



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

March 2026

Volume 36, Issue 3

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

Branch President's Article

Chris Snyder

Hard to believe that we are already into March. A lot has happened and changed over the last couple of months:

This is going to be the year where there will be attacks on our National Agreement and attacks on our routes.

1. Attacks on the National Agreement

- a. USPS has filed an interpretive dispute on our National Agreement with Article 17.4 of the National Agreement – What this means I assume is grievances relating to payment of steward for remedy for noncompliance with a meeting, failing to provide documentation, etc.
- b. USPS has filed an interpretive dispute on our National Agreement with Article 8.5.F. of the National Agreement. I have not been told what the dispute is but the language of Article 8.5.F reads:

F. Excluding December, no full-time regular employee will be required to work overtime on more than four (4) of the employee's five (5) scheduled days in a service week or work over

ten (10) hours on a regularly scheduled day, over eight (8) hours on a non-scheduled day, or over six (6) days in a service week.

This is long standing language that hasn't changed so not sure what the dispute is.

- c. Management at the local level has pretty much quit settling grievances, specifically those requiring payment and those that would normally be settled like time worked beyond the maximum work hour limits and cross-craft work performed by City Letter Carriers in the Rural Craft. I can only deduct that management is receiving instructions from their bosses and their bosses boss not to resolve any grievance. This makes for a bad situation for the employees harmed because all this will do is create a backlog of grievances at the higher steps of the grievance process.

2. Attacks on our routes

In Wichita Falls and surrounding cities the recently built Amazon facility has caused a significant drop in parcel volume for the routes we service. In my opinion this drop in volume should have made an impact in right sizing some of the routes with constant overtime but it seems to have created a lot of undertime for some that obviously management will use to eliminate routes and staffing. Here are my recommendations:

To protect your route, you must do the job exactly as it is written in the Handbooks and Manuals.

* Take Your Full Breaks: In Wichita Falls, we have 15-minute breaks (something the rest of the Nation doesn't have). National Arbitrator Britton ruled that these are mandatory. You cannot waive them. If you aren't taking them, you are effectively giving the Postal Service free labor and cutting your own route's value.

- **Use Your Comfort Stops:** It is biologically and contractually sound to use the restroom. Management has noted that during recent 3999s (Street Observations), carriers aren't stopping once in 6 hours. This is unrealistic and sets a dangerous precedent for route timing.
- **Safety is Your Shield:** * Driving: Wear your seatbelt, park safely (back in/pull through), obey speed limits, and never so

anything while the vehicle is in motion other than drive (i.e.. no fingering mail or rolling up and down your window).

- **Delivery:** Curb your wheels, set the brake, and shut off the engine every time. Take your satchel for every mail or parcel delivery to the porch.
- **Protect the Sanctity of the Mail:** Ensure all mail in the front of the LLV is moved to the back and the bulkhead door is locked during park-and-loops. Scan "where you stand"—at the delivery point, not at the truck.

The Bottom Line

If we lose routes, we lose jobs. Doing the job "by the book" isn't being slow; it's being **professional**. Remember the Post Office writes the rules on how to do your job. When you cut corners, you aren't helping yourself—you're helping management justify getting rid of your route or someone else's route.

I will provide more specific information on route protection in future emails. In the meantime, stay safe, stay professional, and watch out for one another. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

A Report from a recent training event

Count and Inspection School

Jesus Montano, Morningside Station Steward

I would like to express my gratitude to the membership for allowing me the opportunity to attend mail counts and route inspection training located at the National Business Agency's (NBA) in Flower Mound, Texas on Saturday January the 31st.

The class was taught by our NBA Shawn Boyd as well as A.G. Ramirez. Instructions on this topic can be found in the M-39- Management of Delivery Services, M-41- City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities, Materials Reference System (MRS), NALC Route Protection Program, 2012, and the 2018 NALC Guide to Route Inspections.

“The count of mail is used to gather and evaluate data to adjust routes fairly and equitably to ensure that the workload for each route will be as near as possible to an 8-hour workday for the carrier”. M-39, Section 242.122, Handbook M-41, Section 911.2

There are 2 main forms that Letter Carriers should be knowledgeable of.

PS Form 1838-C-Carrier's Count of Mail

PS Form 3999- Inspection of Letter Carrier Route

It is important to know both forms and how to properly fill out the PS 1838-C.

M-41 Section 915 **Inspection Day** -In order that a fair and reasonable evaluation may be made by management, carriers must perform their duties and travel their routes in precisely the same manner on inspection day as they do throughout the year. It is important you understand we are being inspected every single day while we are at work! As you all know, Amazon is here and very soon, if not already, we will lose parcel volume. It is just a matter of time until we have a count on our offices. Losing routes leads to losing jobs! We must protect our routes, and the first step to that is knowing how to do so. If you would like training on how to do this, please reach out to me and I would be more than happy to coordinate some type of training for us at the Union Hall on a Sunday.

It has been my honor to have learned some tools to help protect our fellow brothers and sisters, but

please remember it starts with you though. I have always been a firm believer that if you don't know your rights, then you have none. Thanks again and I will catch you in the field. Please be safe out there!

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. Any guideline amounts are merely suggestions, and you may contribute more or less than the guidelines suggest and the union will not favor or disadvantage you by reason of the amount of your contribution or your decision not to contribute. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, name of employer and occupation of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year

Vice President's Report

Ryan Raeke

On Presidents Day weekend I attended the Region 10 Spring School in Houston, TX hosted by our National Business Agent Shawn Boyd and his staff. Saturday and Sunday was filled with training classes touching on topics such as Defenses to Discipline, Arbitration Hearings, Informal A, Formal A and Overtime Equitability. I got a chance to attend just a few of the classes after my responsibilities as Vice President of the State Association was over. Our duties as a state board during the weekend is to sign up letter carriers to our Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF). We also held another letter drive to congress getting letter carriers to sign letters to their members of congress. We focused on two bills over the weekend starting with HR1065 "Protect Our Letter Carriers Act" and HR1522 "Retirement Fairness Act". All over the country letter carriers are subjected to robberies, assault and murder while in performance of their duties. Just recently a fellow letter carrier was killed on the job in Georgia. HR1065 calls on the federal government to help the post office retro-fit our current arrow lock key system to a modern electronic key lock system. It also calls for harsher penalties for those who attack letter carriers. HR1522 focuses on giving letter carriers the ability to buy back our non-career time. A lot of us have spent some time in a non-career status and that time is not credited to our retirements as it should be. We worked that time and we should receive that credit so we can retire earlier. Over the weekend we got over 200 letters signed. We also signed up 35 carriers to the Letter Carrier Political Fund. Great job to everyone on the Texas State Association of Letter Carriers Executive Board for putting in the hard work to make it a successful weekend. On Monday morning we got to hear a speech from the Texas AFL-CIO President Leonard Aguilar. He

spoke about the need for unions to unite in Texas for better pay and better working conditions. Texas has some of the lowest numbers of union jobs in the state even though Texas has one the nation's fastest growing economies. He also spoke about the upcoming elections in Texas and the need to find candidates that are friendly to labor and not the billionaires who try to influence elections with money. Grassroot community activism will help Texas workers gain more protections on the job and better pay. We also got to hear from NALC's Director of Retiree's Dan Toth and he gave us a state of the union address. He talked about the dire financial crisis the post office finds itself in and many ways the company could find its way out of it. The loss of Amazon volume across the country is affecting revenue and our old business model of mail delivery is outdated and the company needs to keep innovating as a parcel delivery business to stay relevant and competitive. He also spoke about attendance related arbitrations across the nation and how arbitrators are ruling in favor of the post office more than in the grievant's favor. It's hard to argue to an arbitrator an employee should keep their job if they can't come to work. Every case is different and everyone has different circumstances but the bottom line is to try and avoid absences when possible. All in all the weekend was a great success and I would like to give a big 'thank you' to National Business Agent Shawn Boyd and his awesome staff as well as to the members of TSALC Executive Board. If anyone from our branch is interested in attending one of these training sessions I would be happy to talk to you about it. Our branch is always looking for letter carriers to step up and help.



NALC Fact Sheet

Department of Legislative and Political Affairs — National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO
100 Indiana Ave. NW — Washington, DC 20001-2144 — 202-393-4695 — www.nalc.org © NALC

Equal COLA Act (H.R. 491/S.624)

Under current law, there is a disparity in cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) between the federal retirement systems.

Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) annuitants receive a limited COLA increase when inflation exceeds 2 percent, while Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) annuitants receive full COLA adjustments based on the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers.

For example, in October 2025, the Social Security Administration announced a 2.8 percent COLA increase for 2026. CSRS retirees will receive the full increase, while FERS retirees will only receive the capped 2.0 percent boost.

NALC represents more than 50,000 FERS annuitants who receive a reduced COLA, compared to our CSRS annuitants. These letter carriers did the exact same job, paid their fair share, and deserve to receive the same full COLA with no cap. Furthermore, NALC represents nearly 178,000 active letter carriers in FERS, who will be impacted by this disparity when they retire from their public service career.

The Equal COLA Act would eliminate this disparity and ensure all federal annuitants are treated equally, regardless of their federal retirement system.

NALC supports the Equal COLA Act, which would eliminate the COLA disparity between the federal retirement systems.

Sponsored by Rep. James Walkinshaw (D-VA) and Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA)

Health Benefit Plan Report

Changes to Prescription Benefits

Since the start of 2026, the Plan has received many questions surrounding member cost share related to our pharmacy benefits. We understand this has been a change from our prior benefit structure; therefore, it is important to explain the overall impact of rising prescription expenses, overall health care costs, and why this change was necessary.

For many years, healthcare has been trending towards a percentage-based responsibility for medications, with many of the other postal plans having already moved to the coinsurance structure. Despite our attempts to resist this change, the rising use of brand-name medications and GLP-1s means the copay structure is no longer sustainable.

Question: Why is my prescription costing a lot more than last year?

Answer: Due to the increased utilization of brand-name medications, the Plan was unable to maintain the prior copayment structure and keep health plan premiums competitive; therefore, we have moved to coinsurance.

Question: What is the difference between a copayment and a coinsurance benefit structure?

Answer: A copayment is a fixed amount of money that you pay to the facility, provider, or pharmacy when you receive certain services. This amount does not change based on the service.

Coinsurance is a percentage of the cost that you must pay for the service, supply, or medication received.

For example, before 2026, a \$3,500 prescription may have had a \$90 copayment, which would equal a 2.6%-member cost-share, resulting in the Plan covering 97.4% total cost. A generic medication that costs \$50 with a \$10 copayment results in the member covering 20% cost-share. Changing the structure makes the cost-share more

equitable based on the individual's usage without significantly increasing premiums.

Question: What if I'm only taking generic medications?

Answer: Members who utilize generic medications may not have noticed a change or cost increase. For some members, the cost may actually be less.

Question: What if a generic option is not available?

Answer: First and foremost, it is always important to discuss with your physician which medication is best for you and what alternatives may be available for your individual health care needs.

Question: How can I make my prescriptions more affordable?

Answer:

- Discuss with their physician if there is a generic available.

- Non-Medicare members should:

- Speak to their physician or pharmacist about assistance programs that may be available.

- Visit the manufacturer's website to learn more about available coupons.

- Visit prescription discount platforms or cost comparison tools

- Medicare members should be aware that although they are not eligible for coupons, their out-of-pocket maximum is significantly lower (\$2,100) and may be satisfied sooner than anticipated based on Medicare's assigned value for certain medications.

- It is also important to discuss with their physician any Medicare-compliant assistance programs available in their local area.

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BRANCH MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2026

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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