

# Pavement Pounder



January 2023

Publication 2023.01

Airport - Alta Canyon - Bountiful - Cottonwood - Downtown - Dug way - Foothill - Heber - Holladay - Kearns - Lehi - Magna

## BRANCH 111 N.A.L.C. “THE WASATCH BRANCH”

Midvale - Millcreek - Murray - Northwest - Orem - Sandy - South Salt Lake - Sugarhouse - Tooele - West Jordan - West Valley

There was not a December issuer of the Pavement Pounder.

### Oh Boy!

Another peak season is behind us, and aside from the long hours due to understaffing and a couple storms, the feeling for most is that it went ok. Certainly we have had heavier years. Peak season requires tremendous sacrifice from letter carriers in order to get the job done. It comes with the territory, it is what we do and we accept that burden, but thanks are still in order – so thank you. Thank you CCA’s who carry a lot of that burden. Thanks to the ODL, some of whom worked 100 hour weeks. Thank you to all the carriers that made it happen this year and thank you to your families who also accept what it means to have a letter carrier in the family.

The new year is a time when goals are being set and resolutions are being made. I challenge you to make some work related resolutions. Over the last few years I have seen some behaviors that honestly shock me. No one carries mail perfectly and we all get into bad habits sometimes, but if you are consciously cutting corners or working unsafely there is no better time than right now to make changes. Take pride in the service you provide to the customers on your routes. Think hard about what it really means for all of us to stay beloved by the community. If it feels like I am talking directly to you, maybe I am. This is not a race, you do not get a special prize at the end of the day

because you triple cased and carried a route and a half. I have been doing this a long time and when carriers claim they can handle that kind of workload and still do the job correctly and safely, they are lying to you. Please, stop working unsafely. Stop wishing that we didn't have Amazon or those extra coverages. Welcome them, in fact try and generate more business, more packages, more coverages. Your future depends on it. Stop driving on sidewalks, stop skipping blocked boxes. Believe it or not we are a delivery service. If you have apartments that have circumstances where you don't have enough parcel lockers, take each and every package to their door. Yes, even on the third floor. Stop leaving parcels by the mail boxes or just sitting in the mail room. Let FedEx and Amazon be the lazy ones. People notice that the packages that are cared for are the ones from the USPS. Go to the door when a signature is required, make sure forwards are being taken care of. Get to know the businesses on your route and when a package comes along that is missing a suite number, do your very best to get that package delivered. We have to change the way w Wow, that was quite a rant but I know so many of you know exactly what I am talking about. We are not perfect, especially me, but please consider what I am saying. Maybe you won't be able to take that 3 hour piece at the end of the day and maybe estimates will have to be adjusted but this job was not intended to be done at lighting speed. Your body will thank me later.

Wow, that was quite a rant but I know so many of you know exactly what I am talking about. We are not perfect, especially me, but please consider what I am saying. Maybe you won't be able to take that 3 hour piece at the end of the day and maybe estimates will have to be adjusted but this job was not intended to be done at lighting speed. Your body will thank me later.

In Solidarity, Mike Hansen, Executive Vice President, NALC Branch 111

Health Benefits, Jim Kerekes

It's been mentioned this past Holiday has been a hard one, more so than previous years. The understaffing has you putting in more work hours. Our health and money don't always go together well. But thanks to all of you for your service. A service of good reward to you and the people who live in this country.

Now to the current Health information coming upon us. The new Postal Service Health Benefit Program is moving forward. OPM has the main responsibility to enact it according to the law. The law as you know is the Postal Reform Act passed April 6, 2022. OPM, POSTMASTER GENERAL and other associated entities will be involved in implementing it.

Presently I understand the new program will be under the FEHB Program. But that the new Postal Only Plans will be for postal employees and postal annuitants only. Many of you may already know that. Not sure what will be shared with us about this new program in our current 2023 year. But the year 2024

## Wounded Warrior Leave and PACT act By Jimmy Fleming

Since this is my first time writing an article for the Pavement Pounder, I will introduce myself to everyone. My name is Jimmy Fleming and I am the Branch 111 Veterans Affairs Officer. I served our country from 2000 to 2007. I started at the Post Office in 2007 shortly after my military service. It is my job to help Letter Carriers whom are Veterans of military service with questions they might have within the Post Office. So far, my work as a Union officer has been slow. However, I highly encourage people to reach out to me with questions. You can email me anytime at [veteransaffairs@branch111.com](mailto:veteransaffairs@branch111.com).

During our branch meeting in December 2022, a question was asked about Wounded Warrior Leave and also a question on the “Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022” (aka the PACT Act).

Let me start with the first question about Wounded Warrior Leave. This act was signed into law in 2015. It provides federal employees with service-connected disabilities additional leave to attend medical exams or treatment related to their disability. This leave is separate from annual and sick leave. The leave is categorized as Wounded Warrior Leave. The amount of leave allowed is up to 104 hours annually and it does not carrier over (use it or lose it). Every in January, the amount is renewed to the 104 hours to use for that fiscal year (every year as long as your rating doesn’t drop below 30%).

To be eligible for WWL, you must have a combined disability rating of at least 30 percent or more and have submitted the required documentation to HR Shared Service Center. If you want to qualify for WWL, you need to send a copy of your VA disability rating letter AND your DD Form 214 to HR so they can verify your percentage from the VA.

Once you are certified to use Wounded Warrior Leave, you *“are required to request this leave in advance when possible by completing and submitting a PS Form 3971 to your supervisor. You should designate the reason as “Other” on the 3971 and in the space provided write in Wounded Warrior Leave”*. With that being said, this leave can also be used for unforeseeable medical needs for the service-connected disability.

It is very important to note, when receiving treatment using WWL, **you have to provide proof that the treatment (and the leave) was used for the service-connected disability!** The Post Office uses PS Form 5980 “Treatment Verification for Wounded Warrior Leave” to simplify the documentation. Print this form and take it with you every time you use Wounded Warrior Leave. It is your proof of treatment and the only way to have our leave approved under the Wounded Warrior Leave category.

To submit your documentation to HR Shared Service Center, use the information below or you can email the documents (VA rating letter and DD Form 214) to [thz1g0@usps.gov](mailto:thz1g0@usps.gov).

Career Employees	Non-Career Employees
By Mail: USPS/HRSCC Attn: RTR Team PO Box 970100 Greensboro, NC 27497-0100	By Mail: USPS/HRSCC Attn: Form 50 Team PO Box 970400 Greensboro, NC 27497-0400
By Fax: (650) 577-4324	By Fax: (336) 662-4070 or (336) 662-4073

Moving on to the next question about the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022 (PACT act). This is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances. The PACT act added presumptions of service connection for more than 20 new conditions! It also makes it easier to get earned benefits by reducing the evidence necessary for the VA to find that a condition was caused by burn pits or other toxic exposures.

To qualify for added disability rating under the PACT act, I recommend requesting a disability increase through the VA. In my experience, the VA is very slow in this process. I have used outside organizations to push my paperwork through the VA faster. My personal recommendation is Disabled American Veterans (DAV). They are wonderful at assisting Veterans receiving the benefits they have earned. There is a local office here in Salt Lake and they do welcome walk-ins.

In closing, I look forward to meeting with more of you in the future. If you have any other questions on veterans benefits in regards to the Post Office, please email me at [veteransaffairs@branch111.com](mailto:veteransaffairs@branch111.com). If I don’t know the answer, I promise you I will find the answer.

## NALC BRANCH 111

Minutes of the Regular Union Meeting : January 12, 2023 : Convened at 6: pm

The meeting was also broadcast over Zoom for those unable to attend in person.

Conducting: Mike Hansen, Executive Vice President

Pledge of Allegiance conducted by Mike Simonsen

Moment of Silence for Danny Giles who passed away.

Roll Call by Steve McNees

Minutes of the Dec. 2022 union meeting were posted. Without objection, they will be filed for future reference.

Reading of the Communications – Steve McNees

- We received \$9,485.90 from the Utah Labor Center Owners Assoc. from the sale of property east of the labor center.
- Gerald Maxfield's string was changed with his agreement. • We received the official 2022 summary of votes for National Officers. • We received acknowledgement from the MDA, for 3 donations totalling \$7,624 for 2022.
- We received Holiday/Christmas Cards from the MDA, the Coby family, our National Officers, Jodi Miller (Monarch Dental), Utah State AFL-CIO officers and staff, and the Ironworkers Local 27 officers and staff.

Application for Membership by Mike Hansen

- Allyssa Monserret, Rolando Jones, Brenda Groesbeck, Johnny Hackford, Zachariah Straw, Austin Swensen, Antwain Stutson, Joseph Davis, Steven Komperda, Alison Steele, Peyton Nicholas, Grace Ghazaleh, Adreean Capulet.
- Jude Eaton was sworn in as a new member.

Special Guest Speaker: John Beaumont (NALC Legislative and Political Organizer)

We have a new congress but that is nothing to worry about because a lot of good work was started in the last congress to protect our rights and move on as letter carriers. We have support for our issues from both sides of Congress. They are working hard to get the Windfall Elimination provision passed within the next 2-4 years. • Health Benefits are changing with the inclusion of Medicare. We will work to see that no FHB benefits are lost in the process. Veterans' health benefits are through the FHB also and we are working to protect and increase their benefits also.

We need to protect the benefits we have. We protect our benefits through legislation. We treat every single letter carrier equally by protecting their benefits. This is done, not by dues, but through legislation. They are working on a bill to allow non-career time to be included in retirement calculations (affects 60% of our membership).

Sign up to give to the LCPF to protect our rights and futures. • We are one of only 4 unions in the nation that still has a COLA. It is ours through legislation.

LETTER CARRIER POLITICAL FUND (LCPF) by Josh Thibodeau – not present

MDA COORDINATOR by Jeremy Bailey – No report.

DIRECTOR OF VETERAN AFFAIRS - Jimmy Fleming

- He will have a couple of articles in the next Pavement Pounder.

LEGISLATIVE by Chad Mortensen

- Senator Karen Mayne has relinquished her seat in the senate. She will be missed. Her possible replacements have been endorsed by the AFL-CIO. • Chad is focusing with labor caucuses to improve our retirement benefits for transitional type employees and for other federal workers (like the IRS). You can help by donating to LCPF.

TRUSTEES by Chad Mortensen

- They met Tuesday and finished up all of 2022. Everything was found and looked good.
- One issue is how to account for MDA money that is coming in. Money going out is handled properly.

MBA, COMPENSATION by Bob Jewell

- On Jan. 27 th , COVID rules are changing. FICA Covid cases will be handled differently. The ARPA program made it easy to be covered. This ends on Jan. 27 th . • Those diagnosed with Covid after the 27 th will have to file CA-2 rather than a CA-1 (will not be used anymore). This is because there is no clear, identifiable incident(s), over a single day or work shift, to which an injured worker can specifically attribute the alleged incident/events that caused their Covid-19. To file a Compensation claim (CA-1) you will have to file within time limits (within 3 years usually), be a federal employee, provide medical evidence of diagnosis of Covid-19, show it happened in the course of duty, and show a relationship between your Covid and work. It will be very hard to get a doctor to certify that you got covid in the line of duty.

## HEALTH BENEFITS by Jim Kerekes

- A new postal health benefits overview is being sent out to retirees.
- The Postal Service Health Benefits Program will become effective in 2025.

## ORGANIZER by Justin Lindquist – not present

## SAFETY AND HEALTH by Justin Lindquist – not present

## DIRECTOR OF RETIREES by Jeff Asay

- The retiree's annual budget comes from retiree dues only. Usually, there is around \$8,000 in the budget each year (from retirees) which is used for retiree activities during the year.
- 2023 Calendar: Retiree Dinner the end of April. The Steak Fry (no date yet). Retirees' tickets will be paid for out of the retiree fund. Retiree drawings are paid out of the retiree fund only.

## TREASURER by Mike Madsen –

- Copies of the newly proposed budget were made available tonight. The budget is not complete (costs for some classes and trainings haven't been announced yet) but will be discussed and voted on next month.
- December's income was \$27,987. We spent \$11,185 more than we brought in last month.
- We have about \$260,000 in savings.

## VICE PRESIDENT by Amie Gallo – excused

## EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT by Mike Hansen

- About 2,400 grievances were filed in 2022.
- Leave for this year is credited on Jan. 14 th .
- There was a lot of discipline for attendance. Carriers working extended hours/days, with bad working conditions, and no leave caused an increase in sick leave use. This has created a lot of grievances to be filed.

## PRESIDENT by Mike Wahlquist • Excused

## SPECIAL ORDERS:

- A Proposed Bylaws Change was Read (discussion and vote next month): Article 4, Section 8 will add: The Vice President shall work in the Branch 111 Office two days each month during the normal operating hours of Branch 111. Article 8, Section 7.B will be replaced with: The Vice President shall receive a monthly salary of 40 hours at NALC City Carrier Grade 2, Step O, Carrier Technician rate.
- A Proposed Bylaw Change was voted on: That we strike all language in the Bylaws that currently says "Step O" and replace each such citation with the language "Step P". The motion passed.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS: none

## NEW BUSINESS: none

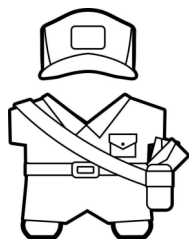
## GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:

We currently have a new bylaws committee to review and suggest changes to improve the language in our bylaws. Let Jeff Asay know if you have anything to add, change, or just make suggestions. You may attend their meeting next Thursday at 6:30pm. The bylaws are on our website (branch111.com) under Member Resources.

## FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SERVICE: none

## DRAW AND ADJOURN – 7:37 pm

- ☐ \$25 drawing winners were Aaron Johnson and Mike Madsen
- ☐ RETIREES – \$25 (Chad Fenwick was not present). Next month it will be \$50
- ☐ PROGRESSIVE A - \$425 (Cheryl Madill was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$450
- ☐ PROGRESSIVE B - \$325 (Christian Gomez was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$350



## Uniforms Needed!

Please bring any uniforms you may have that you'd be willing to donate.

We accept any uniforms in new or used condition, but please none in bad condition.

Continued for page 3

will be a time to do what they let us know that we have to do. That you won't want to miss doing.

I hope that our health plan will have an in person seminar this year. If so, I will be asking for answers to a lot of things if they don't bring them up for our understanding.

Will try to talk to people who signed up for the NALC HIGH OPTION- AETNA MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLAN. The next 6 months, I'll try and find out how its going with them. Try to find out what the "KINKKS" are and if it is easier to understand it's function.

Have had a lot of calls this year. If any have called and I haven't responded it's because I haven't remembered your number. Please Text me or voice message to tell me who you are.

Choose things to keep your stress levels down, take breathing exercises. THANKS.

NALC BRANCH 111 : Minutes of the Regular Union Meeting : December 8, 2022 : Convened at 6:34 pm

The meeting was also broadcast over Zoom for those unable to attend in person.

Pledge of Allegiance conducted by Mike Simonsen

Moment of Silence for Melvin Frank Spilker (6/18/2021), Harry Weir (10/7/2021), Ronald Van Ry (11/27/22), Closs

Stewart (2/10/2019), and Thomas Hamilton (10/16/2020) who have passed away. Frank Saltzgiver

Roll Call by Steve McNees : Minutes of the Nov. 2022 union meeting were posted. Without objection, they will be filed for future reference.

Reading of the Communications – Steve McNees : • We submitted donations from the Steak Fry, Labor Day Picnic, and the Bowl-a-Thon to the MDA for a total of \$7,674. • Four branch officers and stewards' requests to attend Advanced Formal A and Beyond Training in Maryland were denied because the classes were full. ::Application for Membership by Mike Hansen • none

LETTER CARRIER POLITICAL FUND by Josh Thibodeau – excused working : MDA COORDINATOR by Jeremy Bailey

• We have raised over \$9,000 this year. Jeremy will donate the rest of his budget to MDA to put us above \$11,000 donated this year. This is the largest amount our branch has ever donated to MDA in a year.

DIRECTOR OF VETERAN AFFAIRS - Jimmy Fleming

• He has veteran patches for any veteran wishing to have one. You can contact him at veteransaffairs@branch111.com to request one. • The Wounded Warrior Program has additional/increased compensation available to some. Contact Jimmy for more information.

LEGISLATIVE by Chad Mortensen

•The railroad workers are getting hosed by congress much like letter carriers in 1970. Dec 13 th at 11:30am a rally will be held on Capitol Hill (top of State St.) to support railroad workers. Also write congressmen and legislators (Utah's are not supporting them) to support their cause.

• We fought and got 6-day delivery, funding & pre-funding. Now CCAs and casuals need to get retirement credit for all time worked. The Federal Retirement Fairness Act (HR 4268 - will probably change numbers next year) will accomplish this. Chad will lobby next year, especially at Hill AFB and the IRS. Phil Rodriguez is working with 7 other states. They need us (retired and active carriers) to speak up about the years they were not able to buy back their time.

TRUSTEES by Chad Mortensen

• The trustees met Tuesday and went through 3 months of books. There were a few issues (couple of checks without warrants and a debit card disbursement in the wrong folder). Thanked everyone for doing a good job of recording all info on their expense reports. The branch is doing well financially.

MBA, COMPENSATION by Bob Jewell

• Bob is busy which isn't good because that means carriers are getting hurt. Make sure you get everyone to register now with the Dept of Labor (<https://owcp.dol.gov/>) so they are prepared to fill out the CA-1 on their phone even while still on their route. • Please be safe.

HEALTH BENEFITS by Jim Kerekes

• Monday is the deadline to change insurance plans. For retirees: The new NALC High Option - Etna Medicare Advantage plan (PPO CO4 CSA plan - extended service area plan). You have to have Medicare parts A & B first. You get a new Medicare card when you sign up. You have to call every doctor or hospital billing department to make sure they will bill Etna. They also must accept Medicare. The billing dept. has to follow the instructions on the back of your new Medicare card. IHC and Alta View Hospital will bill Aetna. • Medicine downside is that you have to call Aetna to see if your medication is in their preferred generic drug list. If so, it will cost you nothing. • There is no deadline to sign up. It takes effect the month after you sign up. You can join or quit at any time and go back to NALC high option & Medicare. The plan gives \$900 per person per year to help pay Medicare part B costs. They have some dental, vision, and hearing benefits and the Silversneakers fitness program.

ORGANIZER by Justin Lindquist – not present

SAFETY AND HEALTH by Justin Lindquist

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES by Jeff Asay

- Jeff went to Fairview today with other officers to award a 60-year Service Pin and certificate to Jim Christensen (92 years old).
- Jeff has 11 presents that Santa Claus will draw names to award from the retiree roll. The money comes from money left over in the retiree's fund. Those on zoom can pick their present up at the branch office. The presents contain checks for \$100 (10) and one for \$500.

TREASURER by Mike Madsen –

- If you get a check tonight, don't forget to put your name on the payee line to be able to cash it.
- We received \$31,531 for progressive permissive remedies (article 17/31 violations) since 2020. Thanks to Stormy Blood.
- Income last month was \$44,991 which is more than normal because of progressive remedies of \$13,200.
- We brought in \$4,422 more than we spent last month.
- We approved a budget with a deficit of \$40,000 for this year, but we are currently \$45,000 under budget.

VICE PRESIDENT by Amie Gallo – no report

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT by Mike Hansen

- 2,014 grievances filed so far this year.
- We are trying to get more members on our Facebook page (NALC BRANCH 111)
- Training for stewards is on the 21 st .
- Our annual leave is credited on the first day of the 1 st complete pay period of the new year. It will be on the 14 th of January this coming year (pay period 3).
- Joe Horsley was given his Regional Steward Plaque for completing his 4 th year of Steward College.

PRESIDENT by Mike Wahlquist

- Thanked Amie Gallo and her daughter for Christmas decorations in our office (1 st time in a long time).
- Last week they took a 60-year pen to the family of Ronald Van Ry who passed away just over a week ago.
- There have been quite a few CCA conversions the last couple of months.
- The postal service is massively under-staffed. The Salt Lake Installation needs 140 CCAs but only has 35. Priority is to get parcels delivered while routes are not getting delivered. Management is also delivering mail.
- The post office is not hiring because our contract ends next May and they are waiting to use it as a bargaining chip. Other places are worse than in Utah.
- What is the maximum hours during the December exclusion period? The ODL can work beyond 12. All others (includes PTFs, CCAs, etc.) are limited to 11.5 hours plus ½ hour lunch. Scott Canfield sent out notice to management that everyone is excluded and can be worked over 11.5 hours. Mike is already filing a grievance. Stewards should all be filing grievances for each non-ODL carrier worked over 11 ½ hours. More progressive remedies will probably be requested.

SPECIAL ORDERS: none

- Proposed Bylaws Change (read only- discuss/vote on next month): That we strike all language in the Bylaws that currently says “Step O” and replace each such citation with the language “Step P”.

- A Motion was made and approved by the Executive Board, to raise the President's 120 Days fund by \$5,000 with the money to come from the steward training fund. The motion passed unanimously

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: none

NEW BUSINESS: none

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:

FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SERVICE:

DRAW AND ADJOURN – 7:58 pm

☐ \$25 drawing winners were Ray Kosierowski and Kelly Grater

☐ RETIREES – \$225 (Gary Thorne was present and won). Next month it will be \$25

☐ PROGRESSIVE A - \$400 (Scott Gunther was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$425

☐ PROGRESSIVE B - \$300 (Julie Montgomery was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$325

HAM DRAWING WINNERS (\$25 gift cards)

Alisha Chadwick, Joseph Rivera, Stan Neering, Jeff Asay, Joe Horsley, Jennifer Ogden, Brent Console, Bill Craig, Amie Gallo, Bob Valdez, Clementine Alvey, Steven Franz, Stan Burmood, Rocket Ron Hermansen, Arlynn Venema, Bob Jewell, Steve McNees, Aaron Johnson, Mike Miller, Gary Thorne

RETIREE CHRISTMAS DRAWING

\$500 Winner: Keith Warner

\$100 Winners: Eldon Butters, Gus Rohrbach, Jonnie Johnson, Sheila Davis, Rocket Ron Hermansen, Rick Watson, Randy Baker, Craig Ball, Stan Burmood, Yvonne Madsen

Retiree Progressive Drawing Losers (not present)

Draw until someone wins: : Michael Lems, Lee Whiting, Scott Holbrook, Frank Segura, Benny Cordova, Hal Farr, Jerry Austin, Linda Worch, Richard Casper, Keith Coleman Teresa Fredsall, Paul Simmons, Blaine Hardcastle, Robert Spann, Paul Robison, Steve Ballatore, Roger Manwell, Kitt Robertson, Maria Vaksmundska

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The financial records of Branch 111 are available to anyone by appointment and a monthly record is always available at Branch 111 monthly meeting.

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