

Parcels Of Knowledge: The Last Loop - Episode 5

September 19 - September 25, 2026

USPS/NALC News Roundup

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Executive Summary

The strongest operational development this week is a new Amazon PM Delivery Pilot that would create a separate afternoon package operation at three test locations. A publicly reproduced NALC memorandum summarizing USPS Correspondence 5381 says Amazon will drop packages between noon and 1 p.m., clerks will sort them manually, and city carriers will deliver the packages between 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. the same day. Morgantown, West Virginia, and Lake Havasu City, Arizona, are scheduled to begin September 29; Columbia, South Carolina, is scheduled for October 20. The notice establishes package caps and route counts but does not answer the most important workroom questions about carrier reporting times, Article 8 administration, late Amazon arrivals, or how the Postal Service intends to staff a delivery operation deliberately built around the afternoon and evening.

Amazon is not the only pilot touching delivery. A September 24 NALC memorandum summarizes a Marketing Mail Optimized Delivery proof of concept that allows qualifying Marketing Mail to be deferred by no more than one day when a delivery point has no First-Class Mail that day. Austin testing began September 21 and Boston testing is scheduled for September 28. The same memorandum also describes USPS Correspondence 5385, a Washington, D.C.-area pilot using forward-facing cameras mounted inside 100 delivery vehicles to collect road, sign, map, roadway and sidewalk data. The cameras are scheduled to record only after a vehicle is in drive and outside the facility geofence; the notice says they will not record audio and will not be positioned in the operator's field of vision.

The network redesign also continued. USPS launched September 19 S&DC activity in Hebron, Kentucky, and Salt Lake City, Utah; PostalPro separately posted alerts for Indianapolis RPDC delays and an Amarillo RPDC activation scheduled for

September 28. Those items matter because the network changes examined in last week's GAO report are not a completed historical project. USPS is still moving carrier, processing and transportation functions while local employees are working inside the transition.

The current Postal Record adds several smaller changes that carriers may actually notice. MDD-TR update 8.41 added service type codes for matter for the blind, new heavy mail, printed matter and commercial marketing parcels; the update also separated the Parcel Delivery Photo Verification pilot by craft and enabled that feature for city carriers. The same City Delivery column reports that carriers generally preferred their normal vehicles over the Morgan Olson C175 test vehicle and that USPS does not currently plan to purchase C175s. Feedback from the eSprinter test was still being compiled when the column was written.

That scanner update intersects with a new mailing category worth understanding. Heavy Printed Matter is now a USPS Marketing Mail parcel subcategory that can weigh up to 15 pounds and is typically used for catalogs, directories and other qualifying printed material. Nothing in the public standards reviewed for this report identifies Uline by name. A large catalog may qualify if it meets the published standards, but "Uline" should not be treated as an official Postal Service classification.

The package-label story is also changing. The Postal Service is expanding use of the Intelligent Mail matrix barcode, or IMmb, which is a two-dimensional GS1 DataMatrix code used alongside the existing linear IMpb. Postal Bulletin 22711 says commercial Free Matter parcels will be required to carry both the IMpb and IMmb beginning October 4. That is not a general conversion from postal barcodes to ordinary QR codes. The same bulletin also created PS Form 1750-P for Postal Support Employee evaluations.

A recent OIG audit deserves a deliberate catch-up even though it was issued September 10. "Efforts to Mitigate Counterfeit Postage" says USPS shipped 6.8 billion packages and generated \$32.6 billion in package revenue in fiscal year 2025, while losing an estimated \$1.6 billion that year from counterfeit postage labels. The broader audit identified an estimated \$3.1 billion in revenue loss from March 2024 through February 2026 and an additional \$520 million in potentially unrecoverable revenue

through February 2028. The report made 11 recommendations and found gaps in oversight, label detection and interception, case referrals, funds recovery, tip analysis and online monitoring.

For injured carriers, the September/October Postal Record continues NALC's criticism of FECA Transmittal 26-2. NALC argues that the Department of Labor removed longstanding Procedure Manual language stating that an injured employee's account of how an injury occurred has "great probative value" unless refuted by strong or persuasive evidence. The article treats that change as especially important for carriers injured alone on the street and reports that NALC has already seen accepted claims reopened after later Postal Service challenges. Those are NALC's interpretation and reported experience with the change; the practical consequence is that injured carriers and representatives should expect the factual record surrounding an unwitnessed injury to receive even closer scrutiny.

The NALC election has now moved from campaign season into ballot season. The Election Committee says ballots may have entered the mail as early as September 18 and will continue until mailing is completed by September 28. Members who have not received a ballot by October 5 may request a replacement through the NALC Membership Department at 202-393-4695, with a 4 p.m. Eastern deadline on October 9; ballots must be received by noon Eastern on October 19 with ballots being counted that day or the next. Separately, NALC filed comments September 21 opposing an SEC proposal that would make electronic delivery the default for certain financial information that currently is mailed unless a recipient chooses electronic delivery.

The podcast week is enormous because ballots are arriving, but this report does not treat every candidate appearance as a separate news story. APWU and rural-carrier podcasts are being folded into their craft sections going forward, for a little cross-craft podcasts solidarity. I have attempted for the Podcast Desk to consolidate repeated campaign appearances, giving more space to episodes that add substantive education or historical context, and I am introducing The NALC Contrarian as a new feed that listeners have not yet been caught up on.

Story of the Week:

Amazon PM Delivery Creates a Separate Afternoon Operation

The Amazon PM Delivery Pilot is scheduled to begin September 29 at the Morgantown, West Virginia, S&DC and in Lake Havasu City, Arizona, with Columbia, South Carolina, following October 20. The NALC summary of USPS Correspondence 5381 describes an operation that is structurally different from the normal morning parcel stream: Amazon drops between noon and 1 p.m.; clerks manually sort the packages; and city carriers deliver them between 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. the same day.

The two September 29 sites are each listed with a 200-package cap and three delivery routes, an average of about 67 packages per route. Columbia is listed with a 500-package cap and five routes serving ZIP Codes 29205 and 29204, an average of 100 packages per route. The memorandum gives no anticipated end date. It also does not announce a nationwide rollout, new permanent job category, revised wage rate, national staffing formula or Amazon's price for the service.

The important carrier issue is timing. USPS is testing work that arrives after much of the ordinary delivery operation is already on the street. That creates questions that package counts alone cannot answer. Participating offices will need to identify who reports for the afternoon work, whether those employees perform other assignments earlier in the day, how the work is distributed between CCAs, PTFs, ODL carriers and other regular carriers, how Article 8 is administered, what happens when the Amazon truck is late, and how the additional delivery work is recorded. None of those questions is resolved merely by the pilot's announced 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. window.

This is also believe a useful follow-up to last week's Amazon hub discussion. Episode 4 dealt with carriers reporting that Sunday Amazon work was being consolidated into fewer hubs, raising travel, reporting-location, staffing and overtime questions. The PM pilot is different: instead of moving an existing Sunday operation, USPS is testing a new same-day afternoon handoff from Amazon to clerks and city carriers. The practical lesson is the same, though. When the operating model changes, stewards need the actual written instructions, schedules, clock rings, assignments and package data before deciding what contractual issues exist.

Two More Delivery Pilots: Marketing Mail Deferral and Vehicle Cameras

Marketing Mail Optimized Delivery

USPS Correspondence 5383 describes a proof of concept called Marketing Mail Optimized Delivery, or MMOD. Under the test, when a delivery point receives no First-Class Mail for a given day, qualifying Marketing Mail for that address may be deferred for a maximum of one day. Austin P&DC testing began September 21 for ZIP Codes 78703 and 78751 and is scheduled through October 16. Boston P&DC testing is scheduled from September 28 through October 23 for ZIP Codes 02128, 02129, 02152, 02143, 02144, 02145, 02149 and 02150.

The Postal Service says specific steps have been implemented so Election Mail is not affected by the proof of concept. The public notice does not provide the detailed carrier or processing instructions used to identify eligible pieces, nor does it say that offices outside the named test ZIP Codes have authority to adopt the same practice. For carriers, the question is not simply whether one day of Marketing Mail can be moved; it is how that decision changes workload from one day to the next and how the test distinguishes mail that is eligible to be deferred from mail that is not.

Forward-facing cameras in delivery vehicles

USPS Correspondence 5385, summarized in NALC's September 24 memorandum, describes a separate proof of concept with a company identified in the memo as Next Base. USPS plans to use forward-facing dash cameras in approximately 100 delivery vehicles in the Washington, D.C., delivery area, specifically at the Lamond Riggs Post Office and the Section 19 Carrier Annex. The stated purpose is to collect infrastructure data by scanning and analyzing roads, signage, maps, roadways and sidewalks as postal vehicles travel their normal routes.

The pilot was scheduled to begin September 21 and run for several months. The memorandum says the cameras are installed inside the vehicle, will begin recording when the vehicle is in drive and outside the facility geofence, will not record audio, and will not obstruct the operator's field of vision. City letter carriers' participation is described as operating the modified postal vehicles while performing their regularly

assigned street duties. USPS also says postal insignia and postal employee images will be redacted.

Those limitations are important because the notice describes a road-data collection pilot, not a carrier-facing body-camera program. It still leaves reasonable workroom questions: who retains the raw video, how long it is kept, whether location data is linked to recordings, whether footage can later be accessed for accident or disciplinary investigations, and what procedure applies when equipment malfunctions. The memorandum says NALC will review the correspondence and meet with USPS as needed; no broader national rollout is announced in the material reviewed for this report.

Network Operations: S&DC and RPDC Changes Continue

USPS continued moving pieces of the redesigned network during the reporting week. A September 21 PostalPro update reported September S&DC activity, while a secondary report based on that notice identified Hebron, Kentucky, as completing its final carrier insourcing and Salt Lake City, Utah, as beginning its first carrier insourcing on September 19. PostalPro also posted an Indianapolis RPDC delay notice and announced that the Amarillo, Texas, RPDC is scheduled to activate September 28.

PostalPro also updated its Louisville P&DC delay notice during the week. The public alert index is useful here because it shows that network modernization is not only a list of future facilities; it is also a stream of active processing and transportation advisories. For letter carriers, those upstream changes can surface later as late-arriving mail, unusual parcel flow, changed dispatches or workload that does not resemble the day before. The individual PostalPro notices do not establish that every local delivery problem is caused by the network redesign, but they document where USPS itself is warning customers and mailers that processing conditions are changing.

The Postal Record: Scanner Changes and Vehicle Pilot Results

Director of City Delivery Christopher Jackson's September/October column gives carriers a compact look at several technology and vehicle pilots. MDD-TR software update 8.40 changed Standard Performance Measurement sampling: collection-box requests are set to four pieces, while delivery samples are set to three letters and two

flats. Update 8.41, which went live July 13, added new service type codes involving matter for the blind, new heavy mail, printed matter and commercial marketing parcels.⁶

The same 8.41 update separated the Parcel Delivery Photo Verification pilot between the city and rural crafts and enabled the feature only for city letter carriers. That distinction is worth tracking as scanner functions become increasingly craft-specific. A software update can quietly alter what carriers are asked to scan or document even when there has been no new national agreement or handbook change.

Jackson also reports the results of the Morgan Olson C175 vehicle test. Fourteen carriers drove the vehicles more than 21,000 miles across five post offices. The Postal Service's report said participating carriers generally preferred their normal daily vehicles, citing difficulty in tight neighborhoods, visibility concerns, lack of cabin access to the cargo area and curblane-delivery problems. Carriers praised four-wheel-drive performance, lighting, reduced noise and vibration and the HVAC system. USPS told NALC it does not plan to purchase C175 vehicles at this time. A separate eSprinter pilot had ended, but USPS was still compiling the final feedback and purchasing determination when the article was written.

Heavy Printed Matter: A New Name Carriers May Start Seeing

Heavy Printed Matter, or HPM, became part of the USPS Marketing Mail standards effective July 12. The DMM defines HPM as a subcategory of Marketing Parcels covering regular and nonprofit carrier-route, presorted and nonpresorted parcels weighing no more than 15 pounds. The pieces must exceed the standards of a flat by weight or thickness and cannot be used for fulfillment purposes, meaning they are not simply products a customer specifically ordered for shipment.

USPS's Quick Service Guide describes the category as typically including catalogs, directories and other printed material. Catalogs must meet additional standards, and HPM cannot contain books or other non-eligible matter. That helps explain why the new MDD service type codes can matter to a city carrier: very heavy printed advertising can now arrive under a formal Marketing Mail parcel category rather than looking like an oddball piece that does not fit the old mental picture of "junk mail."

There has been carrier discussion about Uline catalogs in connection with this change. The safer description is that large catalogs may qualify as Heavy Printed Matter

if the mailer and the piece meet USPS eligibility and preparation standards; the report does not treat one specific company as automatically reclassified.

Postal Bulletin 22711:

The Matrix Barcode Is Not a QR-Code Conversion

The Postal Service is expanding use of the Intelligent Mail matrix barcode, or IMmb. PostalPro describes the IMmb as a two-dimensional GS1 DataMatrix barcode containing the same data as the linear Intelligent Mail package barcode, or IMpb. USPS developed the matrix code because linear barcodes on softpacks, polybags and irregular packages can be creased or distorted; adding two smaller matrix codes gives sorting equipment additional chances to read the same package data.

Postal Bulletin 22711 adds an IMpb-and-IMmb requirement for commercial Free Matter parcels. The standards take effect October 4, although the DMM revision itself is scheduled for publication November 2. USPS says the requirement improves tracking visibility and package processing. This is therefore not a general announcement that USPS is replacing its barcodes with QR codes. The IMmb is a specific GS1 DataMatrix used with the existing IMpb.

The same Postal Bulletin created PS Form 1750-P, “Postal Support Employee Evaluation Report,” effective immediately in September. USPS says the form expands PS Form 1750 to account for probationary-period changes affecting Postal Support Employees. It is an APWU/PSE-facing form rather than a city-carrier form, but it is a good example of why the Postal Bulletin remains worth checking even when the cover story is not directly about delivery.

OIG Fraud Watch:

Counterfeit Postage Is a Multibillion-Dollar Revenue Problem

The OIG’s final “Efforts to Mitigate Counterfeit Postage” audit was issued September 10, so it falls just outside this week’s reporting window. It is included here because the final report closes out a series of management alerts that have been building through 2025 and 2026, because the dollar amounts are substantial, and because Classes of Mail plans to return to the report in the coming week.

The official Oversight.gov record says USPS shipped 6.8 billion packages and generated \$32.6 billion in package revenue in fiscal year 2025, while losing an estimated \$1.6 billion that year by accepting counterfeit postage labels. The final report contains 11 recommendations and lists about \$19.2 million in questioned costs.

The broader OIG findings, reproduced in summaries of the report, place the estimated revenue loss at \$3.1 billion from March 2024 through February 2026, with another \$520 million at risk of becoming unrecoverable through February 2028. OIG credited USPS and the Postal Inspection Service with making progress but found no comprehensive oversight structure or formal decision authority for the counterfeit-label problem. It also identified opportunities to improve package-label detection and interception, case-referral oversight, recovery of funds, analysis of fraud tips, monitoring of counterfeit labels advertised online and collaboration with industry on new label technology.

This audit should not be confused with the IMmb rollout described above. The report discusses counterfeit-postage weaknesses and possible new label technology, while the IMmb is a separate published USPS package-visibility technology. The safe connection is broader: USPS is increasingly dependent on machine-readable package data at the same time its own watchdog says weaknesses in package-label authentication and payment verification have cost the agency billions of dollars.

Workers' Compensation:

NALC Raises Alarm Over FECA Procedure Manual Change

The September/October Postal Record continues NALC's discussion of FECA Transmittal 26-2, issued by the Department of Labor in April. The transmittal removed Procedure Manual language that had emphasized deference to an injured worker's description of how an injury occurred. The deleted language stated that an employee's account of an injury occurring at a given time and in a given manner had "great probative value" unless refuted by strong or persuasive evidence.

NALC's workers' compensation staff argues that this was not merely a stylistic edit. The article traces the language to decades of Employees' Compensation Appeals Board precedent and says versions of the same principle appear in more than a thousand ECAB decisions since 1998. NALC's concern is especially practical for letter

carriers because many traumatic injuries occur on the street without a supervisor or witness present.

The article reports that NALC has already seen accepted claims reopened after later Postal Service challenges and warns that more claims may become contested or delayed. That is NALC's interpretation of the developing effect of Transmittal 26-2, not a new statutory rule announced by NALC itself. For carriers and stewards, the practical takeaway is documentation: when the injury is unwitnessed, the contemporaneous statement, medical history, route conditions, photographs, witness information from before or after the event and consistency of the record become even more important.

NALC Election: Ballots Are Now in the Mail Stream

The NALC National Election Committee clarified that national-election ballots may begin entering the mail as early as September 18 and that mailing will continue until completed on September 28. The election is being administered by mail under the oversight of the Election Committee, with the American Arbitration Association preparing, mailing, receiving and tabulating ballots.

Members should not assume that every ballot was mailed on the same date or will arrive at the same time. The next practical checkpoint is October 5. A member who has not received a ballot by then may contact the NALC Membership Department for a replacement; the deadline to make that request is 4 p.m. Eastern on October 9. Ballots must be received by noon Eastern on October 19 to be counted.

The carrier-podcast ecosystem reflects that change in the calendar. Candidate interviews, slate programs, regional debates and turnout messages intensified this week as physical ballots began reaching members. The Podcast Desk below describes what those programs covered without reproducing their endorsements or converting campaign claims into independent findings.

NALC Government Affairs: SEC Electronic-Delivery Proposal

NALC filed comments September 21 opposing a Securities and Exchange Commission proposal that would make electronic delivery the default method for certain financial information under federal securities laws. Under the current framework described by NALC, the information is mailed unless the recipient chooses electronic delivery. NALC opposes changing that default.

For a postal audience, this is fundamentally a mail-volume issue. A rule that shifts recurring financial communications from paper-by-default to electronic-by-default can reduce a category of recurring mail over time. The current NALC public update states the union's opposition and links to its formal comments; the report does not treat the union's policy position as an SEC finding or as a prediction of the proposal's final outcome.

Carrier Safety: Queens Mail-Carrier Robbery Case Ends in Conviction

A federal jury in Brooklyn convicted Mahwanga Campbell on September 22 on charges arising from the violent robbery of a USPS mail carrier in Queens, along with stolen-mail and bank-fraud charges. The U.S. Attorney's Office announced the verdict September 23. Prosecutors said the case involved the assault and robbery of the carrier and fraudulent use of stolen or altered U.S. Treasury checks. Campbell faces sentencing later; co-conspirators remained at large at the time of the announcement.¹⁷

Peak Season Watch: USPS Publishes 2026 Holiday Mailing Deadlines

USPS published its recommended 2026 holiday mailing and shipping dates during the week. For the lower 48 states, the recommended dates for expected delivery before December 25 are December 17 for Ground Advantage and First-Class Mail, December 18 for Priority Mail and December 19 for Priority Mail Express. Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and U.S. territories have an earlier December 16 Ground Advantage recommendation, with the remaining dates generally following the lower-48 schedule.

This is not a carrier work-rule announcement, but it is the first routine marker that peak season is moving from abstract planning into public customer guidance. The more operationally important peak-season questions will be staffing, parcel volume, Sunday work and whether the new Amazon and network pilots expand before or during the holiday surge.

Around the Postal Unions: APWU

September 19 brought a scheduled contract implementation change for APWU-represented employees. Pay Period 21 adds new top steps for Grades 4 through 7 on the post-2010 pay scales and a 2 percent increase in night-shift differential

rates. Those changes arise from the APWU's 2024-2027 agreement and are craft-specific; they do not change the NALC city-carrier pay schedule.

APWU also filed a national dispute September 25 over electronic access to records. The union contends that USPS has failed to implement a memorandum requiring the parties to reach agreement on the means for APWU representatives to electronically inspect and review documents, files and other records needed to process grievances, determine whether a grievance exists, bargain collectively or enforce and interpret the contract. The dispute is APWU-specific, but the underlying problem will sound familiar to any steward who has spent time fighting over access to information.

APWYOU with Eric Chornoyby fits naturally in this section rather than the general Podcast Desk. Episode 40, "The Contract and Applicable Law," focuses on how the APWU contract interacts with statutes, regulations, postal handbooks and manuals. Chornoyby emphasizes Articles 3 and 19, warns stewards against either ignoring laws that actually apply or grabbing a general employment-law rule from the internet and trying to force it into a postal grievance, and repeatedly returns to the need to connect outside authority back to an enforceable contractual provision. The episode also spends time on steward education, maintaining personal research files and knowing when to ask for help.

Around the Postal Unions: Rural Carrier Desk

Going forward, I will be including and covering United We Scan in our Rural Carrier Desk. "Mail in Voting Part 3" returns to the federal ballot-mail dispute after the Supreme Court action covered in episode 4.. Its value here is not another full retelling of the litigation; it shows how rural carriers are discussing ballot handling while election mail is already entering the network.

"Sunday Work" is the more immediately practical rural episode. The hosts walk through Article 30.2.P, the Sunday/holiday parcel-delivery worklist, ARCs, RCAs and other leave replacements, volunteer regular rural carriers, seniority rotation and what changes when a Sunday hub is collapsed or decoupled. They also discuss an MOU permitting regular rural carriers to volunteer for Sunday work after the specified leave-replacement resources have been used.

The episode is still useful to city carriers because it shows why “Amazon Sunday” is not one uniform postal rule. The same packages can move through one employer while the city and rural crafts have different contractual staffing machinery. That distinction becomes especially relevant in a week when USPS is also testing a new city-carrier Amazon afternoon operation.

Labor Solidarity Watch: Coca-Cola Teamsters Extend Picket Lines

Outside the Postal Service, Teamsters at Coca-Cola Consolidated expanded an unfair-labor-practice strike during the week. The Teamsters reported September 22 that striking Local 135 members in Anderson, Indiana, extended picket lines to additional company operations and that more than 300 Teamsters in Akron, Toledo and Twinsburg, Ohio, exercised their right to refuse to cross the extended lines. The union said the action effectively shut down the company’s Ohio operations.

The facts here come from the Teamsters’ own strike announcement, so the union’s characterization of the bargaining dispute should be read as its position. The reason the story fits a solidarity segment is simpler: workers in other locations were asked whether they would cross an extended line and chose not to. That is a concrete example of solidarity operating across facilities rather than a generic statement about supporting another union.

Postal Podcast Desk: What the Carrier Shows Covered

Ballot season has turned the carrier podcast network into a flood of candidate interviews, slate programs and election commentary. The summaries below describe what the episodes actually covered. Endorsements, criticisms and claims about other candidates remain the views of the speakers unless independently established elsewhere in the report.

The Table Two Ticket

Episode 20 continues Andy’s transition from rank-and-file participant to working steward. The discussion covers his new steward responsibilities, the training gaps that can exist in smaller offices, what he is learning from actually having to build and defend cases, candidate forums and broader election thoughts. The useful thread is that becoming a steward changes the question from “why is the union not doing something?” to “what do I need to know and document to do something?”

Episode 21 then moves backward in time. Andy reads from former NALC President Fredric Rolando's 2012 presentation to the Das interest-arbitration panel, including NALC's description of the financial crisis, its willingness to accept a lower-paid noncareer workforce under stated safeguards and its opposition to management's proposed two-tier career wage structure. Because the episode reads the historical advocacy presented to the panel, it gives listeners source material for understanding the bargaining record immediately before the award that created the CCA classification and Table Two.

Carriers for a Better Union

"Unionism" is the strongest new item from this feed for The Last Loop because it moves beyond another candidate biography. Omayra Acevedo argues about what union leadership should look like, generational turnover, term limits, participation, accountability and whether long-serving officials can become disconnected from rank-and-file members. The episode also broadens into declining union density and organizing at employers such as Amazon and Starbucks. It is commentary, not an institutional NALC statement, but it captures one recurring election-year argument: whether changing names at the top is enough without changing how members participate in the union.

Hot House with Richie Ray

Episode 156 revisits John Cruz's old removal case after the case became part of current Region 15 campaign messaging. Richie Ray reconstructs the public disagreement over who prepared the arbitration, who helped negotiate the resolution and how credit for that work is being framed years later. The underlying grievance is less important to this roundup than the way an old representation case can become campaign evidence long after it is settled.

Episode 157 brings Corey Walton back for a long-form discussion focused on education, leadership, arbitration experience and the direction he says NALC should take if he is elected executive vice president. Walton talks about remaining connected to carriers, training, grievance advocacy and what he sees as failures in recent national leadership. The interview is campaign media and contains strong judgments about the

union's current condition; its research value is documenting Walton's own explanation of his priorities and philosophy.

Caref4Prez / Mike Drop Monday

The Caref feed spent the week on the road. "Mike Interviews Carriers in Anaheim" lets carriers ask Michael Caref about starting bargaining earlier, the 90-day statutory negotiation period, interest arbitration, pay, CCAs and how he says he would approach negotiations. "Your Union, Your Vote" is more explicitly a turnout and campaign-support program. "Mike Interviews Joe from Irving Texas" returns to a single carrier's workplace concerns: Table Two pay, heat, local-management compliance and knowing the contract. Taken together, the episodes show the campaign using short workroom and route-side conversations rather than another studio forum.

The History of Female Leadership in the NALC

Brooke Bollom describes becoming more involved after discipline following workplace injuries and representation that she felt did not protect her. Her later union work includes steward and branch roles, North Dakota state leadership, Emergency Response Team work, EAP-related service and prior academy instruction. Sara Tischler's path is different: communications and media work, then catering, then entering USPS as a CCA before developing into union and ERT work. The episodes continue the show's strongest theme: people arrive in union leadership from very different careers and often become activists because of a specific workplace experience that forced them to learn how representation actually works.

Six Thirteen

Episode 55, "The Convo XI," is another broad Bill Kriebel and Keith conversation about current postal and union issues during the final stretch of the election. The show remains useful less as a single-topic news source than as a running Region 12 conversation: the hosts move between what is happening in the Postal Service, what they are hearing from members and the internal election. This week's episode continues that mix rather than introducing one dominant new contractual issue.

From A to Arbitration

From A to Arbitration released a heavy series of Concerned Letter Carriers candidate conversations as ballots arrived, including programs with Rocky Acasio and

Tom Rooney, Howard Komine and Allan Rios, and Kimetra Simpson-Lewis alongside independent Health Benefit Plan candidate Henry Cordero. Rather than repeat each endorsement or campaign argument separately, the useful roundup point is that Walton's feed has shifted much of its election-period output toward giving CLC candidates direct long-form access to his audience.

Episode 315, "Salted Peanuts," is the more traditional educational release. Walton returns to discipline and case-building, emphasizing the need to make management prove what it puts on paper and working through examples of how a steward should attack the factual and procedural basis for discipline.

The Comfort Stop

Episodes 67 and 68 continue the "Triple Threat Tuesday" roundtable format with A-Dub, Lino Miranda and guests. Much of the conversation is election-driven, including reactions to ballots arriving and discussion of Health Benefit Plan candidate Henry Cordero. Because Cordero also appeared in a dedicated From the 573 interview, the Comfort Stop episodes are best understood as the loose roundtable side of the week's election conversation rather than a separate candidate profile that needs to be retold in full.

Next Generation Carriers

Next Generation Carriers added long-form regional candidate interviews with Kenny Janulewicz in Region 14 and Chris Reed in Region 1. Janulewicz discusses his regional-office experience, the responsibilities he believes an NBA should carry and the Region 14 campaign. Reed traces a relatively rapid path from CCA to steward, Formal A representative, branch president, regional advocate and arbitration work, then discusses the kind of regional leadership and training he says he wants to provide. These are candidate interviews; the value is letting members hear the candidates describe their own records and priorities.

Classes of Mail

Alan Gegax interviewed Bill Kriebel about the Region 12 race, Kriebel's campaign and his view of the regional office. The episode is openly supportive of campaign media from the host, so the useful content is Kriebel's own explanation of what he is running to change rather than Gegax's endorsement.

The Chris Reed episode is different. Reed uses the program to teach Article 16 and just cause, explaining the disciplinary process, management's burden, investigation requirements and the idea that even when management believes a carrier committed misconduct, it still has to follow the contractual process. This is the kind of education that belongs in the Podcast Desk: it is useful to carriers and stewards, but it is not itself a new weekly postal development.

From the 573

A-Dub's "Load Time with Henry Cordero" gives Cordero a long-form introduction as a candidate for Director of the NALC Health Benefit Plan. The discussion covers his background, union leadership, health-plan administration, transparency, auditing and the changes he says he would pursue. Cordero appeared on several other shows during the week; this dedicated interview is enough to capture the substance without repeating the same candidacy across every feed.

"Sitting Down with Another Region 5 Queen | Load Time with Larrissa Parde" intentionally takes a more personal approach than the Next Generation Carriers interview covered in Episode 4. Rather than repeating Parde's entire résumé, A-Dub spends more time on her upbringing, motivations, people who shaped her, training and Leadership Academy. For Last Loop purposes, that is a new angle rather than a reason to retell the same professional biography.

The Key Cases Podcast

Greg Rowe released two case-focused episodes. C-36646 Bosland involves the retroactive termination of a CCA's health benefits after premium indebtedness developed during unpaid FMLA leave. Rowe walks through the health-benefit provisions, ELM material and FMLA regulations used in the case. C-31980 Nolan is a national-level Article 19 decision involving M-39 Section 126.3; the arbitrator concluded that the particular handbook provision did not directly relate to wages, hours or working conditions and therefore was not enforceable through the grievance procedure under Article 19. Both episodes are useful because they show different limits and protections in the contract, but they remain podcast education rather than separate news sections.

New Feed Catch-Up: The NALC Contrarian

The NALC Contrarian is new to The Last Loop's regular listening list, so this week needs a catch-up rather than a one-episode summary. The show is hosted by President Kira Munn and Vice President Josh Breault of Branch 1779 in Lakeland, Florida. Breault explains the title by saying he likes dissent and believes disagreement can help a union grow, while distinguishing dissent from division. That premise carries through the first run of episodes: the hosts are willing to criticize the CLC, the national slate, individual officers, campaign behavior and sometimes each other.³⁹

The first three releases function as one long election series. "Election of National Officers Part1" begins with the presidential and resident-officer races and the hosts' personal experiences with candidates and slates. Part 2 continues through financial and administrative offices. The third installment focuses on trustee candidates and what the hosts believe the trustee role should be. The episodes include strong opinions and allegations; The Last Loop's purpose is not to reproduce their rankings. What matters for the catch-up is that the feed gives listeners an openly skeptical, branch-officer perspective on the entire national ballot rather than operating as a slate program.

"Synopsis: Candidate Forum" is especially relevant because Branch 1779 hosted the national candidate forum covered in Episode 4. In this follow-up, Breault and Munn explain how they organized the event, who attended, how the time was divided between candidate presentations and questions, and what they thought they learned from the exchanges. They also discuss instances where candidates approached them afterward to respond directly to criticism raised on the podcast. That makes the episode useful as an organizer's post-event account rather than another replay of five hours of forum audio.³⁹

The later episodes widen the feed. "Talking Shit after Work with anonymous Bryant" centers on what the hosts see as personal, sexist, homophobic and appearance-based attacks in election social media and their argument that campaign criticism should stay focused on conduct and representation rather than personal identity. "bullshitting with Rank And File Scotty" is more valuable for the workroom floor: Brault and Munn describe the day-to-day workload of representing a geographically spread-out branch covering roughly 400 members, 15 cities and 18 offices, including

Formal A work, discipline, noncompliance, Article 7 and Article 8 cases, delayed mail and steward burnout. “whose behind the voices...” is largely a get-to-know-the-hosts episode and shows that the feed also intends to mix union content with informal conversation.

Going forward, The NALC Contrarian can join the normal weekly rotation. The first catch-up needs to be longer because listeners have not been introduced to the show; future Last Loop episodes only need to mention it when the feed adds something substantive to the week.

Local Loop: Sycamore, Pennsylvania Loses Its Post Office for Now

For the Local Loop this week, we are heading to Sycamore, Pennsylvania, where the local Post Office temporarily closed after the Postal Service lost the lease on the building. Street delivery is continuing, so this is not a complete loss of mail service. The bigger disruption is for customers who used the office itself. PO box service, vacation hold mail, signature-required pieces and oversized articles are being handled through the Waynesburg Post Office while USPS looks for another option.

The local reporting did not include a reopening date, so for now the situation is open-ended. That is what makes this a good Local Loop story. On paper, it is one small office in one Pennsylvania community. For the people who actually use it, though, losing the physical Post Office changes where they pick up mail, where they go for accountable items and how far they may have to travel for services they used to get locally.

We talk a lot on this show about network changes, cost cutting and operational efficiency. A story like Sycamore is the other end of that conversation. Sometimes the postal system changes because of a national initiative; sometimes it changes because a lease ends and one community suddenly has to adjust. Either way, the effect becomes very local, very quickly.

The Week Ahead: September 26 - October 2, 2026

Monday, September 28, is a busy date. NALC’s Election Committee says national-election ballot mailing is scheduled to be completed by then. USPS is scheduled to activate the Amarillo RPDC. The Boston side of the Marketing Mail

Optimized Delivery proof of concept is also scheduled to begin September 28, adding eight Boston-area ZIP Codes to the test already underway in Austin.¹⁵⁵³

Tuesday, September 29, is the scheduled start for the Amazon PM Delivery Pilot in Morgantown and Lake Havasu City. Those are the first locations where the announced noon-to-1 p.m. Amazon drop and 2 p.m.-to-8 p.m. city-carrier delivery window can be watched in actual operation. The useful follow-up will be written staffing instructions and real operating data, not assumptions about how the pilot “must” work.¹

The podcast calendar is also active. Next Generation Carriers is planning a series of live candidate interviews Sunday on its Facebook page with candidates from across the 2026 NALC national election appearing in individual time slots throughout the day. Separately, Alan Gegax at Classes of Mail plans to go directly into the OIG’s “Efforts to Mitigate Counterfeit Postage” report. Those are two very different things to watch: one gives members more direct candidate access while the other gives listeners a source-focused look at one of the largest revenue-protection stories in the current postal record.

Just outside the formal week-ahead window, October 4 is the effective date for the new Free Matter parcel requirement to carry both IMpb and IMmb barcodes. That deadline is worth keeping on the radar because it is the first concrete effective date attached to the matrix-barcode change discussed in this report.

Week in Review

The week is best understood as a series of operational tests layered onto a network that is already changing. USPS is preparing an afternoon Amazon operation, testing one-day deferral of selected Marketing Mail, mounting forward-facing cameras in delivery vehicles, continuing S&DC and RPDC changes, adding scanner service codes and expanding package-label technology. None of those developments by itself rewrites the city-carrier contract. Together, they show how quickly the physical job can change around the contract.

That is why the written notices matter. The Amazon memo tells us the announced delivery window but not the staffing plan. The MMOD notice authorizes a narrow proof of concept, not local improvisation everywhere. The camera notice describes a forward-facing infrastructure-data pilot, not an audio-recording program.

The Postal Record tells carriers what changed in the scanner and what vehicle pilots actually produced. The OIG report shows the financial stakes when package-label systems fail.

The representation side of the week is equally active. NALC ballots are now entering members' homes, NALC is participating in an SEC rulemaking that could affect recurring paper mail, APWU is implementing pay-scale changes and filing a national records-access dispute, and rural carriers are explaining their own Sunday parcel rules while USPS tests another Amazon delivery model on the city side. Outside postal labor, Coca-Cola Teamsters demonstrated what an extended picket line looks like across multiple facilities.

Finally, the podcast desk is becoming its own record of the 2026 NALC election. The useful approach is not to repeat every endorsement. It is to preserve what candidates say about bargaining, training, finances, grievance handling, health benefits and regional representation; separate those claims from independent documents; and still make room for education and history. That is also why The NALC Contrarian is worth adding to the rotation: it adds another branch-level voice to an already crowded media ecosystem without needing The Last Loop to adopt its conclusions.

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