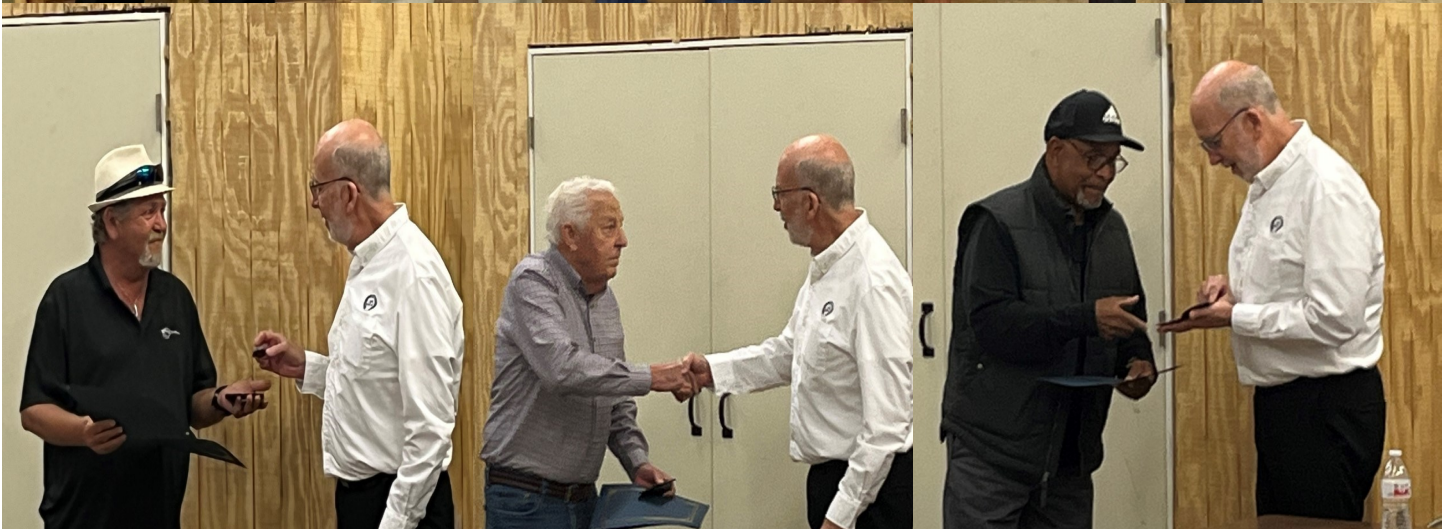
In Solidarity,
Pat Dougherty

President cont.

your hard work throughout the month of December, and the rest of the year, Christmas will arrive. I hope each and every one of you enjoy the holiday season with friends, family, and the people you love. From my family to yours, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy new year!

Fraternally,
Ted Thompson

2022 Membership Awards



2022 Federal Benefits Open Season will run from Monday, November 14 through Monday, December 12, 2022.

Welcome!

On behalf of the NALC Health Benefit Plan, I want to personally thank you for taking the time to stop by our Open Season page. We have made it our priority to make accessibility to our information seamless. Everything you need for 2022 Open Season is now located in one, easy to find location, on our webpage.



After you review what our plans offer, I am confident that you will find we have once again put together a competitive benefit package at an affordable premium. All three of our Plan Options offer a broad vendor network, first-rate benefits, and many incentives or health programs to save you money, and most important, encourage a healthy lifestyle.

Don't take my word for it, explore our Open Season Page.

Trust the Letter Carriers, we deliver more than the mail. It's time to upgrade your health to a union that delivers!

Sincerely,

Stephanie Stewart

Type of Enrollment	Enrollment Code	Premium Rate			
		Biweekly		Monthly	
		Gov't Share	Your Share	Gov't Share	Your Share
High Option Self Only	321	\$259.72	\$102.98	\$562.73	\$223.12
High Option Self Plus One	323	\$560.52	\$241.73	\$1,214.46	\$523.75
High Option Self and Family	322	\$611.42	\$211.30	\$1,324.74	\$457.82
CDHP Option Self Only	324	\$167.18	\$55.73	\$362.23	\$120.74
CDHP Option Self Plus One	326	\$368.86	\$122.95	\$799.19	\$266.40
CDHP Option Self and Family	325	\$396.08	\$132.03	\$858.18	\$286.06
Value Option Self Only	KM1	\$137.22	\$45.74	\$297.31	\$99.10
Value Option Self Plus One	KM3	\$302.71	\$100.90	\$655.87	\$218.62
Value Option Self and Family	KM2	\$325.22	\$108.40	\$704.63	\$234.88



NALC Health Benefit Plan



NALC Health Benefit Plan

Customer Service

For eligibility, claim and benefit information

1-888-636-NALC (6252)

For additional information visit our website at:

www.nalc.org/depart/hbp

www.nalchbp.org



Make the Call!

USPS Employee Assistance Program

1-800-327-4968

(1-800-EAP-4-YOU) TTY: 1-877-492-7341

www.EAP4YOU.com

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Human Resources Share Service Center

1-877-477-3273 Option 5, then Select 6

TTY: 1-866-833-8777

MAILING ADDRESS:

HRSSC FMLA EASTERN

PO Box 970905

Greensboro NC 27497-0905

FAX: 651-456-6041

November Membership Meeting

Raffle Winner

Split the Pot - Natasha Wever

Grant Andress
 Donald Balsley Sr
 William Butler, Jr.
 Stanley Capal
 Daniel Case
 Patricia Castner
 Donald Chapel, Sr.
 Elizabeth Clegg
 Sandra Copenhaver
 Thomas Crowley
 Rhonda Doughman
 Gregory Ervin
 Manville Flugum
 Robert Ford
 Timothy Gilreath
 Gary Griffis
 James Hackney
 Danny Hall
 Ronald Harrison
 Martin Hasenzahl
 Timothy Huesman
 Kris Motley
 Charles Nelson
 Don Nichols

December Retiree Birthdays

William Roberts
 Joseph Saylor
 Frank Schreiber
 William Sullivan
 Robert Tierney
 Dennis Uffer
 Daniel Zeiser

**Happy
 Birthday**

**December
 Gold Carders**

Donald Clay
 Donald Duderstadt
 Roger Frey
 James Gerke
 Milton Keifer, Jr.
 Euie Moreland
 Patrick Moyer
 Carl Rooks
 Gary Volz

**November YOPC
 Attendees**

Deborah Bryant
 Ed Colgate
 Sue Egbers
 JR Ford
 Jerry Giesting
 Art Holt
 Burt Hughes
 Gerry Mees
 Robert Wilkinson

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

**Join fellow retirees
 for lunch**

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

January 2nd

Christine's
 3360 Westbourne Dr.
 Cincinnati, OH 45248

Call Burt Hughes
 (513) 807-4143

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Mail: P.O. Box 14403 • Cincinnati, OH 45250-0403
Toll Free 1-800-265-4527 • www.URmyCU.org

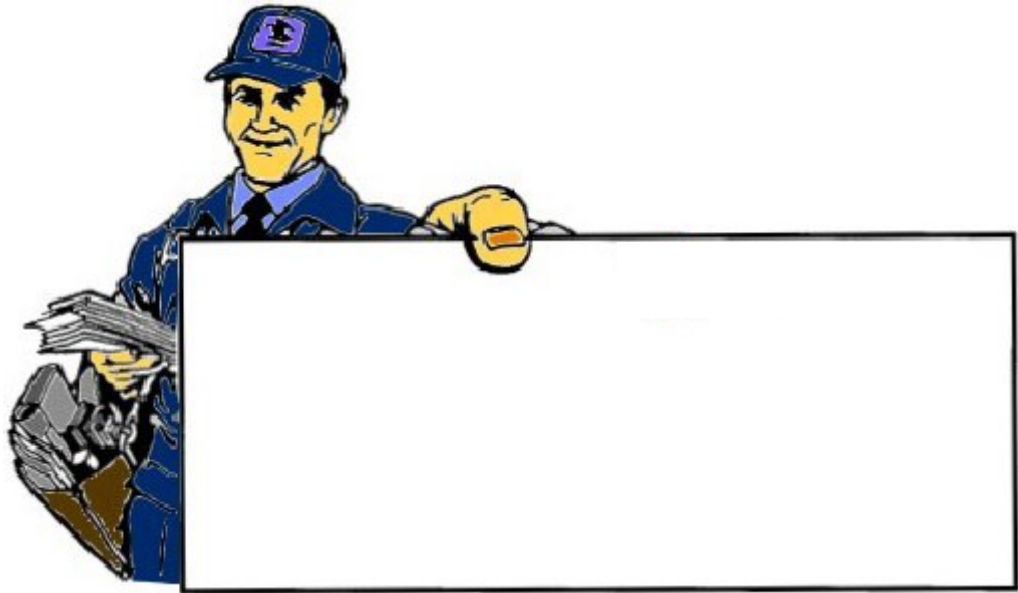
*Balance must be at least \$10,000 or greater to qualify. For loan balances below \$10,000 only the 90 day deferment will be offered. Member must qualify for the loan under normal underwriting guidelines. Minimum rate floor of this offer is 2.99% APR. Interest will accrue over the 90 day deferment period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

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Upcoming Events

- Officers Meeting** - Dec. 8th, 6:00 PM
- Branch Meeting** - Dec. 8th, 6:00 PM
- Ohio Legislative** - Sunday, Dec. 4th
- National Instillation** - Saturday, Dec. 17th
- Christmas Holiday** - Monday, Dec. 26th
- New Year Holiday** - Monday, January 2nd
- Jan. YOPC** - Wednesday, January 4th

