



The Pavement Pounder

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Branch 111 NALC

“The Wasatch Branch”



The President's Report

The Lame Duck President

Some of you might be thinking that this article will be about President Trump, who cannot run again (at least according to the constitution as it now stands), but it is actually about another president who is in their last term... me. I am serving my last term, and last year, as the Branch 111 President, not because I cannot run again, but because I recognize that it is time to turn the running of Branch 111 over to the next generation of leaders... and also so I can ride off into the proverbial sunset of a glorious retirement (ok, maybe not glorious, but any day hiking trails in a National Forest or State Park is a pretty good day).

A little history for those who have arrived late to the game. I first served as the Branch 111 President starting January 1st, 2009, though some might argue that it was even earlier than that, due to some very strange circumstances. I served as an acting president for a while back in 2006, because of an at-work assault on then Branch 111 President Mike Miller on May 26th of that year. Mike ended up having (I believe) three separate surgeries to fix damage to his neck, back, and shoulder, though one of those surgeries may have been in 2007 (sorry Mike if I am misremembering any of this).

The assault occurred at the Sandy Alta-Canyon office. President Miller was attempting to enter one of the zones, which were separated from each other back then. The Supervisors had been told not to allow him into the building (in direct conflict of Article 23 of the contract which guarantees such access to the union). One supervisor attempted to block Mike's entry by pushing a cage of mail in front of him, while a second supervisor (a 204-B), then grabbed the president and threw him into casing equipment. One of the carriers who witnessed the assault was so traumatized that they never returned to work and eventually had to do a disability retirement. That year, while President Miller underwent treatment for his injuries, I filled in as "acting" president, and it was trial by fire to say the least. I was helped by so many great branch officers, some of whom are no longer living, and we made it through that difficult time until President Miller was released back to full duty. I experienced first-hand hard it was to deal with the never-ending series of problems that occur nearly every day in a union as large as ours. President Miller graciously forgave me for not doing things exactly as he would have done, and several years later I ran and became the next branch president in 2009, followed by Phil Rodriguez in August of 2011, and Jeff Nelson in January of 2012 (while I worked for the National Business Agent's office as a Regional Administrative Assistant for nearly 3 years), and then I returned, ran for president again in 2014, and have served as the Branch 111 President from January 1st, 2015, through the present. All in all, at the end of this year I will have served 5 terms for a total of almost 15 years.

President (continued)

It has been a wild ride, and if the old adage “water under the bridge” is applied, said water feels like Niagara Falls because so much has happened during those years. But I will save that for my last article of this year. Right now I want to talk about this coming year: 2026. I have wanted to get Branch 111 totally digitized for many years now, and thanks to Mike Hansen and Destiney Carrillo (our Executive Vice President and Vice President respectively), we are getting closer and closer to accomplishing this. I believe that we will be completely digitized before I leave office, which will mean all past grievances will be scanned in and accessible to the Shop Stewards. Right now we have all B-Team decisions digitized and accessible, and that alone was a great accomplishment (thanks Mike and Destiney!).

Branch 111 sent more Stewards to training last year than ever before, and we want to do it again this year. We will absolutely be sending as many to training as our budget can afford. We also have more Stewards working for the National Business Agent’s office than we have ever had in the past, and those experiences are reflected in the excellent work I see every day as our stewards and officers continue to represent Branch 111 Carriers in their rights under the contract.

UPS just announced 2026 layoffs of 48,000 career positions, and FedEx has also announced layoffs. I believe this will bode well for the United States Postal Service, as we will likely absorb much of the work that they will not be able to handle this year. Our hiring and complement are at the highest level I have seen in 6 years, which means that overtime will likely reduce, but it also means less mandatory overtime, so Letter Carriers will be able to spend more time with their families, especially compared with the years during and after the COVID pandemic.

While we live in interesting times (I dread the news on a daily basis), we continue to serve the public every day, and I know how grateful our customers are for our service. Thank you and may 2026 be a great year for all of us.

Michael Wahlquist – President

Branch 111, NALC



Branch 111 would like to congratulate **Cindy Gilson** (left) and **Dennis Nethery** (right) on their retirements!

They both retired from the West Jordan Post Office.

Happy retirement and well earned!

Please submit photos and names of retirees to be recognized in the Pavement Pounder to:

Natechester8@gmail.com



Drop and Go?

Have you ever returned to the office after completing your route only to be told by a supervisor or manager to “drop and go”? Or been instructed that you have only five or ten minutes to complete your PM office duties? Both of these directives are improper and should be grieved by your union steward.

The phrase “drop and go” can mean different things depending on the situation, but the intent is always the same: management wants you to skip your normal PM office duties and get off the clock as quickly as possible. This instruction is typically given to help management meet a specific goal—getting a carrier an eight-hour day, avoiding penalty overtime, or preventing a carrier from going over 11.5 or 12 hours. Regardless of the reason, it is still an improper instruction.

Similarly, when management attempts to impose a five- or ten-minute limit on PM office time, it is usually a directive coming from higher levels of management. This, too, is improper and should be grieved.

Management understands that when these kinds of policies are pushed, some offices will challenge them through the grievance process. In those offices, operations return to business as usual. What management is really looking for are the offices that do not push back—the ones that simply fall in line. Even if only 20 percent of offices comply, management views that as a win.

So what should you do as a carrier when this happens in your office?

If management attempts to implement a five- or ten-minute PM office time limit, your steward will most likely already be aware of it and working to have the instruction rescinded. Ask your steward if they are addressing the issue, and make it clear that you expect the instruction to be grieved. If your office does not have a steward, contact your branch directly and communicate your expectation that the instruction be challenged.

“Drop and go,” however, is more situational and can be harder for carriers to know how to handle in the moment. The first step is always the same: follow your supervisor’s instructions and then report what occurred to the union.

There are also proactive steps you can take. Sections 41 through 44 of the M-41 outline a carrier’s PM office duties. Take the time to read them. This is a Postal Service manual and clearly defines what management expects carriers to do upon returning to the office in the afternoon.

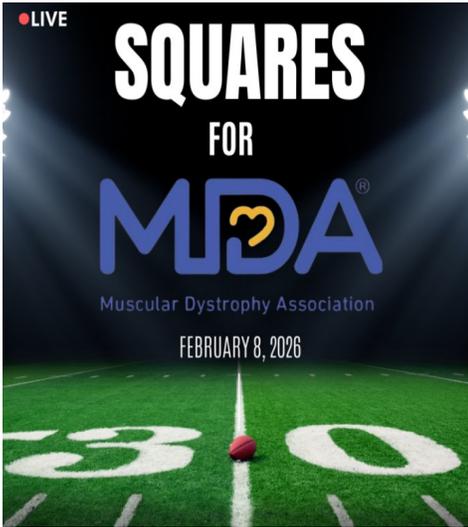
In many cases, one simple question to management can resolve the issue. When told to “drop and go,” ask for a PS Form 1571 so you can properly document the mail you have been instructed to delay. Any experienced supervisor understands that completing the form will take more time than allowing you to finish your PM office duties, and they will often choose to let you complete those duties instead.

Finally, remember that carriers are entitled to “wash-up” time before clocking out. This is legitimate work time and should not be skipped.

It is critical to recognize these improper instructions for what they are and to challenge them. Enforcing the contract only works when we insist that it be followed.

If you have any other questions about your specific situation, communicate with your steward or the branch.

In Solidarity,
Mike Hansen
Executive Vice President



Branch 111 Super Bowl Squares is now live on **Branch111.com!**

Donate \$30, pick your square and root for your square to hit. The question marks will be numbers 0-9 once the board is full. Then, you root for the last digit in the scores to match your square. If you match, you get the prize! It's easy, fun and all donations go straight to MDA from Branch 111.

We nearly reached \$10,000 last year, help us get there this year. If you would like to play, but want to pay in cash, text Nathan at (801) 450-0617 and I will make arrangements. Otherwise, head to Branch111.com to play and donate!

| | MDA | N F C | | | | | | | | | \$30 |
|----------|-----|--------------|-------------|----------------|--------|--------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|------------|---------------|
| | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| | ? | Wahlquist | 2 | 3 | Hansen | 5 | 6 | Nikki Kubinski | Wahlquist | 9 | 10 |
| | ? | Nate Chester | Ethan Jenks | Donovan Mamo | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | Wahlquist | 19 | 20 |
| | ? | Amie Gallo | Piper | Audra Chester | 24 | 25 | Ashleigh | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| A | ? | 31 | Hansen | Destiney | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | Cortland Allan | 39 | 40 |
| F | ? | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | CN | Danny | Hansen | 48 | 49 | 50 |
| C | ? | Josh Jessop | 52 | 53 | 54 | Danny | Ethan Jenks | 57 | 58 | 59 | 60 |
| | ? | 61 | 62 | 63 | Danny | Bradley Kirk | 66 | 67 | 68 | Amie Gallo | 70 |
| | ? | 71 | Aaron Saxon | 73 | 74 | Blake Hansen | 76 | 77 | 78 | 79 | 80 |
| | ? | Wahlquist | 82 | Cortland Allan | 84 | 85 | 86 | Brooks | Wahlquist | 89 | 90 |
| | ? | 91 | 92 | 93 | 94 | 95 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | Jeff Kubinski |



1ST QUARTER



HALF TIME



3RD QUARTER



FINAL SCORE



SilverScript Prescription Benefits Changes for 2026

Sorry, Yeah, it's about Silverscript.

On January 10, 2025 some or all were sent a letter from the health plan about Silverscript. The program started in 2024 where everyone who had NALC HIGH Option and had Medicare A &B were automatically enrolled in the program- Silverscript.

They gave an option in 2024 by choice to opt-out of the automatic enrollment which ended December 31, 2024. In 2025 if you had opted out you were probably having your drugs paid under NALC's normal prescription program. OPM changed the rules by what congress wanted. So the 2025 letter tells what happens if you opted out.

In the last few days in talking to the health plan, I was told that anyone that has MEDICARE A&B will be automatically enrolled in Silverscript for 2026. Meaning those who opted out earlier and those who will become eligible in the future will be auto enrolled. By rule they still have to give you a number of days if you still want to opt-out. I think it was 21 days. If you opt-out you will lose all drug coverage, you'll have nothing. Also by rule if you have NALC High Option and again have Medicare A&B, it is a requirement to have PartD Medicare Coverage. That's true for all other PSHBP Plans. Our health plan has an Advantage Plan. Medicare Part C is the part of Medicare that provides rules for any health plan that wants to create an advantage plan. Our advantage plan covers all of Medicare rules of Medicares PARTS A, B, and D. For our advantage plan, which only is offered for the High Option, you still have to pay the monthly premiums that are the same as the normal premiums for the high option. For further help, if you fall into this situation call me because there is more about what to do. Not enough room in this article to explain.

DRUGS 2026:

This year you'll pay a percentage of the Plan Allowance for your drugs. Those are the Generics, Formulary Brand and NON Formulary.

The drugs that manufacturers make- each has a price. Health plans have an allowance that they will pay for those drugs. So we pay a percentage of that plan allowance for the drug we need. To determine what your going to pay you need to call Silverscript to have them tell you what your cost is going to be. Those who are not on Silverscript because you're not on Medicare you will need to call the health plan.

For Generics, Formulary and NON Formulary you pay a percentage of the plan allowance up to a dollar maximum. The percentages and the up to maximums are different for each drug category. Generics, formulary and non-formulary.

For example if you have to go to the pharmacy and get a 30-day generic drug you pay 20% of the plan allowance. If you have to get a generic drug for 31 days or more (which is called mail order or maintenance choice program) you would pay 20% of the plan allowance with \$250 max per prescription. So check all of your drugs for what it is going to cost you out of pocket. **When you reach \$2100 out of pocket, your drugs are covered 100% the rest of the year.**

If any of this is not understandable call me. So watch for your mail, you may get info about these changes. Forgot, specialty drugs are paid by whole dollar amounts for 30, 60 and 90 days not by percentages.

Jimmy Kerekes,

Health Benefits

NALC BRANCH 111

Minutes of the Regular Union Meeting

January 8, 2026

Convened at 6:34 pm

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

Conducting: Mike Wahlquist, President

Pledge of Allegiance conducted by Connor Lawrence

Roll Call by Steve McNees

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

Reading of the Communications by Steve McNees

- Christmas Cards were received from: James D Henry & family and the Utah State AFL-CIO. • Mike Caref sent a holiday card and a request that we consider voting for him for President of the NALC this year.
- National announced that Michael Galvan has been selected to participate in the NALC's 33rd Leadership Academy Class.

Application for Membership by Mike Hansen

Alex McCray, Daniel Turner, Zackary Lindhardt, Martin Smith, Steven Hodgkinson, Galina Sigauke, Dell Schoohover McKoy, Todd Howey, Luis Perez, Eliana Coy, Pacifique Missi, Nathaniel Dodge, Braxton Sleeman, Anthony Perry, Donovan Mejia, Joaquin Materue, Tristan Houskeeper, Frances Chamberlin, Ethel Evans, Aleshia McElreath

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

MDA COORDINATOR by Mike Hansen

- Super Bowl Squares for MDA is being played again. You can win a Gourmia 11 qt. Dual Basket Air Fryer, Nintendo Switch 2 Mario Kart bundle, Kids Electric Ride Along Mail Truck, or a 75-inch TCL TV. See the Board at branch111.com and make your picks and pay (full instructions there).

DIRECTOR OF VETERAN AFFAIRS by Jimmy Fleming – absent due to illness

LEGISLATIVE by Chad Mortensen • The new legislative district being proposed appears to be a letter carrier friendly district. Chad is getting a lot of requests for support from the other districts. Giving branch support before the primaries can be a problem. He feels we as letter carriers should be giving them all financial support so they know we will support them after the primaries. • The Carrier Protection Act and Retirement Buy Back are some of the issues/messages we need to be talking about, but nationally the issues are still undecided. At this point there is nobody to contact for help. You should tell your reps what issues “you” have (safety, buyback, etc.). Our message will give Chad support when he is able to discuss our issues.

TRUSTEES by Chad Mortensen • They did not meet this month. The did help with preparing the budget.

COMPENSATION by Bob Jewell: He was talking to a carrier today who had talked to his claims examiner. This specific examiner currently has over 3,000 open cases. Many examiners were separated by DOGE last year. New ones are now being hired but are not up to speed on how compensation works. • You shouldn't complete a CA-7 for wage loss until you have started receiving wage loss benefits.

HEALTH BENEFITS by Jim Kerekes • The health plan is going through a lot of changes this year. A lot of plan members were lost from our plan when the system was recently changed and we no longer sign up other federal agencies. Members are the only source of income for our health plans. Our health plan is 75 years old. • When you retire you must sign up for Medicare to help pay for medical costs.

ORGANIZER by Justin Lindquist -not present

SAFETY AND HEALTH by Justin Lindquist –not present

SAFETY AND HEALTH by Justin Lindquist –not present

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES by Jeff Asay • Retiree Health Benefits info: The cost-of-living increases for this year were 2.8% except for FERS employees who only got 2%. • SilverScript is used for every NALC HB member over 65. All copays are not being calculated on the total cost of the drug. Many specialty, non-generic, drugs will cost you 20% of the drug price. Some have caps of \$300 but not all. • Tax season is coming. Form 1099 is available on opm.gov to download or print. • Update your OPM passwords. It is a target for bad people.

TREASURER by Mike Madsen •The budget will be printed and passed our tonight. It will be discussed at our next meeting. • January: \$56,000 income. Income after expenses was \$29,388.

VICE PRESIDENT by Destiney Carrillo • Steward Training on the 21 st at 6:30pm in the branch office and on Zoom. • There is a Facebook group on Zoom called “Coffee with Letter Carriers.” that discusses different topics. Some are pretty interesting. It is for anyone interested.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT by Mike Hansen: 2,060 grievances filed last year. • 89 grievances filed so far this year. • Stewards who still have closed grievance files at home/work, please turn them in so they can be scanned and put in the grievance log. • Do not file your taxes if you have received overtime in 2025. You will get a report from the USPS that may allow you to adjust your taxes. In 2026 they will put the overtime report on the W-2. • 2026 has 27 pay periods. The NALC paychart only shows 26 but updates are coming. • For National Convention we have about 40 delegates but only about 28 qualify for funding. Currently it is projected to cost about \$2,000 per person. Based on our budget of \$30,000, it could cost about \$1,000 out of pocket per qualified delegate to attend. •Daniel Langton is moving to branch 82.

PRESIDENT by Mike Wahlquist: The teamsters now get \$50 an hour. This year UPS is going to cut 48,000 jobs •Amazon drivers average \$18- \$21 per hour. FEDEX is also doing massive layoffs. •Our top wage is over \$40 per hour.

SPECIAL ORDERS: A motion last month to require those on Zoom to fully display their name and a picture or video to confirm the person watching is actually who they say they are was postponed until this month. • An motion that you have to be present to win a door prize was tabled until March. • A motion was made to have a Zoom “waiting room” that you remain in until you provide your full name and a picture to get into the union meeting. An amendment to the amendment was made, to text a message to the Sgt at Arms to verify they are a member. This amendment passed. • Vote on main motion: There will be a waiting room on Zoom where members must display their full names and a picture/video, or they can text the Sgt at Arms to validate their identity, to enter the main meeting. The main motion as amended was voted on. The motion passed • Motion to spend \$500 to the food bank upstairs. It is to come out of the Lobbying Fund. National is doing a matching program for donations to food banks/pantries. The money has to be from branch funds, not donations. The motion passed • Occasionally we get unfair labor practice charges against the branch. xxxx has filed charges against the branch for a sum total of \$150 in damages. A motion was made to pay the \$150 for the Unfair Labor Practice against the branch. • The two committees formed to investigate branch charges last month have not completed their investigations yet.

NEW BUSINESS:

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: none

FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SERVICE: none:

DRAW AND ADJOURN: 8:10 pm

•\$50 DRAWING WINNERS: Yvonne Madsen and Jeff Kubinski

•RETIREES – \$150 (Randy Wyatt was not present). Next month it will be \$175.

• PROGRESSIVE A - \$25 (Jonnie Johnson was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$50.

• PROGRESSIVE B - \$300 (Kristin Fiessinger? was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$325

National Association of
Letter Carriers
2261 South Redwood
Road, Suite 14
Salt Lake City, Utah
84119

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Salt Lake City,
UT
Permit No. 1981

UPCOMING DATES:

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| February 5 | Eboard |
| February 8 | Super Bowl (MDA) |
| February 12 | Branch Meeting |
| February 18 | Steward Training |
| March 5 | Eboard |
| March 12 | Branch Meeting |
| March 18 | Steward Training |



BRANCH 111 OFFICERS

President

Mike Wahlquist
385-216-0476

MBA & OWCP

Bob Jewell
801-244-0929

Organizer

Justin Lindquist
801-301-9293

Executive Vice-President

Mike Hansen
801-628-1848

Editor

Nathan Chester
Natechester8@gmail.com

Safety & Health

Justin Lindquist
801-301-9293

Vice-President

Destiney Carrillo
562-370-3590

Director of Retirees

Jeff Asay
801-597-2380

Food Drive

Josh Jessop

Treasurer

Mike Madsen

L.C.P.F. Coordinator

Josh Thibodeau
801-953-6343
J.thibodeau77@gmail.com

MDA

Nathan Chester
801-450-0617

Secretary

Steve McNees

Legislative

Chad Mortensen

Director of Veteran Affairs

Jimmy Fleming
veteransaffairs@branch111.com

Sergeant-at-Arms

Mike Simonsen

Health Benefits

Jim Kerekes
801-557-6033

Trustees

Chad Mortensen
Kirk McLaughlin
Kortnie Chatterton