



THE RED RIVER CARRIER

TT MORRIS BRANCH 1227, WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS

Bowie, Breckenridge, Burkburnett, Electra, Graham, Hedley, Henrietta, Iowa Park, Jacksboro, Megargel, Munday, Mineral Wells, Olney, Quanah, Seymour, and Vernon Merged

February 2025

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If you don't have a seat at the table, you're probably on the menu

Branch President's Article

Chris Snyder, President

February is officially here, and with the peak season behind us, the pace of the year is already accelerating. This month marks a critical milestone for all of us: the NALC and USPS will begin collective bargaining for our next National Agreement.

As the NALC engages with the Postal Service, we remain hopeful for a contract that reflects the hard work we put in every day. However, we must stay vigilant. With Postmaster General David Steiner at the helm, it is vital to remember his history regarding union negotiations. We are expecting the NALC to fight for the best possible outcome, but we must be prepared for the road ahead.

The Amazon Shift in Wichita Falls

We are currently navigating a significant shift in package volume. Amazon has begun its regional expansion in Wichita Falls, starting with the 76302 and 76308 zip codes. While we have seen a small trickle of volume return to those zones recently, the broader impact is undeniable.

Amazon is now moving into its next phase: implementing a 100-mile delivery radius.

This expansion will likely impact every office in our branch.

- Regarding Burkburnett and Vernon: Since these offices receive Amazon via Oklahoma City rather than Fort Worth, we will see if there is an impact in those offices.
- The Logistics: The Wichita Falls Amazon hub is reportedly operating with 10 contractors and 100 vehicles. While their ability to maintain staffing in our local labor market is uncertain, the immediate loss of volume is significant.

To put this in perspective: between PP 01-26 and PP 15-26, the projected loss for our area (Bridgecreek Station) is roughly 156,000 packages. That is a staggering number for just over half a year.

Protecting Your Route: A Call to Action
With volume down, the Postal Service will undoubtedly look to conduct route counts and inspections to eliminate routes. Now is the time to protect your career. We have some protections and under Article 12 is how reassignments and excessing are delt

with, but the best defense is following the rules to the letter. If your route is "under" due to volume loss, use this time to "right-size" it by performing your duties exactly as USPS regulations require. Do not cut corners. The job you save might be your own.

Back-to-Basics Safety and Procedure:

- **Vehicle Safety:** Park in proper locations (away from driveways and intersections). Always curb your wheels, set the emergency brake, turn off the engine, and lock all doors.
- **The Satchel:** Always take your mail bag to the door when delivering parcels or mail on a residential "hop."
- **Transmission Habits:** Place the vehicle in Neutral at curbside boxes on level ground; use Park for any incline or decline.
- **Focus on the Road:** Wear your seatbelt at all times while in motion. Never handle mail while the vehicle is moving—if you are behind the wheel, your only job is driving.
- **Walking Procedures:** Do not finger mail while crossing streets or climbing/descending stairs.
- **At the Door:** For the sake of safety and accuracy, wait until you are on the porch to scan your parcels. Do not walk while trying to get your scanner out or package out of your mail satchel. Wait until you reach the door, ring or knock on the door, get the package and the scanner out of your bag, scan the package and verify that the number match (last 4 should be

sufficient). Do not do this while you are walking as you are not paying attention thus working in an unsafe manner.

- **Pace Yourself:** Set an obtainable, professional pace. This is a 30-year career, not a sprint.

The UPS Silver Lining

On a positive note, the new UPS and USPS last-mile delivery contract is beginning to roll out. You should start seeing UPS packages arriving at your offices soon. While the initial volume may be low, any additional work is a welcome addition to our floor.

Final Thoughts The future is uncertain, but our work ethic doesn't have to be. If you have any questions regarding route protections or Article 12, please reach out to me directly.

Let's look out for one another.

Branch Demographics

Ryan Raeke, Vice President

During my third week of NALC's Leadership Academy at the Maritime Institute in Baltimore, MD our group of thirty letter carriers from all over the country participated in a class about the demographics of the Postal Service. The definition of demographics is 'statistical data relating to the population and particular groups within it.' For example, the data we looked at showed the breakdown of letter carrier data into five subsets. Gender, Veteran Preference, Age Groups, Tenure and career/non career at the national level. Meaning those numbers are a reflection of our craft across the entire nation. Small, medium and large branches and everything in between were reflected in the national statistical numbers. Each of the thirty letter carriers in the class were also given the statistical data for their own local branches to compare against the Postal Services statistical data at the national level. Comparing the national to our own branch #1227 was very interesting. As a branch we were close to many of the national averages but different in a few as well. I wanted to share that info with our members so we can get a better understanding of our membership and how we can move forward together as a branch.

The first subsection was gender. The national average for letter carriers is 31%

female and 69% male. Our branch average was very different from the national average, 40% female and 60% male for our branch. I liked seeing that our branch had a higher average for female letter carriers by 9%. The postal service is an equal opportunity employer and seeing that our branch is higher than the national average was great.

The second subset was Veterans Preference. This number reflects the amount of armed services veterans in our craft. The national average is 8% veterans and 92% non-veterans. Those are the exact numbers for our branch as well. I honestly thought our branch average would be higher with us having Sheppard Air Force in Wichita Falls.

The third subset was the age of letter carriers. The largest age group of letter carriers at the national level is age 35-40 at 14% of the craft. The 35-40 age group is the branch's largest number as well but at 21% of our letter carriers. The second largest age group is 40-45 at 12% at the national level. The branch sits at 14% of letter carriers aged 40-45. That is a pretty close reflection of our branch to the national average. The third largest group is 30-35 at 13% at the national level. Our branch's average for 30-35 is 13% as well. This data show the majority of carriers are between 30-45 years of age. Our workforce isn't necessarily young but not

necessarily old either. We are right in the middle of a middle age workforce.

The fourth sub set was ‘Tenure’ of Letter Carriers. Tenure is the amount of time carriers have spent as a career employee. This time does not include non-career city carrier assistant (CCA) time. The national average for letter carriers with 5 years and under, of career service is 48% and our branch average is slightly higher at 51%. This means that nearly half of the letter carriers in the nation and within our own branch have less than 5 years of career service. This number really jumped out at me. Over half of our craft is still very new to the job. More than likely they haven’t spent time reviewing the contract and learning about their rights under the contract. Nor have they had probably had much training on the M-41 (Letter Carrier Duties and Responsibilities). This number is illustrative of how important it is at the national and branch level for leaders to continue to reach out and educate our members on the contract and their rights, duties and responsibilities.

The fifth and final subset of the postal service demographics sheet was career vs. city carrier assistants average. The national average of regular carriers is 88% and 12% for CCAs. This means a large portion of our workforce are career employees receiving all the benefits that come with career status. Thrift Savings Plan, Annuity, Health, Dental, Vision, Life Insurance, Sick Leave and Annual Leave. However our branch’s career vs. cca average is very different. Our average of career employees is 78% and

22% for CCAs. That is 10% lower for regulars and 10% higher for CCAs. The reason may be that almost 400 post offices across the county hire straight to career instead of hiring non-career ccas. We have no offices like that in our branch. Most of the offices that hire straight to career is because they struggled to staff those offices due to higher cost of living in those particular areas.

I hope you all find these numbers as interesting as I did. Looking at our branch demographics and how they compare to the national average can help us in many ways to understand why things are what they are when it comes to education and understanding of our craft at the local level. If you have any questions please don’t hesitate to reach out Branch President Chris Snyder or me. We both enjoy educating members on their rights and responsibilities.

OIG Audit of USPS Funds Report

Between 2022 and 2024 USPS Contract Mismanagement Cost the Service Nearly \$1 Billion

From overtime abuses to improper work assignments, mismanagement - not workers - drove nearly 3.5 million grievance payments between 2022 and 2024.

The U.S. Postal Service continues to face serious financial challenges, but a newly released audit by the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) makes one thing clear, a significant portion of USPS losses stems not from employee misconduct but from **management's repeated failure to follow the collective bargaining agreements it negotiated.**

According to OIG Report 25-068-R26, titled Grievance Management, the Postal Service paid more than \$866 million in grievance settlements between fiscal years 2022 and 2024, covering 3,453,101 grievance payments nationwide. These payments were largely avoidable and resulted from recurring contract violations that management failed to correct.

A Systemic Problem, Not Isolated Mistakes

Grievances arise when management violates the National Agreement or local memoranda of understanding. The OIG audit found that many grievances stemmed from the same issues occurring repeatedly across facilities, including:

- Overtime violations
- Improper work assignments
- Cross-craft violations

- Failure to follow established scheduling and contractual rules

Rather than addressing the root causes, USPS management often paid settlements and allowed the violations to continue. The OIG concluded that weak oversight, inconsistent enforcement, and poor tracking systems enabled these problems to persist year after year.

The True Cost of Mismanagement

The financial impact is staggering:

- \$303 million paid in grievance settlements in FY2022
- Approximately \$295 million in FY 2023
- About \$268 million in FY 2024

While annual spending declined slightly, the cumulative cost over three years exceeded \$866 million, highlighting a systemic failure to enforce contracts consistently.

By union category:

- American Postal Workers Union (APWU) grievances accounted for roughly \$372 million, with the highest average payout per grievance.
- National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) grievances totaled approximately \$351 million, driven by volume - about 2.4 million payments.
- NRLCA and NPMHU grievances accounted for tens of millions more.

The OIG also identified 76 individual employees who each received more than \$100,000 in

grievance payments during this period, with the highest total reaching \$367,252. These figures reflect long-term, unresolved violations – not opportunistic claims by workers.

Local Agreements and Escalating Penalties

One of the most concerning findings involved local agreements negotiated by management without proper oversight. The OIG found that some agreements:

- Lacked expiration or revision dates
- Included escalating financial penalties
- Were inconsistent with operational needs
- Were not centrally tracked or reviewed

As a result, violations triggered increasingly expensive payouts over time, with no mechanism to reassess or terminate outdated agreements.

Poor Oversight and Weak Controls

The audit also highlighted serious weaknesses in grievance tracking and documentation:

- The Grievance and Arbitration Tracking System (GATS) relied on subjective issue coding, leading to inconsistent data.
- Required decision letters and supporting documentation were often missing or incomplete.
- USPS lacked a centralized repository for local agreements, making oversight nearly impossible.

Without accurate data and accountability, management could not identify patterns, correct violations, or prevent repeat grievances.

The OIG's Conclusion

The OIG issued eight recommendations aimed at strengthening grievance oversight, improving documentation, centralizing agreements, and reducing recurring violations. USPS management agreed with most of these recommendations, though the report makes clear that real savings will only occur if management consistently follows the contract.

The Bottom Line

This report confirms what postal workers have long known: following the contract costs far less than violating it. The nearly \$1 billion spent on grievance settlements over three years represents money that could have been saved through basic compliance, accountability, and respect for negotiated agreements.

- **Workers did not cause these losses.**
- **The contract did not cause these losses.**
- **Management's failure to follow the contract did.**

Sources

<https://www.uspsoig.gov/sites/default/files/reports/2026-01/25-068-r26.pdf>

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BRANCH MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2026

FEBRUARY 12TH, MARCH 12TH

APRIL 9TH, MAY 14TH, JUNE 11TH,

JULY 9TH, AUGUST 13TH, SEPTEMBER 10TH

OCTOBER 8TH, NOVEMBER 12TH, DECEMBER 10TH

MEETINGS BEGIN AT 7 PM

ALL MEETINGS TAKE PLACE AT YOUR UNION HALL

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