



National Association
of Letter Carriers

William H. Young, President

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PERF Presses Ahead with Hurricane Grants; Process Delayed by State Relief Programs



At left, NALC representative and Chairman of the Executive Committee Drew Von Bergen, center, delivers 'State of the Fund' Report at Postal Employees' Relief Fund (PERF) meeting January 30 at USPS Headquarters. Pictured (l-r) are Postmaster General John Potter, Von Bergen, and Committee vice chairman Louis Atkins, executive vice president of the National Association of Postal Supervisors. In right photo, Grants and Executive Committee members meet. NALC President Young is at left. (USPS photos)

Top House and Senate Leaders Back NALC on 'Contracting Out'

Young, State Chairs Fan Out Across Capitol Hill To Ensure Lawmakers are Aware of USPS Plans



President Young chats with Senate President Pro Tempore Robert C. Byrd (D-WV) during Byrd's visit to NALC reception honoring retired NALC legislative and political director George Gould. (Photos by Mike Shea)

NALC President William H. Young and union legislative leaders from all 50 states swept through offices of House and Senate members this week to bring them up to date on issues critical to letter carriers in the 110th Congress, especially the Postal Service's plans to outsource delivery work through expanded use of Contract Delivery Services.

The NALC state chairs were in the nation's capital for the entire week for annual training sessions and a full schedule of lobbying their respective senators and representatives.

President Young, as part of a special AFL-CIO group, met with several Democratic Party leaders in both the Senate and House including Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), covering a wide range of issues that affect working men and women. Young made sure contracting out and abuses by the Postal Service's Office of Inspector General were on the agenda.

"I received assurance from almost all of them that that (outsourcing) was a deal that would not work and they would help us fight contracting out at the Postal Service," Young said. "They seemed very sympathetic."

At the same time, the state chairs were meeting with members of the House and Senate or their key staff officials about contracting out and other issues.

'Sympathetic Ears'

"Everywhere we went, we found sympathetic ears," Young said.

That pledge of support was very evident at a special dinner for the state chairs February 14. Speaker after speaker expressed support for regular carriers.

In noting the contracting out issue, Senate Majority Whip Richard Durbin (D-IL) recalled how regular carriers and others in the Postal Service continued to deliver the mail to Americans during the anthrax crisis, adding that as long as he remains in the Senate leadership "we're going to deliver for you in the U.S. Senate."

Freshman Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT), who more direct when discussing contracting out.

"What a bunch of (expletive deleted)," he said "It only shows me one thing. We need new leadership in this country."

Tester, Durbin, and another freshman senator, Claire McCaskill (D-MO), all praised NALC's herculean role in last fall's congressional elections when it sent 160 people out to work in campaigns that helped elect pro-worker candidates.

2008 Pledge

"You not only deliver the mail, you deliver the votes," Durbin said.

"Don't ever think that any of us take you for granted," said McCaskill. "You bring the passion and the blood, sweat and tears to the election process."

"You guys did a damn good job," added Tester, who said if it hadn't been for support from the NALC and other unions, he and several other Democrats would have lost tight races.

When Tester said the NALC must step up in the next general elections and help out one more time, President Young made a pledge: "In 2008, this union will put twice the number of people out in the field. We'll make sure that the occupant of the White House is labor friendly."



President Young enjoys discussion with Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT) just before Tester spoke to State Chairs Dinner.



Senate Majority Whip Richard Durbin (D-IL) left, addresses the State Chairs dinner extolling the assistance NALC members played in the 2006 congressional elections; at center, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) presents retired NALC political/legislative director George Gould with a copy of a *Congressional Record* insert honoring his 27 years with the union, and at right, Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-MO) speaks of need for NALC members to stay involved for the 2008 elections.

Grantors of the Postal Employees' Relief Fund January 30 reaffirmed the Fund's policy of providing supplemental benefits to active and retired postal employees who are victims of natural disasters or fires, urging the Fund's Executive Committee to work diligently in considering over 900 pending applications for assistance due to Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma.

That policy bases eligibility and amount of grants on the out-of-pocket loss to an individual **after insurance payments and funds from other relief organizations are taken into consideration.**

The eight-member board of Grantors is comprised of the Postmaster General; the presidents of the four major unions — the NALC, National Rural Letter Carriers Association, National Postal Mail Handlers Union, and American Postal Workers Union; and three management associations — the National Association of Postal Supervisors; National Association of Postmasters of the United States, and National League of Postmasters of the United States.

NALC President William H. Young strongly supported continuation of the policy that has been in effect since the creation of the Fund in 1990, and was retained by an overwhelming consensus at the meeting.

Nearly \$1 million in grants have already been made to victims of the three Golf Coast hurricanes in 2005. To date, the Executive Committee has acted on almost 25 percent of 1,224 applications it received for damage by the three hurricanes.

PERF Executive Committee Chairman Drew Von Bergen, NALC's representative on the panel, said delays by the state governments in Mississippi and Louisiana in issuing housing assistance from the billions of dollars appropriated by Congress had caused PERF's documentation process to slow to a crawl.

"Only within the last couple months have state grants started to be issued and then only a trickle," Von Bergen said.

He said it is critical that victims of these hurricanes, as well as other disasters, provide PERF with all the documentation required. They should immediately send to PERF information regarding their applications for assistance to their state programs — acceptance or denial — that will allow the PERF Executive Committee to then act on their PERF application. Everyone who has a pending application should also keep PERF up to date on any changes in their mailing address or phone number.

Food Drive Packets Mailed to 1,250 Branches; Deadline of March 12 for Postcard Order Form

Priority Mail envelopes containing invaluable information and materials for food drive coordinators are being mailed to the 1,247 NALC branches registered to date for the 2007 NALC National Food Drive scheduled for Saturday, May 12.

The packets contain, among many other items, forms for ordering the FREE 2007 Campbell Soup-U.S. Postal Service postcards for delivery to homes across America just before the drive. Over 118 million of the cards were delivered for last year's drive.

There are two forms in the packet for the postcards. One, for English-language cards, is due back at NALC headquarters by March 12. The other for Spanish-language cards, is due back by May 17. Branches are urged to return the signed forms IMMEDIATELY.

Also in this year's packet are: a revised coordinator's manual containing food drive tips; a timeline for activity; letters of support from sponsors; a 10½ minute DVD video on the drive; a DVD Public Service Announcement for local television usage, and special inserts from Campbell Soup and Valpak on their involvement in the drive.

This year is the 15th Anniversary drive. During the past 14 years, carriers have collected over three-quarters of a billion pounds of food donations from their postal customers. Last May, for the third consecutive year, the amount exceeded 70 million pounds — enough to fill over 1,500 tractor trailers that would stretch for over 15 miles.

In this anniversary year, President Young has set down a challenge to all branches in the country — increase the collection by 10 percent over last year.

Joining again in supporting the letter carriers effort to "Stamp Out Hunger" are Campbell Soup; Cox Target Media and its Valpak direct mail marketing operation; the National Rural Letter Carriers Association; the AFL-CIO; United Way of America and its local United Ways; and America's Second Harvest — The Nation's Food Bank Network.

At the forefront again is the U. S. Postal Service, which has been a partner since inception. Postmaster General John E. Potter expressed the Service's complete support of the 2007 drive in a February 2 letter to President Young.

"This drive really illustrates the power and reach of our postal employees and enables us to help people in need right in their own communities," the PMG added. "We are proud to partner with you in this extraordinary effort to help fight hunger in America and look forward to making this the most successful drive yet."



March 1 Deadline for MDA Registration

Over 200 NALC branches have already responded to President Young's call for a revitalized letter carrier effort to support the union's official charity — the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) — by returning the new MDA registration forms to NALC Headquarters.

March 1 is the deadline for sending back the registration forms that were mailed to all branch presidents. Registration will allow branches to receive the official NALC packet for MDA fund-raising activities during calendar year 2007.

The packet will include a new DVD for use in the year-long campaign, new training materials, information on special MDA summer camp opportunities, a list of the 25 "best practices" for fund-raising, an official coordinator's manual, artwork, and many other items to help branch MDA activity be successful. To receive the packet, branches must be registered.