



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

November 2025

Volume 35, Issue 8

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

President's Report -- Open Season is Here

Chris Snyder, President

It's time for our annual **Open Season**, the period when you can make changes to your health, dental, and vision coverage. This year, Open Season runs from **November 10 to December 8, 2025**.

This is your opportunity to review and change your:

- Postal Service Health Benefit Program (PSHB)
- Dental and Vision Plans

Where to Find Information:

- **PSHB:** Visit the **OPM.GOV** website, click on the "Insurance" dropdown menu, and select "Postal Service Health Benefits Program."
- **Dental and Vision Plans:** Information is available at **Benefeds.gov**.

You might find Significant Savings with the NALC Health Benefit Plan (HBP)

As always, you must do your own due diligence! Especially our CCAs who have different coverage options.

Compare plans and select the plan that best fits your needs. As always, the NALC Health Benefit Plan **offers significant cost savings compared to other plans without compromising coverage.**

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Here's one comparison:

- The **2026 Blue Cross/Blue Shield Blue Standard Self and Family** plan is **\$ 479.21 bi-weekly**.
- The **2026 NALC HBP High Option Self and Family Plan** is **\$ 267.42 bi-weekly**.
- By choosing the **NALC HBP Family Plan** over the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Family Plan, as an active career carrier, **you could see savings of \$ 177.79 in your bi-weekly paycheck AFTER DUES DEDUCTION.**

That amounts to more than **\$ 4,500 per year in your pocket**. And who couldn't use that?

Training Updates: NALC Region 10 Small Batch

A big thank you to **Jesus Montano** (Steward, Morningside) and **Ryan Raeke** (VP and Steward, Burkburnett) for attending the NALC Region 10 Small Batch Training in Lubbock with me on September 28th. We also appreciate the membership for providing us this opportunity.

The training covered crucial new aspects of the National Agreement, including:

- **NEERMP: The New Employee Experience, Retention, and Mentoring Program** (M-02010 in NALC's MRS).
- **Article 8 Changes:** Key updates for both overtime desired lists and the new 12/60 rules.

We were also fortunate to receive valuable training from **RWCA David Miller** (Regional Workers' Compensation Assistant) on **common OWCP grievance issues**. We all walked away with something new!

Penalty Exclusion Period and Some Work Hour Rules:

With the holiday season fast approaching, it's important to review the rules governing maximum work hours:

December Exclusion Period and Article 8 Changes

The **December Exclusion Period** (penalty exclusion for working over 10 hours) this year runs from **November 29 – December 26, 2025** (Article 8.4 and 8.5 of the National Agreement).

Key Rules to Remember:

- **Mandatory Overtime: Overtime Desired List (ODL) and Work Assignment (WA)** carriers may be required to work over 12 hours in a day and/or 60 hours in a week.
- **New Penalty Pay (Article 8.4.G):** For all employees, the 2023-2026 National Agreement added a provision that automatically pays 2.5 times your normal rate for any hours worked over 12 in a day and/or 60 in a service week. This means we no longer have to file a grievance for this penalty pay!

Note: Work between 10-12 hours is still paid at the regular overtime rate (times normal rate) during this exclusion period.

Maximum Hours for Non-ODL/WA, CCAs, and PTFs

For **Non-ODL/WA carriers, CCAs, and PTFs**, your work hours are governed by **ELM Section 432.32**, and these limits do apply during the penalty exclusion period (M-01272).

- **Daily Limit:** You are limited to 12 hours in a day, which includes your lunch break. (If you take a no-lunch, your limit is hours).

IMPORTANT: If you are a **Non-ODL/WA carrier, CCA, or PTF** and you work over the daily limit above, please notify your steward immediately so a grievance can be filed.

2026 Choice Annual Leave Board

The **2026 Choice Annual Leave Board** should be circulating in many offices now. If you encounter any issues or questions in your office, please let me know so I can address them. If you are a new employee and need clarification on how the leave board works, don't hesitate to call!

2026 NALC Health Benefit Plan Premiums - Compare and Save

	Enrollment Codes	Biweekly Employees Pay	Monthly Annuitants Pay
Self Only PSHB High Option	77A	\$121.14	\$262.47
Self Plus One PSHB High Option	77C	\$293.31	\$635.51
Self and Family PSHB High Option	77B	\$267.42	\$579.41

**Premiums listed above exclude the employer portion. CCA's eligible for participation in PSHB, must pay the total cost of the premium as there is no Postal Service contribution.*

The Power of Unity:

Why Solidarity Matters for City Letter Carriers

Every day, city letter carriers serve as the backbone of the United States Postal Service, connecting neighborhoods, businesses, and communities through reliable mail delivery. Yet behind the daily routes, long hours, and dedication to public service lies another essential force that keeps carriers strong — **union solidarity**.

Solidarity is more than just a word we use at meetings or on picket lines. It's the foundation of every gain we've made as postal workers. From fair wages and health benefits to safe working conditions and job protections, none of it was handed to us — it was *won* through unity and collective action.

Strength in Numbers

When city letter carriers stand together through the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), our collective voice carries weight that no single carrier could ever have alone.

Management may hold the authority to make decisions, but our power comes from our ability to act together. Whether it's enforcing contractual rights, negotiating fair routes, or pushing back against unrealistic workloads, unity is our greatest leverage.

Solidarity also ensures that no one stands alone in the face of mistreatment or unfair discipline. When a carrier is called into the office, it's not just one person sitting across from management — it's the strength of an entire union sitting beside them.

That sense of security and shared purpose makes all the difference.

Protecting the Future of the Postal Service

Union solidarity doesn't just protect today's carriers; it safeguards the future of the Postal Service itself. The challenges facing the USPS —

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from privatization threats to budget pressures — require collective resistance. A divided workforce is easy to ignore or exploit, but a united one can organize, educate the public, and defend the institution that has served America for two and a half centuries.

When we show up at rallies, support legislative efforts, and talk to our neighbors about the value of public postal service, we're strengthening the bond that ties us all together — not just as workers, but as public servants committed to something bigger than ourselves.

Solidarity in Everyday Actions

Solidarity isn't only about big moments like strikes or negotiations; it's built in small acts every day. Helping a new carrier learn their route, backing up a steward, volunteering at the branch hall, or simply listening to a coworker's concerns — these are all acts of solidarity that strengthen our union from the inside out.

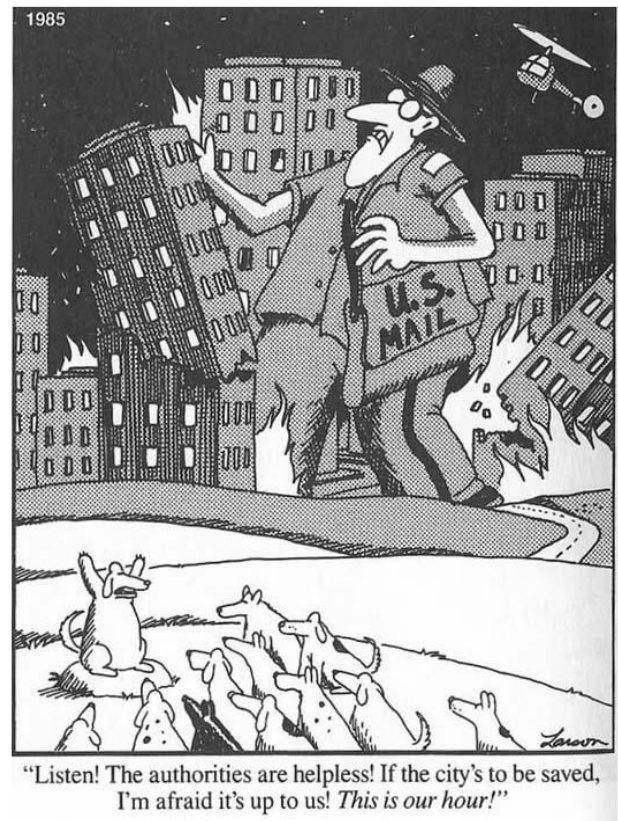
The more we support each other, the stronger we all become. When we choose unity over division, mutual respect over competition, and collective action over silence, we remind everyone — management, the public, and ourselves — that *letter carriers stand together*.

**The challenges we face —
from technological changes to
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met through shared strength
and unwavering unity.**

The Bottom Line

Union solidarity is not just a principle; it's a survival tool. The challenges we face — from technological changes to political threats — can only be met through shared strength and unwavering unity. As city letter carriers, our power lies not in our individual effort, but in our collective resolve to protect each other and the rights we've fought so hard to earn.

Together, we deliver — not only the mail, but justice, fairness, and dignity on the job.



My Takeaway from the Small Batch Training

by Jesus Montano, Morningside Steward

I want to thank the membership for allowing me the opportunity to participate in the Region 10 MBA Fall Small Batch Training on September 28th, 2025.

At the training, we covered topics that pertained to the New Employee Experience, Retention and Mentoring Program (NEERMP) program, Article 8, particularly the new overtime rules, the top 10 OWCP violations, legislation & the effects, as well as steward basic defense to discipline. Class started with an introduction as well as a closing from our National Business Agent (NBA), Shawn Boyd.

The NEERMP program was discussed by Tamera Twinn, who is one of our regional administrative assistants. Tamera assisted with the beginning stages of NEERMP while it was still in a pilot program. NEERMP has proven to help with retention of City Carrier Assistants (CCAs) with various guidelines as well as restrictions, will give a new employee time to acclimate to the job of the letter carrier. It also establishes mentors for the newly hired employees, who will voluntarily help guide the employees throughout their careers.

David Miller, our regional workers' compensation assistant, gave a class on the Top 10 OWCP violations. There is so much information when it comes to OWCP, and we tried to cover as much as we could in the limited time we had. The most important thing to remember is that YOU, as the letter carrier, are responsible for filing a claim.

Working as a Letter Carrier is a very physically demanding job, and as much as I would like for all my brothers and sisters to stay healthy, it is bound

that one day we could be injured. Please don't wait until you have been injured to figure out what you need to do!

Article 8 and the steward's basic defense to discipline was collectively taught by Richard Gould and Shawn Boyd. Article 8, Sections 2,4, and 5 have been modified to increase overtime protections and provide more opportunities for letter carriers. Article 8, Section 3 has been modified to guarantee CCA's and PTF's non-scheduled day and provide a weekly posting of their schedules.

Last topic, legislation & the effects of those on our jobs was taught by the legendary Ryan Raeke, Vice President of both our branch and the Texas State Association of Letter Carriers. Ryan covered some of the recent bills that were passed and some of the future bills in the works. Some are meant to help letter carriers, and some could hurt us. Based on recent events with other unions, he really brought out the effects that legislation can have on our jobs!

During this workshop, I not only received valuable information, but I was also able to network with other carriers and our regional assistants. I am honored to share with you a bit of what we covered and would love to share more information with you in the future.

As we prepare for the 2025 holiday season, please be safe, and thank you for all your hard work and dedication.

What are union officer elections?

This month we will have nominations for officer and delegate positions. So, what are officer elections?

“Union office elections” refers to the process by which the membership of a labor union elects its internal officers (president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, executive board members, etc.). These are distinct from elections for whether a union will represent a group of workers (though related). Once a union exists and has members, it needs to have leadership. Elections ensure the membership has a democratic voice in selecting those who will direct its affairs.

Under U.S. federal law (specifically the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 (“LMRDA”), Title IV), unions are required to hold “regularly scheduled” secret-ballot elections of officers, cover certain categories of officers (constitutional officers, executive board, etc.), and maintain certain baseline protections. [DOL+1](#) In short: union office elections are a key mechanism of internal union democracy.

Why union office elections matter

1. **Democratic legitimacy:** Leaders chosen by the membership are more likely to reflect the interests of the rank-and-file rather than a self-perpetuating clique.
2. **Accountability:** Elections permit members to renew or replace leadership based on performance, trust, direction, and integrity.
3. **Operational oversight:** Elected officers typically handle union finances, bargaining-unit representation, grievance handling, and contract oversight. The election is the point where membership exercises oversight.
4. **Member engagement:** A well-run election increases member awareness of the union’s role, how leadership is selected, and builds a culture of participation.
5. **Legal compliance & protection:** For unions under the LMRDA, failure to hold proper elections or to follow required procedures can lead to complaints, investigations, and potential invalidation of results.

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**Nominations take place in
November!**

**Inside: Health Benefit Plan
Information**

Why Solidarity?

BRANCH MEETING SCHEDULE

2025

NOVEMBER 13th, DECEMBER 11th

MEETINGS BEGIN AT 7 PM

ALL MEETINGS TAKE PLACE AT YOUR UNION HALL

5310 SOUTHWEST PKWY, WICHITA FALLS TX 76310