



**National Association  
of Letter Carriers**

William H. Young, President

April 6, 2007 No. 07-05

# NALC Bulletin

100 Indiana Ave. NW Washington, DC 20001-2144 202.393.4695 www.nalc.org

## IMPASSE!

# Interest Arbitration To Resolve Contract

## Postal Service Rejects Strategic Partnership; Opts for Confrontation on Contracting Out

### NALC to Seek 'Substantial' Pay Increase; Withdraws Workforce Restructuring Bid

NALC President William H. Young announced April 6 that negotiations for a new National Agreement have ended in impasse.

"I truly regret to inform the membership that the top leadership of the United States Postal Service has flatly rejected NALC's offer of a strategic partnership to protect the future of the Postal Service," Young said. "We are shocked by their refusal to work jointly, and now have no choice but to pursue our bargaining goals through interest arbitration."

**"The Postal Service power brokers have thrown down the gauntlet," Young said. "They apparently don't believe NALC is militant enough to fight them on these issues. They are sadly mistaken and will rue the day they so misjudged us."**

Young said NALC will spare no expense and no effort to win 'substantial' pay increases in the arbitration to reward letter carriers for their contributions to the success of the USPS.

The NALC leader also announced that in view of USPS' action, NALC has formally withdrawn its innovative proposals to restructure the city carrier workforce to provide Monday through Friday jobs for all regular letter carriers while eliminating casuals and creating a unionized Saturday work force. These proposals, which would have produced billions in savings for the parties to share, were contingent on an agreement to prevent the outsourcing of city carrier work.

**"This a triumph of ideology over common sense," Young said. "Sadly, there are those controlling the destiny of the Postal Service today who are committed to a philosophy of privatizing and contracting out and damn the consequences."**

### Privatizer at Work

The current chairman of the USPS Board of Governors, James Miller III, earned his right-wing reputation as budget director during the Reagan administration, and is now trying to ram that ideology down the throats of all at the USPS.

"Not on my watch," Young said.

In a conference call with the NALC Executive Council, Young mobilized the union's leadership for the fight ahead.

"The Board of Governors believes it should risk the trust of the public and threaten the long-term viability of the United States Postal Service for quick and ultimately illusory savings offered by contracting out. It has rejected the high road of partnership with the most dedicated and professional delivery work force in the world in favor of the low road of low-wage, contingent labor. It is a disgrace that an agency of the United States government would seek to create yet more contingent workers with low wages and few, if any, benefits. The NALC will not accept it. We will fight back."

Young instructed the NALC's lawyers to work with their counterparts at the Postal Service to begin the process of selecting a neutral chairman for a tripartite interest arbitration panel. Under the law, NALC and the Postal Service will each name an arbitrator to the three-person panel and the parties are free to choose a neutral arbitrator to chair the panel. If the parties cannot agree, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service will name the chairman. Once a panel is established, there will be hearings in which both sides present evidence and testimony to support their positions. In addition to pay increases, NALC will pursue a letter carrier-only health plan as an alternative to higher employee premiums.

**"This is not just about a three- or four- or five-year contract," Young said. "This is about the future viability of the Postal Service."**

Young said the union would engage a multi-track strategy to confront outsourcing.

### NALC Action Underway

In order to protect existing city carrier jobs, the union is pursuing two national-level grievances regarding contracting out, one focused on Article 32 in general and one concerning the proposed outsourcing of 10 existing positions in Reno, Nevada. In addition, the union has launched a lobbying campaign on Capitol Hill to prevent the rapid spread of Contract Delivery Service. Over the past year, the Postal Service has adopted a program to vastly expand contract delivery to areas traditionally served by career employees. Although NALC has no quarrel with traditional Highway Contract Routes, it will seek a legislative prohibition on expanded outsourcing.

**"Thanks in no small part to the tireless efforts of NALC activists, there is finally some oversight in Washington and we have many allies on this issue," Young said. "The lawmakers who worked side by side with us to implement postal reform will not sit by and see all that good work undone by ideologues at L'Enfant Plaza. Many of these legislators, Democrats and Republicans alike, have said that they did not spend a dozen years on reform to see the Postal Service turn around and contract out its core function."**

Young noted that 2007 was shaping up to be an "historic" year that would define the future of letter carrier work. He cited pending national grievances on DOIS, the third bundle, contracting out and a variety of issues relating to the Postal Service's unilateral implementation of flat-sorting technology.

"We intend to pursue these grievances in rights arbitration at the same time we are presenting our contract proposals in interest arbitration," he said. "As usual, we will keep the members informed of developments."