

*The Official Newsletter of
NJ Merged Branch 38, NALC*



THE SENTINEL

April 2020

THANK YOU!!!



President

by Mike O'Neill

Words cannot adequately express the sincere gratitude I hold for every letter carrier standing on the front line of this battle with COVID-19. As America's grocery store workers, pharmacists, and food delivery people join our health care providers, first responders and military as heroes during these most challenging of times, letter carriers stand proudly in their equally important service to our customers. You not only deliver medicine, insulin, checks, and products necessary for daily living to our friends and customers depending on us every day, you also deliver a sense of normalcy during these most abnormal of times. You each have my admiration and thanks, and the thanks of the American public.

I would also like to extend my sympathy and condolences to any of our members who have lost a family member or friend to this terrible virus. We mourn together for the loss of everyone close to our hearts, and pray that they rest in peace.

To those of you who have fought through the symptoms of the coronavirus and suffered the unnatural effects of being quaran-

ned, we wish the best of health to you and your families in your recovery. Our thoughts are also with those of you who have faced economic challenges resulting from the loss of businesses and jobs. Fortunately, as employees of the Postal Service, we continue to be able to work and bring home a pay check. Many of our families, however, rely upon two sources of income, and have felt the pain of the loss of that extra check.

The NALC and the Postal Service, at every level, are working together to protect you, serve our customers, and secure the future of the Postal Service. At our level, we participate in teleconferences with National Business Agent Cirelli and both the South Jersey District and the Northern New Jersey District. We are exchanging emails and phone calls all day, every day.

At the national level, NALC and USPS have reached agree-ment on several issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Printed on the following pages are summaries of these agreements, which deal directly with the safety and health of letter carriers, and new policies regarding leave. The MOU's can all be found on the NALC web site (nalc.org), along with much additional important information regarding the coronavirus and USPS.

Comprehensive and accurate information is an important tool as we work our way through these trying times. I encourage you to take advantage of the information on the NALC web site. You will find written statements and podcasts from President Rolando and our national officers, all of the memorandums of understanding (MOU's) relative to the pandemic, all of the mandatory stand-up talks relative to the pandemic, and much more.

Thank you again for your dedicated service to the American people. No one can say for sure when this will end, but it will end, and we will get through it together.

NEW JERSEY MERGED BRANCH 38

National Association of Letter Carriers

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Joseph S. Rutkoski III	Treasurer
Mark McGrady	Director of City Delivery
Christine A. Strasser	Financial Secretary
Pete Bednarz	Full-Time Area Rep
Roy Jancio	Sergeant-At-Arms
Ron Villegas	Director of Retirees

BRANCH 38 TRUSTEES

Keith Hemmings	Richard O'Connell Jr.
Joseph Otero	Armando Pedreira
	Dominic Walton

PART TIME AREA REPRESENTATIVES

Clint Colie	Roy Jancio
Joe Otero	Armando Pedreira
Dominic Walton	Joseph Zammito

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BRANCH 38 ATTORNEY

Donald Millman, Esq. 973-669-9776

MUTUAL BENEFIT REPRESENTATIVE

Tamara Humphrey 973-444-5128

DATES TO REMEMBER

BRANCH MEETINGS

June 3, 2020

SPECIAL EVENTS

Shamrocks for MDA
January-March, 2020

Retiree Luncheon
To Be Rescheduled

NALC Food Drive
To Be Rescheduled

MDA Day at the Races
July 26, 2020
Tentative Date

Scholarship Night
June 3, 2020

**NJ Merged Branch 38
Web Site**

<http://www.branch38nalc.com/>

Sick Leave for Dependent Care for Child Care

M-01910 – March 18, 2020 – NALC and the Postal Service have agreed to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) allowing a temporary expansion of sick leave for dependent care due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For 60 days beginning March 18, 2020, employees may use sick leave for dependent care in the event they must care for a child as a result of daycare closures, school (Pre-K through Grade 12) closures, or the unavailability of a child's primary caregiver as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The MOU does not change the 80-hour-limit for this category of leave that may be used in any leave year. The parties will revisit this issue immediately prior to this MOU's expiration on May 17, 2020, to determine if an extension is appropriate.

Additional 80 Hours Paid Leave for CCA's

M-01911 – March 18, 2020 - NALC and the Postal Service have agreed to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) providing temporary additional paid leave for City Carrier Assistants (CCAs) affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. For 60 days beginning March 18, 2020, CCAs will be permitted to use up to 80 hours of paid leave for use in certain circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Leave used for the purposes described in detail in the MOU will be coded as TACS Code 086, Other Paid Leave. The parties will revisit this issue immediately prior to this MOU's expiration on May 17, 2020, to determine if an extension is appropriate.

Instituting the Use of the 7:01 Rule

M-01913 – March 23, 2020 – NALC and the Postal Service have agreed to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) instituting the use of Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) Section 432.53, City Letter Carriers (7:01 Rule). A city letter carrier who actually works more than 7 hours but less than 8 hours of a regular scheduled day will, upon his/her request, be officially excused from the completion of the 8-hour tour and still credited with 8 hours of work time for pay purposes. Any hours not worked between the seventh and eighth hour of a regular scheduled day pursuant to ELM 432.53 are included in an employee's regular rate of pay pursuant to ELM 443.212.g. The agreement lasts for 60 days beginning March 23, 2020, however the parties will revisit this issue immediately prior to its expiration to determine if an extension is appropriate.

USPS Letter Regarding Liberal Leave Policy

M-01914 – March 23, 2020 – Letter from Postal Service Vice President, Labor Relations Doug Tulino to the management in the field regarding recent agreements, leave policy and approval of requests for changes of schedule due to childcare needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Social Distancing; Loaning of CCA's; Workfloor Changes; Staggered Start Times; Office Breaks; etc

M-01915 – March 30, 2020 – NALC and the Postal Service have agreed to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) implementing temporary workplace changes to promote social distancing amongst city letter carriers. The MOU commits the parties to limiting individuals to working in their employing facilities to the ex-

tent possible. The MOU also directs the local parties to immediately discuss potential scheduling and office setup changes such as staggered start times, scheduling letter carriers to begin tours in groups of 10 or less, the manner in which stand-up talks are given, break locations and times, etc. The agreement expires on May 27, 2020, however the parties will revisit this issue immediately prior to that date to determine if an extension is appropriate.

Family First Coronavirus Response Act Emergency Sick Leave & FMLA Expansion

Effective April 1, 2020, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) provides employees with two additional types of leave. These new leave entitlements are in addition to leave you are already entitled to under the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) and any applicable Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs).

As a postal employee, you have certain rights under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act recently signed into law. These provisions will apply from April 1, 2020, through the end of the year.

Emergency Sick Leave (up to 80 hours)

Employees are eligible to use up to 80 hours of emergency paid sick leave based on average number of hours worked in a 2-week period. This leave is available to both career and non-career employees regardless of tenure. The reasons for which an employee may use Emergency Sick Leave include:

- To comply with a Federal, State or local quarantine order related to COVID 19, or to care for someone who is;
- To self-quarantine based on a health care provider's advice, or care for someone who has been advised to self-quarantine, related to COVID-19;
- To seek medical care related to symptoms of COVID-19 symptoms and obtain a medical diagnosis;
- To care for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19 related reasons).

There are pay rate limitations associated with this leave type; please go to Blue or Light Blue to get more details.

Family Medical Leave Act Expansion

Employees may also use Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to care for children under 18 whose school or place of care is closed due to COVID-19. This entitlement is available to career and non-career employees after 30 days of employment.

- As with other qualifying reasons, an employee who is eligible for this type of leave can take up to 12 weeks of FMLA protected leave in a calendar year. If an employee has already exhausted all 12 weeks for a different qualifying reason, no additional FMLA leave is provided under this Act.
- The first 2 weeks of this leave are unpaid, unless an employee chooses to substitute other types of paid leave.
- The following 10 weeks will be paid leave at 2/3 of an employee's normal pay, but in no event more than \$200 a day, or \$10,000 in the aggregate.

Both leave entitlement types can be used sequentially to avoid 2 weeks of unpaid leave if employees elect to do so.

THE SENTINEL
NJ Merged Branch 38, NALC
374 Morris Avenue
Springfield, NJ 07081

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Branch Meeting Information & Directions

Meetings are held at 7:30 PM on the first Wednesday of each month, except July & August.

The Branch Meetings are held at:

ELKS BPO LODGE #2116
665 RAHWAY AVENUE
WOODBIDGE, NJ 07095
732-634-2116

Directions:

SOUTH on Garden State Parkway. Take Exit #129 to Route 9 North to Woodbridge Exit (Just after the Forge Restaurant on your right). At the end of the Exit Ramp, turn right onto Main Street (Route 514) and proceed until you reach a monument at City Hall. Bear left onto Rahway Avenue. The Elks is @1/2 mile down the road on your left.

NORTH on Garden State Parkway. Take Exit #127 to Route 9 North and follow directions above.

NJ Turnpike. Take Exit 12 (Carteret). Bear right after toll booth and turn left at light after overpass. Proceed through industrial park to Rahway Avenue and turn left. The Elks is 1 mile ahead on your right.