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March 2021

Queen City Letter Carriers - NALC Branch 43 News & Views

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Ted Thompson
President

From the President's Desk

All ballots for the for the 2019-2023 proposed national agreement should have been received by March 1st. This was extended from an original return date of February 16th because of mail service issues. Replacement ballots were also available to request by February 5th if you didn't receive yours for any reason. I have heard from some members on issues with receiving or mailing their ballots; one members ballot was returned to her home address as opposed to being delivered to the proper destination. By the time you receive this the counting of these ballots should be underway. Perhaps by the time of our March meeting we will have ratification numbers available. If not, I will get that information out to the stewards and, most likely, the NALC will send out push notifications for all those who have downloaded the NALC app. If ratified, the NALC intends to immediately notify the Postal Service so they can begin the rigorous process of recalculating salaries, COLAs, and backpay. If ratified, the NALC also intends to immediately begin working with prospective Task Force members and working on the memo's contained in the contract. Once completed, the NALC will then look at the feasibility of retirement incentives to see if it is even possible.

I have recently had several long conversations with Region 11 National Business Agent (NBA) Mark Camilli on staffing. I also participated in a recent teleconference with national president Fred Rolando where staffing became a part of the conversation. Here is the situation our branch is in regarding staffing: we don't have it! The majority of our

offices are not properly staffed. With that said, Groesbeck, Middletown, and Parkdale office staffing numbers are atrocious. I have spoken to, or heard from, many members in recent months over their frustration with the number or hours they are working due to inadequate staffing. Currently, many carriers who do not seek or want overtime are not getting days off. Carriers are not getting regular workdays. Carriers are working six and even seven days a week for ten, eleven, twelve, and sometimes more hours. We cannot keep or adequately higher enough CCAs. Regular carriers are resigning at an alarming rate. I have heard many reasons from the membership on why we have staffing issues: management treats CCAs and all carriers terrible, management doesn't care about our safety, management doesn't care about our quality of life, management doesn't care about our health, CCAs are not given proper training, CCAs are not compensated enough, CCAs and regular carriers are required to work too many hours or long hours, the Postal Service is no longer a desirable employer, COVID-19 and the pandemic, etc. I have also heard from the Postal Service that they are always trying to hire carriers and looking for innovative ways to broaden appeal or bring awareness: Every Door Direct Mailing (EDDM), Facebook profiles, virtual job fairs, recruiting at local high schools, etc. Every postal employee, including myself, has our reasons for why we think staffing is at historic lows causing historic highs in employee workhours. For all hardworking members out there busting your behind day in and day out delivering the nations mail- I am aware of the problem, I am aware of your frustration, I am aware you want change and to work a normal schedule.

As I begun staffing by saying- I have been having conversations with Mark Camilli and he will be meeting at the Area level to discuss and address staffing. When on a teleconference with

Continued on following page

**NEWS & VIEWS**

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

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EDITOR'S 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.

Fred Rolando, he discussed staffing and shared headquarters is currently working on identifying exactly what the problems we are facing at each location is and what the issues are that need addressed. Headquarters is looking at whether staffing is a management issue, a craft issue, a pay issue (PMG DeJoy just testified before Congress he would like an all-career workforce), etc. Headquarters is also looking at bypassing the hiring of non-career employees and hiring directly career as has been done in the past in select markets.

Change will not happen overnight. Change can be (or is or has been) slow, sometimes too slow. I wish I could tell you I had the solution or fix for all the hours you're working that you don't want to- but I won't lie- I don't. I will tell you that I'm highly aware and have been, and continue to be, in discussions with my NALC channels of communication and weekly discussion with the Postal Service. Until the time comes that staffing is better, if you are worked outside of contractual limits, or have questions on what those limits are, ask to speak to your steward or call the branch office. Despite the staffing, despite the odds, you continue to deliver and provide essential services for our community and nation. I am extremely grateful to the tremendous work ethic many of you have- showing up daily to work no matter rain, sleet, snow, or shine. I commend and thank each one of you that shows up to work and provides these essential services. Because of you- we get the job done!

Branch officers just recently met to discuss and propose operating budgets. Staffing has a direct impact on our branch annual operating budget and this information will be shared at the upcoming membership meeting on March 11th. There are a few upcoming branch or regional events I would like to share. First, Region 11 will be hosting a virtual retirement seminar on

Sunday April 18th. This seminar will be conducted via WebEx from 1:00-3:00 pm. Anyone looking to retire shortly or those who would just like to know more information, please contact the branch office so we can get you registered. Once again, it is time to begin getting information out for our annual Branch 43 scholarship awards. An application for the scholarship drawing is included on page 8. Applications will be accepted by mail or at the Branch office until April 30th. Five randomly selected winners, along with five randomly selected alternates, will take place at the May membership meeting. For all stewards, or any member wanting to learn more or thinking of becoming a steward, the branch will be conducting our biannual steward seminar on Thursday April 22nd. Dinner will be served beginning at 6:00 pm with training slated to begin at 7:00 pm. This training conducted is open to all members interested in attending. For all members and stewards, please make your reservations by calling the branch office.

Fraternally,
Ted Thompson

STEWARDS SEMINAR

Thursday, April 22th

Dinner begins at 6:00 PM
Training begins at 7:00 PM

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.*



Pat Dougherty
Vice President

From the Vice President

Maximum hour limits

The Cincinnati Installation and several Branch 43 associate offices are sitting at historically low staffing levels for letter carrier craft employees. This is not just a local problem, but it also is becoming a national issue throughout the country. The bottom line in my opinion is until the USPS addresses the culture from the top of its organization on how it treats craft employees, we as an organization (USPS) will find it extremely difficult to maintain proper staffing levels moving forward. The USPS must recognize that craft employees are their greatest asset and key to any future success of this organization. The hard truth of the matter is the retention rate of new craft employees over the last several years locally and nationally is atrocious and detrimental to this organization future success. It places the remaining craft employees under tremendous stress and dealing with unrealistic expectations due to low staffing levels.

We have been getting numerous calls at the union hall from CCAs and regular carriers inquiring about the contract regarding maximum work hour limits in a service day.

There are two separate restrictions on the maximum number of hours a letter carrier craft employee may be required to work. One is found in Section 432.32 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM), and the other in Article 8, Section 5.G of the National Agreement.

ELM Section 432.32 provides the following rule that applies to all employees, including city carrier assistants:

Except as designated in labor agreements for bargaining unit employees or in emergency situations as determined by the PMG (or designee), employees may not be required to work more than 12 hours in 1 service day. In addition, the total hours of daily service, including scheduled work hours, overtime, and mealtime, may not be extended over a period longer than 12 consecutive hours.

Because this ELM provision limits total daily service hours, including work and mealtime, to 12 hours, an employee is effectively limited to 11.5 hours per day of work plus a half-hour lunch. However, the ELM also permits the collective-bargaining agreement to create exceptions to this general rule.

An exception to this rule can be found in Article 8, Section 5.G of the National Agreement, which provides the following:

Full-time employees not on the "Overtime Desired" list may be required to work overtime only if all available employees on the "Overtime Desired" list have worked up to twelve (12) hours in a day or sixty (60) hours in a service week. Employees on the "Overtime Desired" list:

1. may be required to work up to twelve (12) hours in a day and sixty (60) hours in a service week (subject to payment of penalty overtime pay set forth in Section 4.D for contravention of Section 5.F); and
2. excluding December, shall be limited to no more than twelve (12) hours of work in a day and no more than sixty (60) hours of work in a service week.

The exception in Article 8.5.G applies only to full-time employees on the overtime desired list. Excluding December, the above provision limits those employees to no more than 12 hours of work in a day and no more than 60 hours of work in a service week. However, since the term "work" within the meaning of Article 8.5.G does not include lunch, the 12 total hours of work in a day for carriers on the overtime desired list may extend over a period of 12.5 consecutive hours.

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, part-time employees or full-time employees who are not on the overtime desired list, all of whom are effectively limited to 11.5 hours of work per day by ELM Section 432.32, even during December.

National Arbitrator Mittenthal ruled in C-06238 that the 12-and 60-hour limits are absolutes. Excluding December, a full-time employee may neither volunteer nor be required to work beyond those limits. In C-07323 Arbitrator Mittenthal ruled that when a full-time employee reaches 60 hours in a service week, management is required to send the employee home-even in the middle of a scheduled day. He further held that in such cases the employee is entitled to be paid the applicable eight-hour guarantee for the remainder of his or her scheduled day.

On October 19, 1988, the national parties signed a memorandum of understanding (M-00859) to implement the above mentioned Mittenthal awards. Part of that memorandum states:

The parties agree that with the exception of



Mark Camilli
Region 11 NBA

National Business Agent Spring 2021 Report

Uncertainty, frustration, and angst or just plain exhaustion are some words that letter carriers describe their feelings as we are entering the one-year mark of the Covid-19 pandemic. I recall this time last year; we were preparing to celebrate the 50th anniversary of those letter carriers who went out on the historical strike of 1970. As we decided to postpone the New York City celebration, I do not think many of us could have anticipated that we would still be somewhat shut down as a Nation one year later. During this past year, letter carriers faced one challenge after another but heroically pushed through those challenges so millions of Americans could stay home, remain safe and help flatten the so-called curve. It is easy to understand why many would feel discouraged, but spring is arriving, and in many ways, a “spring” of positives are arriving for letter carriers.

The United States Postal Service Board of Governors (BOG) acts much like a board of directors of a private corporation. Ultimately the BOG sets policies on all postal matters - from reviewing current practices, service standards, capital expenditures to long range planning. Robert M. Duncan was Chairman of the BOG from September 2018 – February 2021. He was once the Chairman of the Republican National Committee, serving in that post from 2007 – 2009. Mr. Duncan stepped down from his post as Chair but remains on the BOG. Ron Bloom was unanimously elected on February 9, 2021 to serve as the 24th Chairman of the BOG. Mr. Bloom is an economic advisor who served under the Obama administration where he helped lead the auto industry restructuring after the 2008 recession. He has an extensive labor background as he also served as a special assistant for 13 years to the President of the United Steelworkers union and was employed as an advisor to the National Association of Letter Carrier on postal issues. On the same day of a House subcommittee hearing on the USPS, President Biden announced three nominees to the BOG. The three are: Ron Stroman, former deputy PMG who resigned from his post during the Trump administration, Anton Hajjar, former general counsel of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) and Amber McReynolds, CEO of the National Vote at Home Institute (NVAHI). The NVAHI is nonpartisan and nonprofit,

dedicated to making sure every American can vote in a safe and secure manner by expanding vote-at-home systems in all 50 states. NALC Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe serves as Board Chair of the NVAHI. Hopefully the three nominees go through a speedy Senate confirmation and the USPS BOGs can put the USPS on the right course to ensure the Nation’s treasured agency provide world class mail service well into the future!

In other positive news, the USPS has just recently announced awarding the contract to begin replacing the aging fleet of vehicles. While proto-type photos may take time to get used to, the features can not be overlooked. Items like a side entry door to access mail that will be safer for letter carriers instead of working from the back of a vehicle. Other safety features include items such as air conditioning, airbags, back-up and 360-degree cameras, automatic parking brakes, front and rear bumper sensors, forward collision warning and blind spot warnings. We are also expecting the results of potentially ratifying a new national agreement. If ratified, CCA’s with 24 months relative standing will be converted to career which will significantly alter the “cap” of the regular workforce ultimately allowing to hire significant more hires across the country. Ratification will also infuse higher wages and the USPS can begin calculating retro payments to be paid to the hard working and deserving letter carriers!

As things have been grim over the past year, there are many positives to build upon and the pendulum is starting to swing our way. Many exciting items are still yet to be seen and possibly on the horizon – Postal Reform, more funding for the USPS under stimulus plans, FFCRA extension or replacement, USPS infrastructure spending, more vaccine availability and on in on. Yes – we are all feeling the challenges of the pandemic, but there is a lot to look forward to...

Motions made at the February Membership Meeting

To dispense with the roll call of Officers and reading of the previous month’s minutes. **Carried**

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

To adjourn. **Carried**



Matt Bauer
Leg. & Pol.

Director of Legislative & Political Affairs

President Biden announced his three nominees to join the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors recently. There are currently 3 vacancies on the nine-member board and the six existing members were all appointed by former President Trump. President Biden has chosen Anton Hajjar, the former general counsel of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU); Amber McReynolds, a voting rights activist, and the CEO of the National Vote at Home Institute; and Ron Stoman, who recently retired as deputy postmaster general. If confirmed by the Senate, Democrats will have the majority on the board, which currently has 4 Republicans and 2 Democrats.

Postmaster Dejoy recently appeared at a hearing before the House Oversight and Reform Committee, where Democrats questioned him on the slowdown in mail deliveries over the summer. Dejoy told members of the committee that his future plans for the agency may include slowing the delivery of first-class mail.

Despite the pandemic, on-time rates for first-class mail were over 90% until Dejoy took office in June. Critics have called for Dejoy to be fired, include Rep. Bill Pascrell Jr. (NJ-D). He stated he wants Biden to fire the entire board for what he called dereliction of duty.

Congresswoman Alma Adams, who last week sent a letter to Biden (signed by 79 other Democrats) called on Biden to fill the existing vacancies, said that “She was overjoyed he answered our call to fill the vacancies. A truly nonpartisan Board of Governors will be able to partner with Congressional leaders on necessary reforms to maintain the long-term health of the USPS and identify immediate issues to be resolved by decisive action. President Biden’s nominees to the board are passionate, qualified advocates who will build the USPS back better and I encourage the Senate to act swiftly to confirm them.”

This is a big first step by Biden to implement positive reform to the Postal Service. I am hopeful of big legislative changes within the next couple years. However, this still requires work on our part and a great first step by you, is to consider giving to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF). We ask for \$5 per paycheck. Branch 43 is grateful to all members who contribute. However, we are always looking to sign up more members. If you are interested in learn-

ing more about, or signing up for, the Letter Carrier Political Fund, please let me know. I am always willing to help or answer any questions you may have. My contact information is as follows:

Email: matt.bauer@branch43.org
Cell: (513) 550-6436

Matt Bauer
Dir. of Legislative and Political Affairs

Vice President cont.

December, full-time employees are prohibited from working more than 12 hours in a single workday or 60 hours within a service week. In those limited instances where this provision is or has been violated and a timely grievance filed, full-time employees will be compensated at an additional premium of 50 percent of the base hourly straight time rate for those hours worked beyond the 12- or 60-hour limitation. The employment of this remedy shall not be construed as an agreement by the parties that the employer may exceed the 12- and 60-hour limitation with impunity. As a means of facilitating the foregoing, the parties agree that excluding December, once a full-time employee reaches 20 hours of overtime within a service week, the employee is no longer available for any additional overtime work. Furthermore, the employee’s tour of duty shall be terminated once he or she reaches the 60th hour of work.

Arbitrator Snow ruled in C-18926 that the Memorandum of Understanding M-00859 limits the remedy for any violations of the Article 8.5.G maximum hour limits to an additional premium of 50 percent of the base hourly straight time rate. However, Arbitrator Snow’s award does not necessarily limit remedies for repeated or deliberate violations of ELM 432.32.

CCAs and regular carriers not on the overtime desired list are limited to 12 consecutive hours with a lunch or 11.5 work hours in a service day. Management cannot contractually force you to work any longer in a service day. If you reach this limit in a service day and return to the office and are instructed to go back out do not argue with management, just politely tell them you reached your work hour limits for the day and clock out. Notify your steward and allow them to address the situation with the supervisor or manager who instructed you to exceed your work hour limits in a service day. Be careful and stay safe.

In Solidarity,
Patrick Dougherty

USPS awards contract for the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV)

On February 23, 2021, NALC received notification the Postal Service has awarded a 10-year contract to Oshkosh Defense to manufacture the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV).

Under the initial contract, Oshkosh Defense, based in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, will finalize the production design of the NGDV – a purpose-built, right-hand-drive vehicle for mail and package delivery. The NGDVs will include fuel efficient gas engines or gas-electric hybrid powertrains, air conditioning, 360-degree cameras, advanced braking and traction control, air bags, and a front- and rear-collision avoidance system that includes visual and audio warnings. The vehicles will also have increased cargo capacity to better accommodate higher parcel volumes.

The purpose of the NGDV is to replace the aging fleet of LLVs and to expand the current delivery fleet. The Postal Service anticipates Oshkosh will produce between 50,000 and 165,000 NGDVs under the initial contract. However, the Postal Service will have the ability to order more vehicles during the 10-year contract period. Based on the anticipated 18-

month timeline communicated to NALC, the first NGDVs will be deployed in the summer of 2023. To bridge the gap between today and the deployment of the NGDV, the Postal Service has acquired commercial off-the-shelf vehicles, such as the right-hand drive Mercedes Metris and the Dodge Pro-Master to supplement the delivery fleet.

The road to the contract award has been a long one for the Postal Service and letter carriers. The NGDV program began in June of 2014, when NALC received notification from the Postal Service they were going to begin soliciting input from letter carriers regarding their preferences for the next delivery vehicle. Later that fall, NALC met with USPS representatives at the USPS Engineering Facility in Merrifield, Virginia regarding future vehicle initiatives. Beginning in March of 2015, a small group of letter carriers selected by NALC were invited to the engineering facility to provide feedback on prospective design specifications for the new vehicles. After gathering feedback from the selected employees, USPS developed a list of design preferences and selected manufacturers to develop and produce vehicle prototypes for testing. Initially, six companies were involved in





the program; however, one manufacturer exited before developing a prototype.

The Postal Service began durability and emissions testing on the NGDV prototypes in September of 2017. During the course testing, USPS identified problems with the prototypes and halted all tests until the manufacturers could make repairs to the vehicles. All test vehicles were transported to the Transportation Research Center (TRC) in East Liberty, Ohio for repairs and to ensure the vehicles were safe for operation by letter carriers. NALC Director of City Delivery, Christopher Jackson and members of his staff visited the TRC in February 2018 to observe the repairs being made and the durability testing.

Letter carriers in various locations across the country were provided familiarization training on the prototypes before they were offered the opportunity to use the prototypes for delivery. These carriers began field testing the prototypes in March of 2018. Field testing of the five prototypes continued in the various test sites around the country and was completed in March of 2019. USPS engineering then drafted a Statement of Work (SOW) based on the data gathered during the different types of tests conducted. Once the initial SOW was complete, NALC was provided a copy to review. Over the next few months, Chris Jackson and his staff met on several occasions with USPS engineering, safety, and labor relations to provide feedback and express concerns related to the SOW and observed testing of the prototypes. After addressing the concerns raised by the NALC, the Postal Service drafted the final SOW, which was provided to the remaining manufacturers.

Based on the timeline information provided by USPS, NALC was optimistic a contract would be

awarded in late 2019 and the first production NGDVs would be available for use in 2021. However, due to budget constraints and the Covid-19 pandemic the NGDV program was put on hold.

NALC is pleased to provide the membership with the good news that a contract for the NGDV has finally been awarded and hopefully, the NGDVs will be on the road in 2023. In the meantime, NALC will continue discussions with USPS on how to meet the vehicle needs of the delivery fleet in the interim.



2021 NALC Branch 43 Scholarship Rules & Application

Eligibility Requirements:

1. Applicant must be the son/daughter, legally adopted son/daughter, stepchild or grandchild of an active or retired Letter Carrier of Branch 43.
2. Applicant's parent or grandparent must be in good standing with Branch 43 NALC for a minimum of three (3) years prior to submitting the application.
3. The member may not have applied for or have held a management position with the USPS, including 204-B positions, for three (3) years prior to submitting the application.
4. Application forms will be made available for pickup at Branch 43 headquarters beginning March 1st of each year. The application form will be printed in the March and April editions of the News and Views annually. The form will also be available at the Branch 43 website beginning March 1st of each year.
5. Applications MUST be postmarked no later than April 30th of each year. Applications may be dropped off in person at Branch 43 no later than the close of business on April 30th of each year.

Name of Member: _____

Name of Scholarship Applicant: _____

Applicant's Relationship to Member: _____

Applicant's school of choice: _____

Awarding of the Scholarships:

1. Winners will receive a Five Hundred (\$500.00) scholarship to be drawn by lottery at the regular Branch 43 Membership meeting in May each year.
2. Four (4) scholarship winners and four (4) alternates will be drawn. If, for any reason, a scholarship recipient will be unable to use the scholarship, then the alternates, in the order they were drawn, will be awarded the scholarship.
3. Awards are for one (1) year only. However, the winner is free to submit an application each year he or she is eligible to apply.
4. Scholarship Awards will be deposited into the winner's school account, established at an accredited college or trade school, in the applicant's name.

Any and all issues arising from the rules and applications as it pertains to the Branch 43 Scholarships will be reviewed by the Branch 43 Board of Trustees. The findings and decision of the Board of Trustees pertaining to the Branch 43 Scholarship Fund will be FINAL.

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February Membership Meeting Raffle Winners

Split the Pot - Chris Harmon (\$37.00)

MDA - Dave Durbin & Randy Utz

Galls - Dave Durbin

James	Arrasmith
Raymond	Ash
Loyal	Brock
Edward	Brown
Michael	Bryson
Paul	Burnhimer
Joseph	Dean
Gerald	Giesting
Dennis	Halcomb
Leroy	Hardman
Greg	King
Rhonda	Kuntz
Thomas	Marckesano
David	McCaffrey
Kelse	Murphy
Dennis	Poe
Gregory	Propes
Lois	Schuerman
Norbert	Schultz
Mark	Singer
David	Taylor
John	Westerman
Timothy	Wiechman

March Retiree Birthdays

February YOPC Attendees

Deborah Bryant
Liz Darby
Diana Enwright
JR Ford
Jerry Giesting
Art Holt
Burt Hughes
Dick Keller
John Macon
Gerry Mees
Robert Wilkinson

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



Douglas Bentley
John Dinsmore
John Koch
Thomas Rouse
Lester Weber



March Gold Carders

Gilbert	Bird
Orville	Cupp
Robert	Gabbard
Albert	Matheus
Joseph	McGowan
Altha	McNeil
Donald	Nagel
Jack	O'Leary
Clifford	Ritzi
Thomas	Rouse
Robert	Stulz
Frederick	Wehby
Larry	Yung

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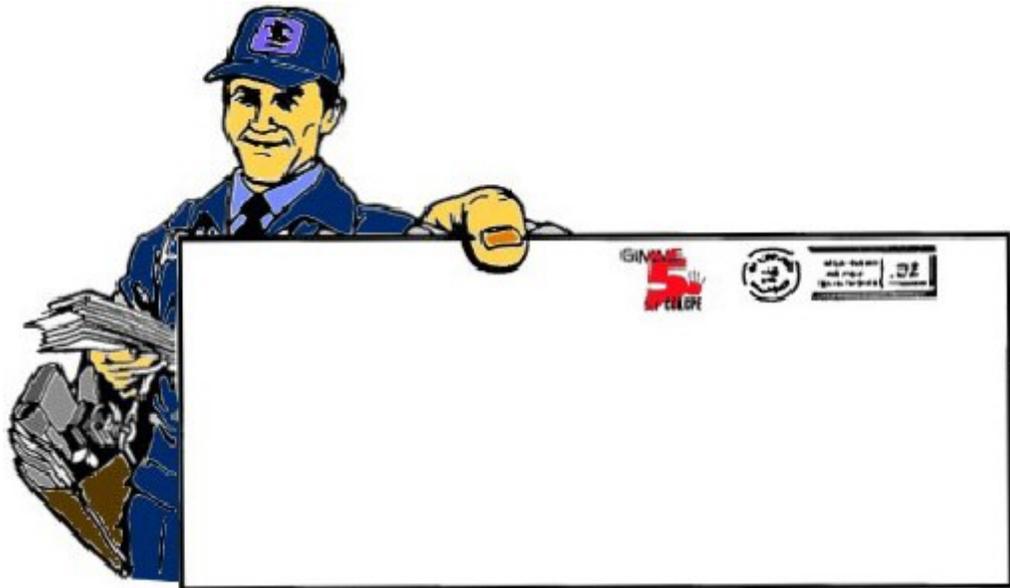
*Balance must be at least \$10,000 or greater to qualify. For loan balances below \$10,000 only the 90 day deferral will be offered. Member must qualify for the loan under normal underwriting guidelines. Minimum rate floor of this offer is 2.99% APR. Interest will accrue over the 90 day deferral period 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 - March 11th, 6:00 PM

Branch Meeting - March 11th, 7:30 PM

April YOPC - Wednesday, Mar. 31st

Virtual Retirement - April 18th, 1:00 PM

Steward Seminar - April 22nd, 6:00 PM

