

# The Pavement Pounder

## Branch 111 NALC

### “The Wasatch Branch”

Publication  
2026.6  
June  
edition

 **NALC**  
BRANCH 111

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**JUNE 18<sup>TH</sup>**

 **7:00 - 9:00 PM**

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If you would like to donate— use the QR code to go to our team fundraising page:

<https://mda.donordrive.com/team/25190> click the “support us” button and make a donation. You can also call or text **Nate Chester** at **(801)450-0617** if you’d like to donate using cash or check. I’m also looking for businesses to contact to be sponsors, so please let me know if you know any that might be worth reaching out to. Come hang out with us! National Officer **Dan Toth (Director of Retirees, National Business Agent Nick Vafiades** and **Regional Administrative Assistant James Frankford** will also be there. (Plus all the fun people of Branch 111) Thank you to the following sponsors (so far)-

**Chris’ R Bodyshop** (Jayne Hogan) -\$500 **Federal Injury Centers of Utah** -\$200 **Stubbs Dental** -\$100 **Monarch Dental** -\$100 **Stress Less Plan With Travel** (Stephanie Scherzinger) -\$100 **Make Your Mark Celebrations** (Mike Hansen and Ashleigh Mark) -\$100 **Autism Celebrations** (Jenny and Shawn Woodall) -\$100 **Branch 111 retirees** -\$500 **Mike Wahlquist** -\$100 **Mike Madsen** -\$100 **Nate Chester** -\$100 **Sharla Groves** -\$100 **Kirk McLaughlin** -\$100

## President's Report

### Ethics vs. Volume

The sky is falling. Barbarians are at the gate. The wolf is here. Choose your metaphor, mail volumes are declining. I began carrying mail in 1987, and right now I am seeing mail volumes drop to their lowest levels. Of course I am referring to volumes generally, and not every day. And management is crying USPS poverty like never before.

I feel certain that we will get a "surge" of mail in the autumn months, like we always do, but the National Union and the USPS agree that mail volumes will never return to what they once were. Does this mean the end of the Postal Service? I don't believe so. We have some advantages over our competitors that will help us weather the storm. We need to adapt to and fill a slightly different role in the future, just as we have evolved and adapted in the past. Do Letter Carriers really change? Just ask a 40-year veteran of the Postal Service how they carried mail back in 1986 and you will be told that our future world would have seemed very scary to carriers back then!

One of the biggest problems we now face is the temptation for management and labor to behave in a less than ethical manner and screw everything up. Please allow me to explain. I have seen the following scenarios at various times during my career: An overeager Station Manager and a couple of ambitious Supervisors decide that since mail volumes are down, they need to beef up the percent-to-standard casing speed of the Letter Carriers in their station. To do this, they manually put in fictitious "waiting time" clock rings into the Carriers' actual clock rings on a daily and weekly basis, resulting in route values based on false data. Or Supervisors who exaggerate volumes so that their operation looks better on paper, which will ultimately make future carriers look worse than the current carriers, which leads to badly adjusted routes and unwanted attention from postal officials whose idea of fixing things involves more sticks than carrots.

In the past, Branch 111 had to pull out of joint route count and inspection processes, and other joint agreements due to certain members of management behaving in a less than ethical fashion.

Here's another scenario, and this one is also based on real events. Cased mail volume and DPS volume are light on a given day. A Letter Carrier gives a "good-faith" estimate that he or she will be

back at a certain time that does not please management. DOIS says that they will be back earlier than the estimate, but we all know that DOIS is merely a management tool, and we have proven at the National level many times that it is inaccurate. In fact, in my previous articles I have shown that a letter carrier should not be disciplined merely for not making DOIS estimates. So, in this example, the Letter Carrier ignores DOIS (as he or she rightly should) and sticks with their estimate. Management decides to do a street observation on the carrier, follows them for the day, and the carrier comes back 3 hours earlier than their estimate. You might think that this is an exaggeration, and I really wish it were. This scenario and others like it have caused management to increase their street observation of Letter Carriers in general. Since management has found one or two carriers acting as described above, management may then feel that all Carrier estimates are suspect, hence their response of increased street observation.

There is an old adage that goes something like this: "A bad apple can spoil the whole barrel." The above-mentioned scenarios have one thing in common. An extremely small number of people acting unethically can ruin things for everyone, both in labor and in management. When trust is lost, both sides lose. The side that keeps faith loses because now they must be more vigilant and work harder to watch the other side. The side that has a "bad apple" break faith loses because now every member of their group is suspect, working under scrutiny and suspicion.

So, what can we do about it? Both labor and management must do the same thing to maintain the atmosphere that has existed in our offices in the past. Both sides must strive to maintain the ethics that have graced the Postal Service for the last several hundred years. Both sides must be flexible enough to ethically meet the changes that will come in the next several hundred years (assuming our country can make it through 2026, that is). In article 34, it states:

***"The principle of a fair day's work for a fair day's pay is recognized by all parties to this agreement."***

We must be ethical in our dealings with management, giving a fair day's work, and management must be ethical in their dealings with us, giving us a fair day's pay (not to mention treating us fairly). I'm not saying that we have to be perfect. An estimate is still just an estimate. ***(continued next page)***

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We should still revise our estimate any time it becomes apparent that our day will be different than what we expected. We should never allow ourselves to be pushed around, though we must remember that “Carriers may expect to be supervised at all times while in performance of their daily duties” (from the M-41). Let’s just make sure that when we are observed, we are found doing our duties (under the contract), and that should be enough for any Supervisor or Manager.

Management, on the other hand, should be above reproach in the performance of their du-

ty. Since the contract states that their work is “higher level”, I expect them to live up to a “higher level” of ethics. With management and labor acting ethically, I believe that the Postal Service can weather the struggling economy and be viable in the future, no matter how strange and fantastical the future may turn out to be. And what if a manager or supervisor acts unethically? The union will find it out and expose it. We always do, eventually.

Michael Wahlquist  
President  
NALC Branch 111



## Where We Stand and What Comes Next

Over the last few weeks, many of you tuned into the two collective bargaining updates that President Renfroe gave via the members-only portal on NALC.org. During those live streams, President Renfroe laid out the Postal Service’s and our own contract proposals, nearly 90 of them. Like many of you, I watched and listened closely. I felt the updates really pulled back the curtain like never before when it came to contract negotiations. However, with one major exception: the economic piece was not explained like I hoped it would be.

A few days later, I was on my way to the Collective Bargaining Conference in Washington, D.C. I truly expected that we would be discussing those same 90 or so proposals, maybe a little more in-depth, but still missing the economic piece we all wanted to hear about. I was incorrect in my assumption. The fact is, we didn’t discuss anything that we heard on the live streams. It was *all economics and interest arbitration. Dollars and cents. Real numbers.*

Now, before I continue, I must reiterate the first thing President Renfroe told us in that room. After those live streams, it was only a matter of hours before everything shared in the secure portal was plastered all over Facebook. President Renfroe spent the entire next day hearing about it from management. He was very clear about how we share the private information we were about to hear. He in no way discouraged us from sharing it with our members, but he did inform us of the real damage it does when we go public, either on social media or in articles that we all know management reads.

By the time this article prints, I will have already shared what I learned with the members of Branch 111 during our June meeting. Because management

reads our publications, I now find myself in a position where I have to question what I can safely print here. The answer, unfortunately, is not much.

I am happy to share exactly what was discussed at the conference with anyone who wants to reach out to me personally, or who wants to ask questions at our upcoming July branch meeting. Please show up, and let’s discuss it.

While I can’t write down our specific economic strategy here, I *can* share a couple of things already in the public record that I found incredibly interesting. Look at the historical cost of our last three contracts:

- **2016–2019 Contract:** \$2.9 Billion
- **2019–2022 Contract:** \$3.0 Billion
- **2023–2026 Contract:** \$4.1 Billion

It is entirely possible that the NALC and the USPS will eventually find a number they agree on, which would then be sent out to you for a membership vote. But right now? They are not close.

So, what does the realistic timeline look like if we head to interest arbitration? Our contract expired on May 22, 2026.

- **Right Now (June/July):** We are currently a few weeks into a legally mandated 60-day mediation period, and negotiations are continuing behind the scenes.
- **July 22, 2026:** The mediation period officially ends. At this point, it becomes time to formally schedule interest arbitration.
- **August 3-7, 2026:** The NALC 74th Biennial Convention is taking place in Los Angeles. Because of this, it will be **(continued next page)**

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impossible to schedule arbitration hearings before mid-August.

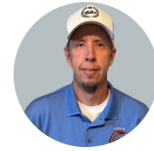
- The Fall: This is the realistic window for arbitration hearings to be scheduled. The hearings themselves can take anywhere from a couple of days up to 20 days.

**If we do go to arbitration, a realistic expectation for us to actually know the final outcome and**

**see an arbitrator's ruling would be by the end of this year.**

Stay strong, stay informed, and I hope to see many of you at the July meeting where I can try and answer any questions you might have.

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



## Can Management Run Your Annual Leave Without Your Permission?

The Service has a long, repetitive history of running carriers' AL without their permission. Under no circumstances can the Service run an employee's AL without the carrier first requesting it.

**ELM Section 512.411** - Except for emergencies, annual leave for all employees except postmasters must be requested on PS Form 3971 and approved in advance by the appropriate supervisor. Leave requests from rural carriers must be approved in accordance with Article 10 of the USPS-NRLCA National Agreement.

**ELM Section 512.421** - Requests for annual leave are made in writing, in duplicate, on PS Form 3971.

If a carrier has not submitted a PS Form 3971 designating their choice for AL, then it would be a violation for management to run an employee's annual leave. More often than not, we see carriers who arrive late or leave work with less than 8 hours often run into situations where management refuses to offer the carrier work up to 8 hours and instead forces them to use their AL.

### What if the employee requested Leave Without Pay (LWOP)?

LWOP may be granted for a variety of reasons, including personal reasons, vacations, illness or injury, family care, military service, union business, and other approved absences. Most importantly, when an employee requests LWOP due to illness, injury, or family care, the employee is not required to exhaust available annual leave or sick leave before requesting LWOP. The ELM specifically states that an employee may utilize annual leave and/or sick leave in conjunction with LWOP and need not exhaust those leave balances before requesting leave without pay.

Be aware that management does have discretion when it comes to the approval of LWOP. However, Article 5 of the National Agreement prohibits management from taking any unilateral action inconsistent with the terms of the existing agreement or with its obligations under law. If management is denying the use of LWOP, it should be investigated to determine whether the denial was made in an arbitrary and/or capricious manner. More often than not, there is some sort of policy in place to deny all leave requests where the employee has elected to use LWOP in lieu of AL. This should be grieved.

**Using LWOP in Lieu of Sick Leave: ELM 513.61 Insufficient Sick Leave** - *If sick leave is approved but the employee does not have sufficient sick leave to cover the absence, the difference is charged to annual leave or to LWOP at the employee's option.*

The key words in the provision above are **the employee's option**.

*"Accordingly, when an employee knows or reasonably believes that their sick leave balance is insufficient or exhausted, the employee should be afforded the opportunity to complete a PS Form 3971 upon returning to duty and designate whether the remaining absence is to be charged to annual leave or Leave Without Pay (LWOP). Management may not unilaterally designate annual leave in place of LWOP."*

*"An employee who does not call in is considered absent without leave or permission (AWOL) until the facts in the case are received. The pending AWOL charge should not be entered on the time card at this time. The time card entry should be made after the facts have been received, as described in Chapter 3."*

AWOL should not be entered when an employee has properly notified the Postal Service of their absence, whether through the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system or **(continued next page)**

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through direct contact with local management. In such circumstances, management is aware that the employee will be absent and has received information regarding the reason for the absence. Because the employee has fulfilled their obligation to notify the employer, the absence cannot reasonably be characterized as being without authorization or without notice. Any determination regarding the appropriate leave category may be addressed separately, but the mere fact that management has been notified of the absence does not support the designation of AWOL.

In short, management is never permitted to charge an employee's Annual Leave without the employee's request and a PS Form 3971 supporting that re-

quest. While management does have discretion when it comes to approving or denying Leave Without Pay (LWOP), that discretion is not unlimited. Any decision to deny LWOP must be made on a case-by-case basis and cannot be exercised in an arbitrary or capricious manner.

The F-18 serves as management's Time and Attendance Handbook, while ELM Sections 510 through 519 provide detailed guidance regarding leave requests, leave approval, and the procedures management is required to follow. Understanding these provisions can help employees recognize when their contractual and handbook rights are not being properly observed.

Thanks,  
Michael Galvan

### **NALC BRANCH 111**

#### **Minutes of the Regular Union Meeting June 11, 2026**

**●Meeting Convened** at 6:33 pm

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

**Conducting:** Mike Wahlquist, President

**Pledge of Allegiance** conducted by Mike Simonsen

**Moment of Silence for George Westerman and Jay Reupena who have passed away.**

**Roll Call** by Steve McNees

**Minutes** of the May Union Meeting were posted.

With no objection the minutes will be filed for future reference.

**Reading of the Communications** by Steve McNees

We received election materials from Bill Water of Branch 419 in Knoxville, Tennessee. He is running for the office of National Trustee. • Dr. Wendy Davis sent us a flyer announcing she is running for House District 40. • We received National confirmation of receipt of our resolutions for National Convention. • National sent instructions for attendees at National Leadership Academy to be held in Maryland in August. • Management was notified of Privacy Act Violations and Postal Rules and Regulations regarding grievance files improperly stored at an employee's home. Management was asked to take immediate action to obtain the records, with our help if necessary. • The branch has endorsed Evan Done (Senate Dist. 14), Jennifer Daily-Provost (House Dist. 22), and Lannie Chapman (County Clerk). Each was sent a letter of endorsement.

**APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP** by Mike Hansen. New Members: Jeade'en Knox, Anthony Gutierrez

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

**MDA COORDINATOR** by Nathan Chester  
Bowling night is next Thursday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, 7-9pm at the Bountiful Bowl. The event is free, just make a donation, as big or small as you want to MDA. Free Pizza and soda. Nate would like some more sponsors (\$100 donation).

**DIRECTOR OF VETERAN AFFAIRS** by Jimmy Fleming – no report

**LEGISLATIVE** by Chad Mortensen  
Jennifer Daily-Provost (spoke last month). She followed thru by arranging a meeting last Friday with the her, Chad Mortensen, Utah Attorneys, and Phil Rodriguez regarding the Post Office bill that expired. We are moving forward again after many years. Vote by mail is being fixed by State and Union leadership. Representatives from State run organizations (DMV, Soc. Services., etc) will be getting together to discuss how the USPS can serve them. • They also discussed getting the Carrier Alert program going again (run by each city). • Chad proposed a possible change in the candidate endorsement process. Candidates would be given time limits to speak or they would be interviewed in Executive Board Mtg (**EBM**) and the **EB** would report to the branch their recommendations. No decision was made. • Last Tuesday the **EB** met with Stephanie Pilcher, running again for Senate District 14. Chad reported what she said and a motion was made to endorse Stephanie. The motion passed.

**TRUSTEES** by Chad Mortensen

They met Tuesday and reviewed 3 months of receipts. There was only one issue (a receipt without a signed warrant). It was quickly resolved.

**COMPENSATION** by Bob Jewell – no report

**HEALTH BENEFITS** by Jim Kerekes

• Don't forget to submit your Silver Script forms to get your \$600 refunds.

**ORGANIZER** by Justin Lindquist – not present

(minutes continued)

**SAFETY AND HEALTH** by Justin Lindquist – not present

**DIRECTOR OF RETIREES** by Jeff Asay – no report  
**TREASURER** by Mike Madsen

This was the tiniest monthly report ever. • Last Month: Income ~\$36,000, expenses ~\$25,000, net income \$10,343. • We earned \$475 in rewards for using a Costco credit card to pay for training last month.

• **VICE PRESIDENT** by Destiney Carrillo – not present

• **EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT** by Mike Hansen  
• 730 grievances filed so far this year. • June 1-3, Mike went to D.C. for the Collective Bargaining Conference.

President Renfro talked about what has happened over the last couple of months. Video updates have been placed on the National website (nalc.org). We have a responsibility to not do anything that will distract the parties during negotiations. On May 22<sup>nd</sup> our contract expired. Negotiations are ongoing until July 22<sup>nd</sup>. Union and management teams locked down at a hotel for a week to negotiate a contract. Now they meet a couple times per week. At the conference they discussed what the costs might be if changing different items being negotiated, but nothing has been decided yet. • Arbitration starts July 22<sup>nd</sup>, after National Convention ends. There will be 3 arbitrators. Arbitration can take up to 20 days for just presentation.

**PRESIDENT** by Mike Wahlquist -

• On Memorial Day weekend, Executive Vice President Destiney Carrillo was going to marry Jay Reupena but Jay died in a motorcycle accident on his way to the wedding ceremony. Mike thanked everyone in the branch for all of the support for Destiney (there was a lot). • Jay Reupena was a T.E. for

many years before converting to regular. Jay offered to help do the organizing. He had the ability to win over a crowd in two seconds. When he talked to new employees, they responded by joining the union. Jay was willing to help Mike with whatever needed to be done. He was an amazing man with a huge heart. We will miss him. • A motion was made to pass the hat for Destiney Carrillo. The motion passed.

**SPECIAL ORDERS:**

June 25<sup>th</sup> is the AFL-CIO Convention. Delegates are: John Mister, Jim Kerekes, Fernando Palofox, Phil Rodriguez, Kim Mortensen, Josh Thibodeau, Garreth Davies, Chad Mortensen, Keith Warner. Further information will be mailed out.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** none

**NEW BUSINESS:**

• CFC contributions are not going to the charities that are they are supposed to. National Officers will be notified. • A motion was made to create a Standing Order (Special Rule) to place a cap of 10 minutes to speak for all guest speakers, including questions after they speak. An exception applies to National union offices this year. The motion passed.

**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:** none

**FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SERVICE:**

The hat was passed for Destiny Carrillo. \$594 was collected

**DRAW AND ADJOURN:** 8:28 pm

• **\$50 DRAWING WINNERS:** Gary Thorne and Bob Jewell

• **RETIREES** – \$100 (Lee Dansie was not present). Next month it will be \$125.

• **PROGRESSIVE A** - \$150 (Jenny Woodall was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$175.

• **PROGRESSIVE B** - \$100 (Kerry Reeder was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$125

## Legislative

# Branch 111 Endorsed the following candidates:

- Salt Lake County District Attorney: Sim Gill
- Congressional District 1: Nate Blouin
- Utah House District 34: Erin Gemison
- Utah House District 42: Iva Williams
- Utah Senate District 13: Evan Done

- Utah Senate District 14: Stephanie Pitcher
- Salt Lake County Council at Large: Zach Robinson
- Salt Lake City Council District 5: Erika Carlsen
- Salt Lake County Clerk: Lani Chapman



*Branch 111*

# Summer POOL PARTY

Free-Free-Free

11 | JULY

6:15 PM - 8:15 PM

SATURDAY



We Rented the Entire  
Murray Aquatic Center

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84119

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UT  
Permit No. 1981

## UPCOMING DATES

June 17	Steward training	Please register now if you plan to attend the June Branch Meeting via Zoom. Register at Branch111.com or use the QR code below.
<b>June 18</b>	<b>MDA Bowling night</b>	
July 2	Eboard	
July 9	Branch Meeting	
<b>July 11</b>	<b>Branch 111 Summer Party</b>	
July 15	Steward Training	
August 3-7	NALC National Convention	
August 13	Branch Meeting	

**July  
Branch Meeting**



**Register Now**

**MDA**<sup>®</sup>  
MUSCULAR  
DYSTROPHY  
ASSOCIATION

NALC BRANCH 111



*Come for fun, bowling and food!  
Event is free but donations to MDA are appreciated*

🕒 **THURSDAY** 🕒  
**JUNE 18, 7-9PM**

📍 **Bountiful Bowl** 📍  
**(409 s 500 w Bountiful)**

<b>President</b> Mike Wahlquist 385-216-0476	<b>Editor</b> Nathan Chester Natech- ester8@gmail.com	<b>Safety &amp; Health</b> Justin Lindquist 801-301-9293
<b>Executive Vice-President</b> Mike Hansen 801-628-1848	<b>Director of Retirees</b> Jeff Asay 801-597-2380	<b>Food Drive</b> Josh Jessop
<b>Vice-President</b> Destiney Carrillo 562-370-3590	<b>L.C.P.F. Coordinator</b> Josh Thibodeau 801-953-6343 J.thibodeau77@gmail.com	<b>MDA</b> Nathan Chester Nathanches- ter.mda.nalc@gmail.com 801-450-0617
<b>Treasurer</b> Mike Madsen	<b>Legislative</b> Chad Mortensen	<b>Director of Veteran Affairs</b> Jimmy Fleming vet- eransaffairs@branch111.com
<b>Secretary</b> Steve McNees	<b>Health Benefits</b> Jim Kerekes 801-557-6033	<b>Trustees</b> Chad Mortensen Kirk McLaughlin Kortnie Chatterton
<b>Sergeant-at-Arms</b> Mike Simonsen	<b>Organizer</b> Justin Lindquist 801-301-9293	
<b>MBA &amp; OWCP</b> Bob Jewell 801-244-0929		