



RELIEF CARRIER APPRECIATION WEEK

FEBRUARY 1ST TO FEBRUARY 7TH, 2025

The National Rural Letter Carriers' Association has designated the week of February 1 – 7, 2025 as Relief Carrier Appreciation Week.

Your North Carolina board wants to say THANK YOU for all you do!

This entire issue is dedicated to our relief carriers. It is filled with information targeted toward our RCAs & ARCs.

We are encouraging all North Carolina carriers to please take the time to show our North Carolina leave replacements that their hard work, dedication and commitment to the job has not gone unnoticed.

As we wrap up 2024 and another record breaking holiday season, now is an especially good time to recognize and thank them. Why not ask your Postmaster if they would be willing to show them some appreciation this special week. As we all know, a little recognition and acknowledgement can go a long way towards boosting the morale in an office.

Thanks for hanging in there and getting us all through this exceptionally grueling year. We all know that our relief carriers seem to get the worse of it. They are thrown on routes they don't know, get sent to offices they have never even heard of before and end up working in late and in the dark! Many of them are working long hours for days on end without a day off.

Our Relief carriers play a vital role in the craft. We need them. Treat them well and thank them whenever you can, not just this one week. We should value and appreciate them all throughout the year! **THANK YOU!**

Please send your pictures of RCAs, ARCs, PTFs and/or office appreciation party to Vicki Gray (address and email are on page 2) for possible publication in the next issue of the NCRC.

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Articles are the opinion of the Author and not necessarily the NCRLCA, the NCRLCA or the Editor.

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National Emergency Hotline

**1-888 EMERGNC
(1- 888-363-7462)**

is a toll-free number for USPS employees to use in the event of a facility or weather-related emergency.

In an emergency, the hotline provides employees with information about the status of their facility and special instructions or guidance.

Please keep this phone number for future use.

WEBSITE

Please visit
www.NCRLCA.org
for all the latest news.

This month the password will be H@ppyN3wY3@r

The password will be changed to the above on January 31, 2025.

At this time the password is only needed to access the Junior Auxiliary page.

Cover Photo

Looking Glass Falls

Near Brevard, NC becomes an icy cascade in winter. Accessible all year, it's easy to get to and has it's own viewing deck.

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Important Dates

January 1	New Years Holiday
January 20	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day:
January 25-27	South Atlantic Conference
February 1-7	Relief Carrier Appreciation Week
February 14	Valentines Day
February 17	Presidents' Day:



RCA Appreciation Week

President

Elaine Althoff

We often hear “I’m just an RCA”. You’re more than that to us.

Well, we all were at one time “Just an RCA”, but times have changed since some of us started. Back then our regulars each had an RCA for each route, we worked the Saturday and whenever they were out on vacation, sick, sometimes carrying another route when another RCA was unavailable.

Turn to today's understaffed offices and the RCAs are now working just as much or more than the regulars. Some get burned out due to being overworked and underappreciated only to leave. And who really can blame them!?

It is not an easy job, although we make it appear to be. We throw everything at them in three days and think they got it all.

You need to spend more time with them, not just go home early, after all, you are the trainer and you will reap what you sow. So teach them. Mentor them. Don't snap at them when they do something wrong. You have been doing this for years and it's second nature but for them it is all new.

There is no other job out there to prepare you to do the work we do. Sitting in the middle of your seat with one foot on the pedal and delivering mail out the wrong side of a car. Most people don't want to use

their new car and leave anyway. They get so beat down by everything, if and when they get a day off someone calls out, and here they come canceling plans, appointments putting life on hold.

That's what we do. Make it easier on them. Update your labels, make them a cheat sheet, show them the package look ahead even if you don't use it, and show them the Load Truck and how to number the parcels. For you it's maybe a waste of time, to them time not wasted. If you don't know how to use it, have another RCA show them. It saves them so much time in the office if they know how to use it to their advantage, and not feel the pressure of being on the street overwhelmed.

Make sure your boxes are numbered; I tell my RCA if it is not numbered don't deliver because putting the wrong mail in and then trying to retrieve it can be well messy with shouty capitals you know what I mean.

Our patrons are sometimes just as hard as some regular carriers. “You're running late today”, are not words I even like to hear! I know I am and I can't make time up.

Being an RCA can sometimes feel like a thankless job. Managers may be pushing you to work faster or work on routes that you don't even know or going to other offices and working in the dark or maybe your regular carriers don't treat you very nicely.

Thank those who come to your office from another office. I always try to tell them, “Thank you for coming and helping us out. I appreciate you coming in.” and “Have a Safe Day”. We even check on them. Management is not always nice to them, so they may not come back and I don't blame them.

I hope you will show your gratitude toward them and how much we appreciate them showing up and grinding it out right beside us.

Thank You! And you're more than just an RCA to me. You're the superhero that has no cape! You're the next great regular. You're the next mentor for your RCA.

#28716 WNC STRONG





Chaplain

Jesse Ray Farmer Jr.

Be Strong and Courageous

One possession that is always in my pocket to distribute are small crosses with verses of inspiration attached that a little lady on my mail route makes.

No matter where I am, there is always someone who I feel like may need that little cross. Whether it be a McDonald's cashier, the trash dump attendant, or a friend that may be feeling discouraged. Most people take the cross from me with a smile and a thank you.

I'm never quite sure how God is using these crosses in the lives of those who possess them.

A few weeks ago, I handed one of my crosses to a military veteran who was starting a new career. After receiving the cross, he became close to tears, disclosing that years earlier as he was about to be deployed a lady had run up to him and handed him a rosary. He had kept that rosary close to his heart during dangerous times knowing that someone back home was thinking about him and possibly praying for his safe return.

Before the Israelites went into battle, there was typically a prayer and a motivating speech given by

the elders and priests in the land to ask for protection. One of the leaders, Joshua, encourages the people to not forget what they have been through and overcome. Joshua tells them to "Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for God is with you wherever you go (1:9)".

This can still be true today. Whether it be a new job, a diagnosis or a deployment, we can hold fast to even the smallest object or memory of what God can do and continue to do in our lives.

During the harsh winters of our life when we don't know what the next day will bring, remind yourself of the blessings that are in your life. I would also encourage you to be like Joshua, motivating courage and strength in others and offering to help lift them up during their battles.

This also should remind us of those in the military service who may be needing care packages, prayer, or letters of support as they sacrifice their lives for us.

If you need encouragement or prayer please reach out to me.



Obituaries

Keyera Regina-Delois McGougan

We are sad to announce that on November 29, 2024, at the age of 27, Keyera Regina-Delois McGougan (Fayetteville, North Carolina) passed away.

Though her name may fade from the lips of time, the imprint Keyera leaves upon the hearts of her loved ones remains eternally vivid — a testament to the depth of her spirit and the richness of her legacy.

She is survived by: her mother Cynthia McGougan of Fayetteville; and her aunts and uncles, Minister Vera Colvin of Fayetteville, Kelly Whitted of Fayetteville, Ebony Whitted of Fayetteville, Tonishia McNeill of Fayetteville, Yvette Whitted of Fayetteville, Terry McNeill of Fayetteville and Curtis Whitted of Fayetteville.

Keyera was an active rural carrier at the Lakedale Post Office in Fayetteville.



*Telisha Locklear
Executive
Committeeman*

Is Rushing Worth It?

Happy New Year and let me be the first to say thank you to all the RCAs PTFs and ARCs for the awesome job you do everyday.

We encourage all North Carolina regular carriers to please take the time show your relief carriers that their

dedication and hard work doesn't go unnoticed.

I hope everyone had a happy and safe holiday. The holidays can be so rushed with working, trying to keep the traditions and spending time with family.

Get going or hurry-up are words we have all heard. Especially after this last holiday season. There did not seem to be enough time in the day for all we were expected to accomplish.

Stop letting managers make you feel rushed. Do not allow management to rush you and cause you to work in an unsafe manner!

Not everything on your to do list is an emergency.

In the moment, rushing feels like the only way to remedy the situation. "I'm running behind, so I need to rush to catch up!" But in reality, rushing to "catch up" or "get ahead" is rarely worth it!

Let's look at how this can occur.

- ▶ Rushing can cause redo's (time wasted).
- ▶ Rushing can lead to injuries to yourself or others.
- ▶ Rushing is mentally draining.
- ▶ Rushing can distract your attention from hazards you would normally recognize.
- ▶ Rushing can prompt you to take shortcuts.
- ▶ Rushing is working harder not smarter.

The positive results from rushing are marginal at best. You never truly catch up! And the cost for acquiring those slim benefits significantly outweighs

their overall benefit.

Let's say you're running late and decide to speed. Instead of going the 60mph speed limit, you push it to 72mph. What should have taken you 15 minutes now only took about 12.

Saving those precious three minutes costs you significantly. You're putting yourself at greater risk for physical harm (crash), mental harm (stress), and financial harm (speeding ticket). For just three minutes!

This isn't to say that working quickly is not worth it. We all should work quickly and efficiently. But rushing adds stress and anxiety to your life. Even if it doesn't feel significant in the moment. The difference between a peaceful mind and a somewhat stressed mind is significant. It impacts everyone around you as well.



So in closing, I want to say, manage your time. Prioritize your time. Keeping your work/life balance is very important for you physically and mentally.

Remember these tips for your safety.

Your safety is the priority.



*Brian Hamlett
Executive
Committeeman*

Retirement Benefits and Tax Season

It's the start of a new year and time to start thinking about Tax Time. As an employee you got your W-2 through the mail or downloaded it through PostalEase, filed your taxes, and it was done. It's a similar procedure as a retiree with the biggest change being the documents necessary and where to find them, should you need to. The information in this article was found at opm.gov (unless otherwise noted) and you should consult a tax professional if needed.

As a retiree you will not be getting a W-2 from the USPS unless you just retired and worked for a portion of the tax year. Retirees get a 1099-R, Distributions From Pensions, Annuities, Retirement or Profit-Sharing Plans, IRAs, Insurance Contracts, etc. These are mailed out at the end of January to the address on file with OPM. They use whatever address they have as of the second week of December so be sure to promptly make address changes as they occur. These changes can be made

through services Online (servicesonline.opm.gov.) Services Online also allows you to make other changes such as changing your direct deposit, requesting a duplicate 1099-R, etc. This does require a Login.gov account to sign in.

Another important fact to remember is that YOU are responsible for making sure the appropriate amount of federal tax is withheld from your annuity. Be sure to check early in the year and adjust as needed. You should also ensure any state taxes are withheld and submitted to the state. North Carolina residents can make changes using Form NC-4p available on ncdor.gov. Both of these amounts will be specific to your financial situation and you should consult a tax professional for assistance, if necessary.

It is important to ensure this information is updated as it becomes necessary. OPM does not give tax advice but the IRS offers fee tax help at irs.gov as well as by phone 1-800-829-1040. You can also refer to a recent copy IRS publication 721 for information. An as previously mentioned, consult a tax professional if necessary.



Auto-Home Insurance

Happy New Year!

Now that we are starting a new year it's time to think about change. Do you need more or different insurance coverage?

As a Rural Carrier you are entitled to special discounts on all your insurance needs. Yes, all of them! Not just your automobile. National General offers substantial savings on home and auto insurance, but they also have coverage for your motorcycle, RV and more. Call **888-325-7727** and use code **R-RP** for a quote.

Are you driving your POV on the mail route? Don't forget to ask about the Federal Tort Claim Act. Federal employees are protected against liability resulting from the operation of their POV while on the mail route.

Do you have a government vehicle assigned to your route. Great! National General will still offer you a discount on your auto insurance even though you do not use your POV for delivery!

The NRLCA Insurance Marketplace can make a difference in your needs for insurance coverage. You can even get a \$10.00 gift card just for getting a quote. Give them a call to see what they can offer you!

Remember to use the code R-RP for your benefits. Let's get the right coverage for your needs!



Tracy Greer
Executive
Committeeman

Health Care For Relief Carriers (RCAs)

Over the years, the NRLCA has achieved major milestones in healthcare benefits for RCAs.

For many years, there were no benefits for part-time employees and thankfully that has changed. You now have access to Health, Dental, and Vision insurance. Enrolling for benefits can feel overwhelming and confusing but don't worry, I am here to help!

1. <https://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance> is a great source of information. Here, you can compare plans and website information for each provider.
2. <https://www.carefirst.com/usps/> is Blue Cross Blue Shield and is the sole insurance provider for RCAs. You can find information about the plan and contact information.
3. <https://www.benefeds.gov/> is where you will enroll and find information about dental and vision insurance.
4. https://myhr.usps.gov/en/pay_benefits/wellness/wellness_at_usps This website is a treasure trove of knowledge. There are many articles and webinars listed along with contact information.
5. https://myhr.usps.gov/en/pay_benefits/wellness/employee_assistance_program if you need any assistance with things like mental health, substance abuse, etc., this website will provide that information.
6. <https://usps.ndbh.com/EAP> another great website with app-based information to assist you with depression, anxiety, insomnia, and much more.

There are also many important numbers if you prefer calling for assistance:

- ★ Employee Assistance Program: 800-327-4968
- ★ Benefeds: 1-877-888-3337
- ★ Carefirst: 833-960-4025

As always, should you need assistance you may contact me. I am happy to assist you and answer any questions you may have.

I would like to thank you for your service as an RCA. You are the backbone of the craft, and you play a critical role in the success of the United States Postal Service.

NCRLCA Dues for 2024-2025

Regular, PTF...Cash.....	\$839.00
1187...Bi-Weekly.....	\$32.27
Retired.....Cash.....	\$115.00
1187R...Monthly.....	\$9.58
RCA, ARC.....Cash.....	\$280.00
1187.....Bi-Weekly.....	\$10.77

The membership year begins July 1, ends June 30. Please make checks payable to NCRLCA. Checks or membership forms should be mailed to Vicki Gray, NCRLCA Secretary/Treasurer, 424 Wapiti Dr., Spring Lake, NC 28390.

NOTE: "Dues, assessments, contributions or gifts to the NCRLCA are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

Union Dues

Union dues are fees that union members give to the union to help provide the resources to stand up for good jobs and benefits, decent working conditions and a better future for our families. Union members in the private industry earn 38 percent more on average than nonunion workers. They also receive 54 percent more in benefits.

Union dues help fund activities that give workers more power at the bargaining table, in the statehouse and in the community. Some of these activities include: Organizing expenses; Office equipment and regular administration expenses; Attorneys to assist in negotiations, grievances and arbitration; Training; Research into companies and industries to gather information for negotiations and organizing; Accountants to analyze the company's books.

Members receive information about how dues money is spent by their local at monthly membership meetings.

Local unions also file annual reports with the U.S. Department of Labor.

The benefits of job security, union negotiated wages, safety protections, insurance, pensions, and the support and backing of a union to fight for your rights make paying union dues well worth the money.

New RCA? Set Goals for Yourself

Without RCAs the post office could not fulfill their mission of delivering to America and regular carriers' bodies would wear out even faster. New hired RCAs first learn how to carry a route from the regular whose route they are assigned. In time they will learn from the other carriers and RCAs in the office as to what techniques make for a more efficient process of casing, pulling down, loading, and safely delivering routes.

Most RCAs do not know what is needed to be successful when they first start. So here is a brief list of items compiled to increase their chance of success faster.



Vice President

Jay Schreiber

“Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible.”

– Anthony Robbins

Here are some reachable goals for RCAs working four or more days per week .

Within 3 months:

- * Master the 6 basic scanner functions that are required daily.
- * Learn the other scanner functions that determine the route's pay.
- * Familiarize yourself with the package lookahead function.
- * Be able to case bundled flats (already in order) and DPS.
- * Be able to use load truck to help mark parcels.
- * Be able to load vehicle in order.
- * Be accurate with delivery.
- * Recognize that on Sundays small parcels that will fit the mailbox should go to the door so the mail can be delivered Monday.

After 6 months

- * Master the other scanner functions that determine the route's pay.
- * Be able to correlate the address on the street to the location on the case.
- * Be able to case raw mail.
- * Speed up casing bundled flats and DPS time.
- * Start taking bundles or a half tray of DPS to the street to work it on the route instead of casing it.
- * Be able to load vehicle more quickly but efficiently.
- * Use the package lookahead to see what is to be delivered soon.

- * Delivery accuracy plus adding speed.
- * Own your mistakes and make notes to avoid specific issues being repeated.

After 9 months

- * Continue to master the scanner functions that are not often used.
- * Be comfortable taking box-holders to the street rather than casing them in the office.
- * Take more DPS to the street rather than casing it in the office.
- * Be able to see an address in your mind while casing and see the position on the case while delivering.
- * Increase your utilizing package lookahead for packages.

I know the names of customers on my route but do not expect a new RCA to learn them right away. If they deliver every piece as addressed correctly, I have no complaints.

Also, being involved and attending the spring district business meetings will increase new RCAs chance of success.

“It’s not whether you get knocked down, it’s whether you get up.” – Vince Lombardi

I would like to thank all the RCAs who have survived their first, second or umpteenth Christmas and wish you all the best in 2025.

I also want to thank Daphne Brown and Shari Schreiber for their input with this article.

South Atlantic Conference (SAC)

January 25-27, 2025

Sonesta Atlanta Airport North

1325 Virginia Avenue

Atlanta, Georgia 30344

Make reservations online at [Sonesta.com](https://www.sonesta.com) or call 1-800-766-3782

Changes To The SAC Program this Year

Seminars Start On Saturday Afternoon

46th ANNUAL SOUTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE

The 46th annual meeting of the South Atlantic Conference (SAC) will be held January 25-27, 2025, at the Sonesta Atlanta Airport North at 1325 Virginia Avenue in Atlanta, Georgia. There is a special room block rate of \$105 (plus tax) with an additional \$10 a day charge for parking.

The reference code is “**G012325SAC**” when placing your reservation online at [Sonesta.com](https://www.sonesta.com) or calling the reservation number at 1-800-766-3782.

The cut-off date for reservations is January 10, 2025 to be eligible for the group rate.

This year the SAC Board has decided to charge a registration fee of \$40 to attendees from outside of the South Atlantic Conference states. This will be paid at the registration table when you register. This is for only the non-SAC state attendees. There is no registration fee if you are from the SAC states.

Know that this seminar is informational for all members. We strive to give you the best and latest information available in a concise and informative manner. This year all seminars will be without competition with other seminars. Those seminars planned are Health Benefits Seminar, FERS Retirement, OWCP, Labor, and a RRECS training.

This year the Conference will begin on Saturday, January 25, at 1 p.m. with the opening ceremonies and some special guests, then into seminars. The Worship Service will be held on Sunday morning and will be followed by other speakers and then the keynote speaker, NRLCA President Don Maston. Members of the National Board will be available for a Q & A session on Sunday.

Monday’s session will begin at 8:30 a.m. with remarks from USPS managers and the assigned Executive Committeemen to the Conference, followed by another Q & A panel. The Conference will adjourn no later than 12 p.m.

Attend SAC and be in the know!

Dennis Conley, Interim SAC President

New Congress in January

Welcome to 2025!

This new year brings many changes and many new opportunities to each of us. We have a new President and Vice President along with five new members in the House of Representatives.

Unfortunately, we lost two of our strongest supporters. Kathy Manning (who didn't run for re-election) and Wiley Nickel. We appreciate everything they have done to support legislation on our behalf! The other two strong supporters, Donald Davis and Alma Adams were re-elected.

The members of the 119th Congress will be sworn in on January 3, 2025. While we retained our two Senators Thom Tillis and Ted Budd we have five new members in the House of Representatives. They are:

Addison McDowell in District 6, replacing Kathy Manning

Mark Harris in District 8, replacing Dan Bishop

Pat Harrigan in District 10, replacing Patrick McHenry

Brad Knott in District 13, replacing Wiley Nickel and

Tim Moore in District 14, replacing Jeff Jackson.

All legislation that did not pass the House before the end of 2024 must be re-introduced in 2025. I will update you on this legislation as soon as it is introduced. Also, as soon as I have contact information for the above-mentioned new members, I will put that information on the website. Check the www.NCRLCA.org website under Legislation for updates as they occur.

You can visit www.Congress.gov, enter your address under 'find your Representative' and then click on their name to go to their page. There you can email them, sign up for a monthly newsletter, or contact them by phone or in person. If you choose to email them, just introduce yourself and tell them that you are a rural carrier.

START THE CONVERSATION!



PAC CHAIR

Brenda Gibbs

Become a Sustaining Donor

Use this form for automatic PAC payments from your checking account.



I hereby authorize my bank to deduct from my checking account the monthly sum of: (circle one)

\$50

\$25

\$15

\$10

Other: \$ _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (print): _____

Employee ID Number: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Phone Number: _____

Please attach a voided check or include Bank Routing number along with your account number.
Send to NRLCA-PAC 1630 Duke St, Floor 2, Alexandria, VA 22314

Stay Cyber-Safe In 2025



Webmaster
Renee Johnson

Happy New Year!

For many of us, the dawn of a new year brings well-meaning resolutions that rarely make it to spring. I'm going to share one with you that you can and should use all year: cybersecurity.

I've done the legwork for you and have put together seven recommended practices that should help deter cybercriminals. As it is with anything, however, nothing is foolproof. Keep sensitive information locked up in a safe location.

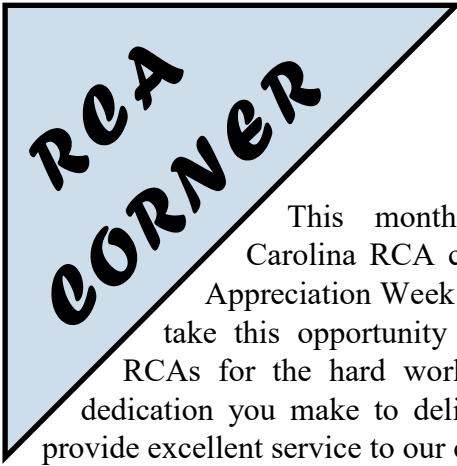
According to experts at OPM, TSP, McAfee, Norton, and government websites like the Department of Homeland Security, these seven steps should help keep you, and your data safe all year.

1. **Use strong passwords.** Basically, if you can remember the password, it is likely not secure enough. We might not like long passwords that are a mixture of numbers, letters, and symbols, but they are a must for optimum security.
2. **Use MFAs—multifactor authentication.** Most of us are familiar with the multifactor authentication method since the websites for both Liteblue and Thrift Savings require it. But if you're not, it is a two-step verification method that sends you a code via text or registered email each time you attempt to login. You will have a small window of time to retrieve the code and key it into the provided space before being allowed to access your data at the site.
3. **Do not open attachments or scan QR codes from random emails.** If you did not ask for the file, you should assume it can contain malware or other tracking programs that will either disable your equipment or steal your sensitive information. If there's any doubt, call the number you have for the agency or person involved—not the one listed on the email or on the social media post.
4. **Back up your data.** Whether you are using a spreadsheet for your daily rural route data collected between mini mail surveys, saving family recipes, keeping documents for tax purposes, or anything else that you use a computer for, back up the data on a routine basis to prevent a total loss.
5. **Verify any requests made for information via email or social media accounts to prevent “phishing attempts”.** This is very important. A trend with cyber criminals is cloning instead of hacking. They hide their identity behind the name and sometimes ‘lifted’ picture of someone in your circle. For instance—you might get an email from a name that resembles or is identical to a board member, or USPS, or even Norton Security. However, if you hover your mouse over the sender's email address, it will uncover a mixture of strange numbers, letters, and symbols that are not related to the person or company it pretends to represent, or a strange spelling or misspelling.
6. **Most importantly, know that a board member will never email you to send them money, gift cards, or any other form of payment.** Assume any email you receive requesting money, account access, or anything you did not initiate is an attempt to defraud, and do not open it or any of its attachments.
7. **If you have any questions or doubts, call the person or company from the number you have on file—again, not the one in the email.** Taking that extra few seconds to verify the information is so much better than making a mistake online that can be both financially draining and time-consuming to straighten out later.

For more information, read the posted Cybersecurity Best Practices at the Department of Homeland Security. <https://www.cisa.gov/topics/cybersecurity-best-practices>.

If you believe you have been a victim of a cybercriminal, report the incident to the Department of Homeland Security at <https://www.dhs.gov>.

Here's to a Cyber-Safe and Prosperous 2025!



Leave Issues & Working In Other Offices



Asst. District Representative

Ralph Fernández

This month in the North Carolina RCA corner, with RCA Appreciation Week upon us I want to take this opportunity to thank all our RCAs for the hard work, sacrifices, and dedication you make to deliver the mail and provide excellent service to our customers daily.

I hope this article helps regarding a few issues I wanted to talk about, and one is requesting leave. RCAs now earn Annual leave per our current 2021 to 2024 contract. RCAs that earn leave will earn one hour of annual leave for every 20 hours worked. They can earn up to two hours per week. A leave replacement can earn up to four hours per pay period. That's dependent upon your work schedule. RCAs are entitled to annual leave provided there is sufficient leave replacement coverage in their office.

Another thing I wanted to talk about is leave submission. Requests for leave should be submitted to your supervisor or your postmaster per Article 10, Section 7. If management fails to return a leave slip to you within three business days, this will result in the request being automatically approved. **But** you have to make sure when you submit it that you actually hand it to a member of Management. They sign off in the section on the leave slip that says "*Signature of Supervisor and Date Notified*". That is your receipt and your three days will start the next business morning. If you don't get it signed when you turn it in, we will not be able to invoke the three day rule if they fail to respond. Simply placing the leave slip on your supervisor's desk does not constitute turning in a leave slip. **Get the signature!**

The other issue I would like to discuss regards RCAs traveling to other offices.

RCAs can be scheduled or borrowed to work in

another office. In Article 30.2.D.5 it states: "If a leave replacement is scheduled to case and carry a regular route in his or her assigned office, the leave replacement is considered unavailable to work in another office."

Some management is mandating regular carriers to work and then sending RCAs to other offices. This is an improper practice.

Leave slips must be given to Management, not just laid on the desk.

According to Article 8.5.B: "On the day the regular carrier works the relief day the assigned leave replacement may be required to work any route in the delivery unit consistent with the provisions of this Agreement."

As always if you are given the order, you should follow the instructions and initiate a grievance once you return to your office.

When RCAs travel to other offices for work they are compensated for the mileage and the time, minus the normal commute and time to their assigned office. This is done in E travel for the mileage and on the green card for the time.

So if it normally takes you 10 minutes to get to your office and 5 miles and the other office is 25 minutes away and 15 miles you would claim 15 minutes on the green card and 10 miles in E travel. If you're having any troubles getting paid with this, you need to contact your local steward and / or initiate a grievance.

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North Carolina District Representative

Cliff Workman

Hello to you all and Happy New Year.

I know all of you are glad to be out of Christmas and excited for the new year and new years resolutions.

Primarily, I want to express my sympathy for the loss of any carrier or individual and to their family and friends. These are circumstances we do not want to find anyone in. My thoughts and prayers go to you all. Take a moment of silence for those of us that have lost their lives this past year.

Since it is the New Year, how about a new year's *Safety Pledge* if you will.

What I would like to talk to you about is safety. Please, all of you remember it is your job to be safe. We have six things to do when we are getting in or out of our vehicle to deliver.

1. Check your surroundings,
2. Place the vehicle in park/drive,
3. Curb the wheels,
4. Set/release the hand/foot brake,
5. Remove/place the keys from/in the ignition,
6. Remove/buckle your seatbelt.

If the vehicle is in motion your lap belt must be worn. Are you in the parking lot at the office just moving your vehicle to the loading dock? If you are not delivering mail, then both your shoulder belt and lap belt must be on.

Well, who cares, management does not care unless they are in trouble for it. We care. The Union cares. Who do you think management will blame for not wearing a seat belt, or not turning the vehicle off or curbing the wheels properly? They will blame the carrier. They always do. Every accident or issue management looks at everything a carrier should have done, and places blame on the carrier whenever possible. Please keep this in mind.

You. You are the one responsible for your own safety and following the safety rules. If you have questions on working rules for rural carriers, then read the manual in your offices.

All offices should have a PO-603 in the office. This is the Rural Carrier Duties and Responsibilities Manual. If you do not have one, ask management for a copy. If they do not have one, then they need to order them. If they refuse to order them then file a grievance. This is a manual and management should have a copy of all manuals in the office.

Safety is in Article 14 of the National Agreement.

Remember that management should not be telling you to do something unsafe. This is the time you can choose to ignore a direct order.

An average person of average intelligence must be able to look at the situation and determine that it is an unsafe situation. If that is the case, then this is when a direct order from a manager could be ignored.

Please be prepared to explain why you feel it is unsafe. If you are out delivering in the dark at 7:00 PM they are not going to consider this as an unsafe practice to deliver in the dark.

Delivering more than 12 hours for a leave replacement is not proper and should not be done unless the leave replacement chooses to work more than 12 hours. This information can be found in the Employee Labor Manual or ELM in section 432.32 for the twelve-hour language.

If you are a member, you can also look on the NRLCA.ORG website which has a ton of information including RRECS guidelines, contractual guidelines, all the manuals used by the parties, and the same information your stewards use to process grievances.

You have access to all of it except for a small portion that is for stewards only. Go to the Departments tab from your computer, then click on Steward Operations, then click on steward reference guide. You can look up anything a steward can. If you want to look up leave search for L, then go to leave. If you are on the app on your phone there should be a spot on the bottom of the main page where you can

(Continued on page 16)

click on SRG. That stands for Steward Reference Guide. The topics can be clicked on and read at your convenience from there.

Need a copy of the contract? Go to the same website and click on the picture of the contract. It will download a copy right there on your phone. Stewards use this manual every day, the same as me. It is a great tool to learn information and there is additional information on safety.

If a Manager/Supervisor is telling you to do things that are unsafe then a grievance should be initiated and a 1767 should also be filed and turned into management or the safety office.

Management should have the 1767 forms up in the office on the safety board for anyone to fill out. If they do not have them, they are in violation of the Department of Labor rules and regulations, and a step 1 grievance discussion should be initiated to resolve the issue and an 8191, grievance form, should be annotated by the direct Supervisor/Manager if the issue is not resolved per Article 15 of the National Agreement.

Thank you all for your attention to these matters. No one wants to deliver sad news that your loved one did not make it back home. Safety depends on you. Let us all go home the same way we went to work.

Thank you all again, Happy New Year.



Secretary/Treasurer

Vicki Gray

Do You Belong?

Are you a member of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association? I hope you are. If not, I hope the information in this issue will help to convince you of the values of membership.

On the next page is a list of several reasons from the National Office of the benefits of belonging to the NRLCA.

In my opinion, the number one reason for membership in the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA) is that it is the best way to stay properly informed. You need to know your rights and be aware of any and all changes within our craft. The NRLCA provides this information to members and notifies you of any changes impacting your job as soon as possible. We sure have had a lot of changes this past year. There will be more to come too. Becoming a member ensures that you have the latest information regarding any changes in postal policies or procedures that impact rural carriers.

Management loves an uninformed carrier. Not knowing your rights, actual work rules, or what you are entitled to can hurt you! Being a member gives you access to information about your employment rights as a rural carrier, which is crucial for navigating workplace issues and ensuring fair treatment.

Also, you must be a member to have a voice in the craft. Only members can vote for their local union steward, delegates, or on the contract for working carriers. By joining the NRLCA, you become part of a collective voice that advocates for your interests and concerns regarding working conditions and contract negotiations.

Members, I hope you share this information with your co-workers. Non-members, I hope you consider becoming a member. A dues withholding form (PS 1187) is on page 18. Dues are currently \$10.77 per pay period for RCAs and ARCs and \$32.27 per pay period for PTFs and regular carriers. I believe the benefits our members receive are worth the small cost of our membership dues.

North Carolina currently has **2406 non-members** in our craft. There are 1037 regular carriers, 66 PTFs, 866 RCAs and 437 ARCs that are **not members** of the union.

I want to remind you that our National Office still has the Recruit A Friend Today (RAFT) incentive program. You will receive \$15 for each RCA or ARC that you recruit and \$50 for each regular carrier or PTF. You just have to fill in the recruiter information on the bottom corner of the 1187 form. The new member can also be the recruiter and receive this RAFT incentive.

WHY IT PAYS TO BELONG TO THE NRLCA

1. The National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA) has an effective legislative program in the Congress to promote and protect the interests of rural carriers.
2. NRLCA holds exclusive recognition to represent the rural carrier craft with the U.S. Postal Service.
3. NRLCA negotiates all labor agreements for the rural carrier craft with the USPS, including wages, benefits and working conditions.
4. Only the NRLCA can represent members of the rural carrier craft in the grievance procedure, including providing protection in disciplinary actions.
5. NRLCA has an excellent health insurance program; The Rural Carrier Benefit Plan which includes a prescription drug benefit program for Regular rural carriers, Part-Time Flexible carriers (PTF carriers), Retired members, and qualified Leave Replacements.
6. NRLCA offers, other than the health programs, some additional insurance programs: Dental (available to all members); Vision (available to all members); Life (for Regular and PTF carriers only); Long Term Disability (for Regular and PTF carriers only).
7. NRLCA also offers the Rural Carrier Auto Insurance Plan and the Homeowners' Insurance Plan (Note: Check State Availability).
8. NRLCA provides a monthly publication, The National Rural Letter Carrier, to keep its members informed on postal and legislative matters of vital interest.
9. NRLCA provides information and fellowship for its members at county, district, state, and national business meetings and at informational meetings where all members may participate in the democratic process of developing NRLCA policy.
10. NRLCA provides an official website for its members at www.nrlca.org. It includes accurate, up-to-date information that affects your job, your wages, and the changing environment of the postal service. Only NRLCA Members can access the full website.
11. Because of the union, no rural carrier can be involuntarily reassigned to another craft or job in the postal service. More importantly, because of this union, no employee from another craft can be assigned into the rural craft. We are protected from that by the contract that was negotiated by the NRLCA.
12. Without the union, any one of us could be subject to lay-off. There would be no consideration of seniority or re-bidding the routes when an encumbered route was eliminated. If your route was gone - you would be, too.
13. Without the union, any one of us could be reassigned to another craft or job anywhere in the Postal Service and displaced employees from other crafts could be reassigned as rural carriers, taking future jobs away from our own RCAs.
14. Only members of the NRLCA are allowed to vote on officers of the union or hold office in the union.
15. Only members of the NRLCA can become union stewards.
16. Only active craft members of the NRLCA can vote on proposed new contracts with the USPS.
17. Only members of the NRLCA have access to union-provided assistance with Workers' Compensation claims.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
AUTHORIZATION FOR DEDUCTION OF DUES

RURAL CARRIER CLASSIFICATION			
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular	<input type="checkbox"/> PTF	<input type="checkbox"/> Relief	<input type="checkbox"/> ARC

_____ (SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER)		_____ (USPS EMPLOYEE I.D. NUMBER)	
_____ LASTNAME		_____ FIRSTNAME	_____ MI
_____ MAILING ADDRESS – INCLUDING APT# IF APPLICABLE		_____ CITY	_____ STATE
		_____ ZIP CODE +4	
_____ POSTAL INSTALLATION WHERE EMPLOYED		_____ ZIP CODE OF INSTALLATION	_____ INSTALLATION FINANCE NO.

SECTION A - AUTHORIZATION BY EMPLOYEE

I hereby assign to the **National Rural Letter Carriers' Association**, from any salary or wages earned or to be earned by me as your employee (in my present or any future employment by you) such regular and periodic membership dues as the union may certify as due and owing from me, as may be established from time to time by said Union. I authorize and direct you to deduct such amounts from my pay and to remit same to said Union at such times and in such manner as may be agreed upon between you and the Union at any time while this authorization is in effect.

This assignment, authorization and direction shall be irrevocable for a period of one (1) year from the date of delivery hereof to you, and I agree and direct that this assignment, authorization and direction shall be automatically renewed, and shall be irrevocable for successive periods of one (1) year, unless written notice is given by me to you and the Union not more than twenty (20) days and not less than ten (10) days prior to the expiration of each period of one year.

This assignment is freely made pursuant to the provisions of the Postal Reorganization Act and is not contingent upon the existence of any agreement between you and my Union.

Contributions or gifts (including dues) to the NRLCA are not tax deductible as charitable contributions. However, they may be tax deductible under other provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.

_____ EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE	_____ DATE	_____ PHONE	_____ EMAIL ADDRESS
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SECTION B- FOR USE BY STATE ASSOCIATION

R - NATIONAL RURAL LETTER CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION

SIGNATURE OF ACCEPTING UNION OFFICIAL

DATE

I hereby certify that the dues of this organization for the above-named member, for the applicable designation, are currently established at \$_____ per pay period.

LOC #	STATE
	NC
DATE	REMIT #

Vicki Gray

_____, STATE SECRETARY

SECTION C- FOR USE BY NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Date of Delivery to Employer (For National Office use)

ANNIVERSARY DATE TO BE USED AT USPS PERSONNEL OFFICE

Send to: Vicki Gray
NCRLCA Secretary Treasurer
424 Wapiti Drive
Spring Lake, NC 28390

Recruiter EID:
Name:
Address:

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VICE PRESIDENT

EASTON SMITH

SECRETARY/TREASURER

NATHALIE WARREN

CHAPLAIN

TRENTON GREER

A Program of Love 2024 – 2025

Auxiliary News

From
Linwood Smith
Committeeman

National Auxiliary President, Lesa Routh-Halcomb's project for 2024-2025 is "A Program of Love." She has chosen the Humanitarian Project: "The Cure Starts Now" with skin cancer awareness as a focus.

Overexposure to ultraviolet rays causes most cases of melanoma, the deadliest kind of skin cancer. To lower your skin cancer risk, protect your skin from the sun and avoid indoor tanning.

Vitamin D we get from sun keeps our bones healthy, but can cause a lot of damage to our skin. Performing your own checking of your skin is very crucial, but even better is to schedule a professional skin cancer screening annually.

Practice sun safety by staying in the shade. When possible wear clothing that covers your arms and legs. Wear a hat with a wide brim to shade your face, head, ears, and neck. Wear sunglasses that wrap around to block both UVA and UVB rays and use sunscreen with sun protection factor of 15 or higher and reapply every two hours.

Easy to Remember the 5 S's for Sun Safety

- ☀ **Slip** on a T-Shirt.
- ☀ **Slop** on sunscreen with a 15+ sun protective factor.
- ☀ **Slap** on a wide brimmed hat.
- ☀ **Slide** on some quality sunglasses.
- ☀ **Shade** from the sun whenever possible.



THE CURE STARTS NOW®

It would have been difficult for you to have been a resident of North Carolina and not have witnessed "A Program of Love" in our state this fall after the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene.

An out pouring of Love has been shown by so many people in so many ways due to the catastrophic flooding, mudslides, loss of lives and homes by so many friends and neighbors. We continue to lift all friends, family, neighbors and love ones in our prayers as the long journey continues for years to come for North Carolina.

Reminder: National Scholarships are due by March 1, 2025.



NCRLCA
424 WAPITI DR
SPRING LAKE NC 28390-1562

TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 387
FAYETTEVILLE NC
28302

Address Service Requested

What Difference Does A Union Make?

Union

1. Wages, benefits and working conditions are protected by a legal contract.
2. A contract spells out how much each worker earns.
3. Unions negotiate raises for every one. Members vote on it, and if they feel it's an unfair, they can vote it down.
4. If you are unfairly disciplined, unions provide due process to protect against unscrupulous supervisors.
5. If you don't like something at work you can work together with your union to change it.

Non-Union

1. Management can change wages, benefits and working conditions unilaterally.
2. No one knows how much anyone else earns. Disparate treatment/favoritism exists.
3. If you want a raise you must plead your case to a supervisor or manager.
4. If you are unfairly disciplined, you are on your own (at-will employee). You're subject solely to policy.
5. If you don't like something at work, you are at the mercy of management.