



The Pavement Pounder

Branch 111 NALC

“The Wasatch Branch”

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

The President's Report

Do We Want To Keep New Hires?

I started working for the Post Office in 1987. In all the years since then, I have seen management lose or fire an obscene number of efficient and adequate workers. Some Carriers left because they did not want to work 7-days a week, every week, and never see their families. They could get a job for equivalent pay somewhere else that did not require the insane hours of the USPS. Prior to now, CCAs and PTFs could be required to work 11.5 hours per day, 7-days a week, and that schedule burned out employees at an alarming rate. I was a PTF twice myself, and I remember how hard it could be during the two probations I served. Not only have PTFs and CCAs been required to work excessive hours on a daily and weekly basis, but they often have had no fixed assignment and have often been required to learn new routes daily. I have seen management burn out people who would have been good employees (over and over again ad nauseum) just because it was easier to do that than to hire, manage, or protect their people. I have also seen management fire good workers just because they weren't full blown runners. Carriers would often fail their probation even though they had never missed a day, never had an accident, and always had a good attitude, simply because they were a tiny bit slower than the other PTF or CCA (who was perhaps misdelivering everything and who might be stuffing vacant boxes to the point of explosion). In short, I have seen a lot of bad practices enacted by management regarding keeping our new employees.

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“I will forever be grateful to the veteran Carriers who came out to save me on my first day on a route when I didn't even come close to finishing, because they gave me encouragement instead of discouragement, and they didn't make me feel bad that they were sent out to help me”

And the onus is not just limited to management. I have also seen veteran Letter Carriers give brand new employees an “hour” of delivery that they themselves couldn't get done in an hour and a quarter. We used to refer to that practice as giving someone a “power-hour”, and it was seen as despicable. Some veteran Carriers would say things like “well, I got screwed over when I was a PTF [CCA], so I'm just doing what was done to me”. The problem with that kind of treatment is that the supervisor would then assume that the probationary employee was not meeting expectations when they didn't complete the time given in the time

stated. I believe that most of us give grace to our new-employees, and that mistreatment is not the “norm”, and I will forever be grateful to the veteran Carriers who came out to save me on my first day on a route when I didn't even come close to finishing, because they gave me encouragement instead of discouragement, and they didn't make me feel bad that they were sent out to help me when they had already finished their assignments.

So the question has been in my mind for over 30 years: “Do we want to keep new hires?” I know that the answer should be “YES!”, but up until now it has seemed like the answer was always “maybe.” The sad fact is that the USPS retention rate has been below fifty percent for decades. It is no surprise considering the first paragraph above. But for the first time in my sojourn with the Post Office, we are starting a program to increase retention, and I believe that is going to work.

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Starting July 1st, PTFs and CCAs will have new protections that will make their work experience better. During their first 4 weeks (starting with the week they have OJI training), they will have at least one day off per week and will be limited to 8 hours per day and 40 hours per week. In their second 4 weeks, they will have the same limitations, but instead of the 8 hour per day limitation it will be 10 hours, and instead of the 40 hour limitation it will be 56 hours. After 8 weeks, the limits go back to the normal limits as they previously existed (11.5 hours per day), but there is a 60-hour limit per week during weeks 9-12. And after 8 weeks of work employees will still get one day off per week, except in the December exclusion period, or if the employee volunteers to work 7 days a week. Also, the first 8 weeks must be in the employing office, PTFs and CCAs can no longer be sent to other offices during this critical training time. Each CCA and PTF will also be assigned a “Mentor”, a seasoned carrier who will help the new employee by answering questions, providing extra training, and serving as a “guide” to the bureaucratic maze of Post Office employment. And new hires will now receive specialized Sunday training before they are required to work on Sundays.

There are more aspects to the New Employee Experience, Retention and Mentoring Program (NEERMP), but I don't have the space to write it all down here. Let it suffice to say that I know that this program will allow us to keep more workers than ever before. The work hour reductions, limitations, and day off guarantee will allow new hires to still have a family while they are learning the ropes, and I know that this will allow the USPS to keep more good people, including the ones that we would have lost formerly. That will in turn allow us to keep better staffing, which makes for a better work environment overall.

Michael Wahlquist – President
Branch 111, NALC

Traditional 6-Day Route Counts Are Back

We've received confirmation that management intends to conduct traditional 6-day route counts and inspections in as many zones as possible starting in September 2025. Some offices were already inspected prior to the summer months. Ron Osborne, Special Assistant to the President, has confirmed that management is compiling a list of offices for fall inspections.

For many of our newer carriers, the only route inspection process you may have experienced is the Joint Process (TIARAP) from the last couple of years or none at all. The traditional 6-day count is a very different experience. While the joint process kept management teams out of our offices and even led to several routes being added in Branch 111, management will be sending teams into our offices this fall, and they will be looking to take some of those routes back.

Protect Your Route: Crucial Actions Now

The outcome of a 6-day count could lead to route eliminations and significant territory shifts. While management might try to eliminate routes with less senior carriers, depending on the zone, rebids are highly likely to occur. This means if a route with a carrier who has five years of seniority is eliminated, all routes with carriers who have less seniority would be put back up for bid.

Simply put, you could lose your current route, or your all-mounted route could suddenly have walks added to it.

This is why we are urging every rank-and-file carrier to:

- **ALWAYS** take all your breaks.
- **NEVER** work off the clock.
- Deliver your route as the M-41 instructs. Take your time and maintain a pace you can realistically sustain for the next 30 years. It is not a race.

We will do our best to educate all carriers over the next month, but your immediate action on these points is critical to protecting our routes and our livelihoods. If your office is notified of upcoming route adjustments, you can reach out to the branch to request a team come in to provide extra training and help with potential grievances.

In Solidarity
Mike Hansen
Executive Vice President
Branch 111 NALC

Editor's Note:

What Just Happened? A Recap of NALC Legislative Action

It's July and the current administration's budget reconciliation bill has been passed. Thankfully, after a very anxious time for letter carriers, the provisions in the bill that would have harmed letter carriers were defeated.

What Happened, a timeline:

December 2024-

Reports circulated that incoming President Trump was considering actions to privatize the Postal Service's essential functions.

January 29, 2025-

House introduces anti-privatization resolution (H.Res. 70) calls on Congress to take all appropriate measures to ensure that the Postal Service remains an independent establishment of the federal government and not subject to privatization.

February 06, 2025-

Congress reintroduces bipartisan Protect Our Letter Carriers Act. Bipartisan lawmakers in the House and Senate reintroduced the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act (POLCA) (H.R. 1065/S.463). The bills are identical to the House and Senate versions introduced last Congress and include three measures to deter the increasing crimes and assaults committed against letter carriers on the job.

February 21, 2025-

President Trump says he may put the U.S. Postal Service under the control of the Commerce Department in what would be an executive branch takeover of the agency. This was taken by the NALC as an attack on carrier's jobs.

February 24, 2025-

NALC holds 'Save USPS' rally in Washington, DC. NALC held an event on Capitol grounds to send a clear message to the White House: Hell no to dismantling the Postal Service!

NALC organized this event after reports last week that President Trump was planning to issue an executive order that would fire the Postal Board of Governors and place the agency under the control of the Commerce Department, changing USPS from the independent self-sufficient agency it has been for 55 years.

NALC completely opposes any efforts to privatize the Postal Service, cut service, or fundamentally restructure the agency.

February 25, 2025-

Federal Retirement Fairness Act reintroduced in House

This bipartisan bill would allow certain federal employees, including letter carriers, to make catch-up retirement contributions for time spent as non-career employees after Dec. 31, 1988, making it credible service under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS).

March 23, 2025-

Nationwide "Fight Like Hell" rallies held, including a very successful one by Branch 111, to oppose any threats to the postal service and USPS jobs.

March 27, 2025-

Senate introduces anti-privatization resolution S.Res.147 calls on Congress to take all appropriate measures to ensure that the Postal Service remains an independent establishment of the federal government and is not subject to privatization. The Senate version is identical to the House version (H.Res. 70).

April 30, 2025-

As part of the budget reconciliation process, in a 22-21 vote, the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability advanced a measure that would reduce benefits for federal employees, including letter carriers.

These proposals include:

- Increasing the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) contribution rate for existing employees up to 4.4 percent
- Cutting retirement benefits by eliminating the FERS special annuity supplement
- Reducing annuity payments by calculating a retiree's annuity based on their high-five salary average (instead of three)

May 22, 2025-

House of Representatives narrowly passed the Republican-led One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1) by a vote of 215-214-1. Passage of H.R. 1 marks a major step forward in the budget reconciliation process, which allows the Republican-led Congress to fast-track sweeping budget cuts to reduce federal programs and spending.

As it relates to letter carriers, the initial legislation contained harmful provisions, including a 4.4 percent across-the-board increase for all employees' contributions to the Federal Employee Retirement Systems (FERS) and recalculating retirees' annuities based on their high-five salary average (instead of high-three).

Following aggressive lobbying efforts by NALC and the federal employee community, lawmakers removed these two provisions.

Despite our best efforts, a key threat to postal employees did pass in the House: elimination of the FERS special annuity supplement, a crucial benefit for FERS-covered employees who retire before becoming eligible for Social Security at age 62.

June 06, 2025-

White House releases FY2026 budget details, calls for eliminating steward time at Postal Service.

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(What Happened continued)

June 13, 2025

As a direct result of NALC’s action in the Senate, HSGAC’s text does not include the provision in the House-passed reconciliation bill that would eliminate the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) Special Annuity Supplement, a critical benefit for FERS-covered letter carriers who retire before they are eligible for Social Security at 62.

June 18, 2025-

President Brian L. Renfroe testified in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s (OSHA) informal rulemaking hearing for the proposed Heat Injury and Illness Prevention in Outdoor and Indoor Work Settings rule.

June 27, 2025-

As the reconciliation process progresses, the Senate is considering increasing the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) contribution rate to 15.6 percent for all postal employees hired after Jan. 1, 2026.

“This is a disgusting attack on future letter carriers,” NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said.\

July 01, 2025

Notably, thanks to NALC’s efforts, two major attacks on letter carriers that were proposed during the Senate process were ultimately removed from the package.

Increasing the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) contribution rate to 15.6 percent for all postal employees hired after Jan. 1, 2026, and taking back any unspent funds designated for USPS electric vehicles (EVs) and requiring the agent to sell all its EVs and associated infrastructure were removed.

July 03, 2025-

Today, in a party-line 218-214 vote, the House passed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1).. Of particular note to letter carriers, the final package was stripped of any provision that would negatively impact letter carriers, our bargaining rights, and the postal network.

In the last two months of congressional consideration, many direct threats were proposed. These included increasing Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) contribution rates as high as 15.6 percent, calculating annuities based on the high-5 average salary instead of the current high-3, eliminating the FERS Special Annuity Supplement, forcing new federal hires to choose between at-will employment or an increased FERS contribution, imposing a fee for Merit Systems Protection Board Claims and Appeals, taking back unspent funds designated for USPS electric vehicles (EVs) and requiring the agency to sell all its EVs and associated infrastructure, and attacks on other federal employees’ collective bargain-

ing rights. Ultimately, NALC successfully got all threats directly targeting letter carriers removed.

"Letter carriers' activism and NALC's strong bipartisan relationships helped us defeat devastating provisions for current and future letter carriers," NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said. "We successfully delivered a powerful message to Capitol Hill.

When lawmakers come after our 295,000 members’ jobs, retirements and futures, we say, 'Hell no!'"



All of this has happened and it’s only July. I thought it would be a good illustration to put all of this in one document to show that much of our careers, benefits, and futures are directly dependent upon politics. With one legislative session, letter carriers could lose thousands in health benefits, retirement benefits, and union representation among other things. Combined with always needing to fight for better contracts, NALC members are continuously on the verge of losing ground or have actually lost ground from political maneuvers.

It’s my belief that the USPS cannot “efficient” it’s way out of it’s economic losses, and carriers cannot work the USPS out of those losses. It’s also my opinion that our future is mostly in the hands of politicians. We ought to be aware of our friends and enemies, and be clear eyed about who we should support with our votes and campaign contributions.

I suggest that you find out how your representatives voted regarding this bill. Did they support stripping you of your retirement? Did they support raising your contribution into your retirement, which would have reduced your pay by thousands? Did they support taking away the supplement, forcing you to work 5 years longer?

It can be difficult in some instances to separate our personal political choices from our professional ones. But for me, putting food on the table, paying my mortgage and providing for my family take priority before any other issues. Personally, I will not support politicians who vote to harm my family.

I am thankful for everyone who called, wrote, rallied and protested. We barely held onto what we had. I hope now is the time we stop playing so much defense and start playing more offense. Let’s fight to bring down all FERS contributions to .8%. The anti-privatization bill is good offense. Let’s get that passed. All the proactive legislative work is great. This attack on letter carriers isn’t over. They’ll come back, looking to erode our careers in one way or another. Sign up for the Letter Carrier Political Action Fund, be ready to call and write. Attend caucus meetings, ask questions, run for office. We need more advocates for letter carriers and the labor movement.

In solidarity,
Nathan Chester,
Editor
Branch 111

NALC BRANCH 111
Minutes of the Regular Union Meeting
June 12, 2025

Convened at 6:36 pm

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

Conducting: Mike Wahlquist, President

Pledge of Allegiance conducted by Nathan Chester

Moment of Silence for Jeff Bodily who passed away

Roll Call by Steve McNeas

Minutes of the June 2025 union meeting were posted. With no objection the minutes will be filed for future reference.

Reading of the Communications by Steve McNeas

- The Iron Workers Local 27 is having a Golf Tournament Sept. 20 at the Fox Hollow Golf Course in American Fork.
- We received a request for the branch's financial records for the "120 Days Account" for 2024 and 2025. It was requested to have a report at the July Branch Meeting.
- Stormy Blood provided a letter with documentation regarding an OIG investigation to determine if there was evidence of a crime regarding excessive non-compliance payments for grievances filed by Stormy Blood. The OIG did not find sufficient evidence of crimes. Stormy found documentation showing the USPS report to the OIG was much less than the USPS documents report.
- President Wahlquist wrote to Pres. Renfroe asking if or how National officers and staff pay their dues.
- Renfroe responded regarding the National's handling of dues for headquarters employees. They do not deduct dues from their pay. The CGSFB permits a branch to exempt any member from dues payments under reasonable rules.

Application for Membership by Mike Hansen

Heather Garbe, Omar Osman, Lisa Munoz Torres, Jaime Gonzalez Hernandez, Alexander Scott, Braden Jackson, Wendy Aragon, John Wallace.

Guest Speaker, Dale Cox running for Murray City Council Dist. 2. If you take care of your employees, they will take care of you. He was a member of the Operating engineers #3, President Utah AFL-CIO, and member of the Murray City Council.

Guest Speaker, Ben Beck running for Murray City Council Dist. 3. He is a member of the Transit Workers union (bus driver), helped organize the IBW staff, and member of Operating Engineers Union (construction).

LETTER CARRIER POLITICAL FUND (LCPF) by Josh Thibodeau – no report

MDA COORDINATOR by Nathan Chester

- Thurs 7:30pm Bowling Night- There is no cost (only MDA donation\$). You don't have to bowl. There will be games (pool, pinball machines, & more) and pizza. Bring your friends and family. Bountiful Bowl (5th So. Exit). The entire building is reserved.
- Aug 12th is primaries to city councils.
- You have to be engaged and vote to get the leaders we need.

DIRECTOR OF VETERAN AFFAIRS by Jimmy Fleming – no report

LEGISLATIVE by Chad Mortensen

He is focusing on local political races rather than national. He asked candidates if they are going to provide a place to park for delivering mail and will they support protecting mail delivery. These candidates can help provide the parking and safety we need/deserve.

TRUSTEES by Chad Mortensen

- Didn't meet this month, but will meet next month.

COMPENSATION by Bob Jewell -not present

HEALTH BENEFITS by Jim Kerekes – no report

ORGANIZER by Justin Lindquist -not present

SAFETY AND HEALTH by Justin Lindquist –not present

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES by Jeff Asay –

- There will be no retiree only drawings at the steak fry. Retirees and guest are free.

TREASURER by Mike Madsen

- Having trouble with his new finance program. It is causing lots of problems and payroll may be delayed.

VICE PRESIDENT by Destiney Carrillo –

- July 16th is steward training. She will be reviewing recent decisions and the new retention programs.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT by Mike Hansen

- There were 1,218 grievance numbers issued so far this year.
- The new mentor program needs volunteers to be mentors in each office. There are a number of new rules with this program. If someone is being considered to be fired within their first 90 days, there has to be a sit-down talk with that person (PTF or CCA), a mentor, steward, and manager to see if there is a way to avoid separation.
- On Nalc.org there is a list of joint union and management Q&A to this program. One states that PTFs in a hub office cannot be worked out of their office for their first nine it

Minutes (continued)

weeks. • They are working on a joint Q&A for Article 8 issues. • Sponsors for the bowling activity on July 17th (\$100 per lane): OCD Anxiety Center, Shaun Frasier, Organizing Habits, Stephanie Scherzinger, Autistic Celebrations (Woodall) 2 lanes, Jane Hogan 4 lanes, Wasatch Recovery, Branch 111 Retirees 2 lanes, Life is Golden, Lara Carburn, Bountiful Letter Carriers, Chris Williams, Kirk McLaughlin, John & Sharla Groves. The entire bowling alley is reserved. Nathan Chester is hopeful we will have \$5,000 to present to the MDA (from donations).

PRESIDENT by Mike Wahlquist

• Retirees and soon to be retirees are having trouble contacting OPM. He suggests getting up at 6:00am to call them because they are so busy during the day. You can call your Congressman/Senator/Representative and they all have liaisons with OPM that can get you connected to OPM. • OPM becomes responsible for retiree's retirement, healthcare, and almost everything else (not the USPS). • It is summer – it is Hot. Take enough water. If you run out of water for any reason, go get some more. This is an emergency situation. Members who come back from a long illness/injury are the ones most susceptible to heat related injuries/illness/death. • July = dogs and kids. Be prepared to encounter dogs (repellent) and watch for kids everywhere you drive. Walk around your vehicle before backing if there is no other option. Observe the safety rules. You are paid to be safe.

SPECIAL ORDERS: No new orders.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

• Last month: a motion was made to amend a standing order about handling dues in arrears. The amendment would allow only those on OWCP to not be required to pay back dues. The motion passed. An amendment was made to not require national officers and staff to pay back dues. before action was taken a motion to table the motion until the next meeting (July) was made and passed. • A motion was made: National officers and staff will not be required to pay back dues. The motion failed. • Motion: The rule (not paying back dues) will only apply those on OWCP. The motion passed. • Motion to endorse Dale Cox for Murray City Council District #2. The Motion Passed. • Motion to endorse Ben Peck for Murray City Council District 3. The Motion Passed.

NEW BUSINESS:

• Motion to move the pool party to Sunday next year (no vote). Motion to postpone this motion until next meeting. The motion passed.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: none

IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION: none:

DRAW AND ADJOURN: 7:57pm

• \$50 DRAWING WINNERS: Connor Lawrence, Monte Jones

• RETIREES – \$775 (**Kirk McLaughlin was present**). Next month it will be \$25.

• PROGRESSIVE A - \$1,175 (**Jenny Su'a was present**). Next Meeting it will be \$25.

• PROGRESSIVE B - \$150 (7-43 Jeremy Goins was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$175

Upcoming Dates

August

Thursday 7th E-Board

Friday 8th Union Bee's Night (Central Fed)

Thursday 14th Branch Meeting

Wednesday 20th Steward Training

Saturday 23rd Steak Fry

September

Wednesday 3rd Steward Dinner (Bee's Game)

Thursday 4th E-Board

Thursday 11th Branch Meeting

Wednesday 17th Steward Training

October

Thursday 2nd E-Board

Thursday 9th Branch Meeting

Wednesday 15th Steward Training



Branch 111 Bowling Night



MDA Bowling Night

Branch 111 had a great Bowling Night! We were able to raise \$3,600 (or so) for MDA. We had a great turnout. We had all 20 lanes busy with free bowling, pizza and drinks.

These proceeds will go towards providing children who suffer from the effects of muscular dystrophy an opportunity to attend adaptive camps that give them opportunities to have experiences that they wouldn't otherwise have. MDA also funds research to find a cure and treatments for those afflicted with muscular dystrophy.

Branch 111 has so far raised \$6,600 for MDA in 2025! I would like to thank EVERYONE who has contributed to this cause. Special thanks to those who sponsored lanes. The following donated \$100 to sponsor a bowling lane:

Jayne Hogan –1 lane
Chris' Body and Paint– 3 lanes
Autistic Celebrations – 2 lanes
Wasatch Recovery-1 lane
Life is Golden– 1 lane
Time to Travel– 1 lane
Make Your Mark– 1 lane
OCD Anxiety Center– 1 lane
Organizing Habits-1 lane
Shawn Frasier-1 lane
Branch 111 Retirees– 1 lane
Lara Carbuhn –1 lane
Bountiful Carriers– 1 lane
Chris Williams– 1 lane
Kirk McLaughlin– 1 lane
Tooele Carriers– 1 lane
John and Sharla Groves– 1 lane
Michael Wahlquist– 1 lane
Tsenu Mamo– 1 lane
Fernando Palafox– 1 lane



Donate to MDA

These donors contributed **\$2,400** to our event. Participants at the event then donated an additional **\$1,200** (we still have some coming in).

We would love for **BRANCH 111** to make it on the leaderboard for donations to MDA. If you were not able to donate or participate but would still like to donate, you can use the QR code to donate. Any help is appreciated.

We will also be having prize raffles at the STEAK FRY, and POKER NIGHT, which is sometime in October or November (TBD). Thanks again for an amazing turnout! And thanks for showing that BRANCH 111 is awesome.

Nathan Chester,
Branch 111 MDA

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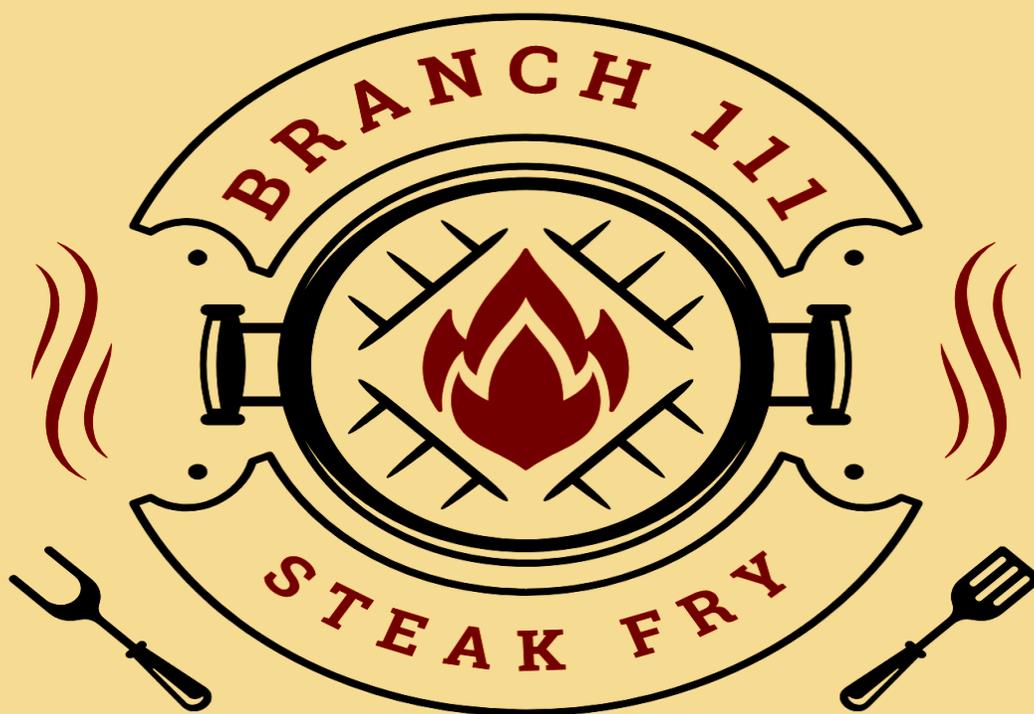
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Chad Mortensen
Kirk McLaughlin
Kortnie Chatterton

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 **• AUG 23 @ 6:00 PM •** 

FOOD FUN PRIZES

INFORMATION

\$12
Per Person

SUGAR HOUSE PARK - HIDDEN GROVE PAVILION

1330 E 2100 S, SALT LAKE

BRANCH MEMBERS AND ONE GUEST

TEXT MIKE HANSEN FOR TICKETS (801-628-1848)

