

908 News

NALC Branch 908
AFL-CIO
PO Box 1223
Blackwood, NJ
08012

South Jersey Letter Carriers

Atco, Barrington, Bellmawr, Berlin, Blackwood, Bridgeton, Clayton, Deptford, Egg Harbor City, Gibbsboro, Gibbstown, Glassboro, Glendora, Gloucester, Haddon Hts., Hammonton, Lawnside, Magnolia, Mantua, Maple Shade, Marlton, Mt. Ephraim, National Park, Paulsboro, Penns Grove, Pennsville, Pitman, Riverton, Runnemede, Salem, Sewell, Somerdale, Stratford, Swedesboro, Voorhees, Wenonah, Westville, Williamstown, Woodbury, Woodstown

Return Service
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BUY AMERICAN - BUY UNION

Newsletter Com: Litty, Lipski, Graff Phone: 906-2838 Fax: 227-0516 www.nalcbranch908.com January 2025

Presidents Report

Happy New Year everyone. As we head into 2025, we will once again be faced with many issues as we move forward. First off, I would like to welcome our brothers and sisters from **Branch 4623 Clementon** to their new home of Bill Revak Branch 908. We believe this merger will be a great asset to our branch as it now is official effective January 1, 2025.

As many of you are aware, 2 of our brothers passed away last year, and to keep our branch moving forward I have made a few changes in our executive board effective January 1, 2025. I have appointed Assistant Recording Secretary **Mike Graff**, to the position of Financial Secretary to replace brother **Steve Lipski**. I have appointed Trustee, **Allen Muff**, to the position of Assistant Recording Secretary. I have appointed Clementon steward **Dave Jonczak**, as Trustee. At this time, I will not be appointing anyone to fill the vacancy of Heath Benefit Rep, **George Greenwood**, as we continue our search for a qualified member to take over his extensive and time-consuming duties. In the interim, I will be available to answer questions on our health plan as needed. Thanks for your cooperation in this matter.

Next, everyone should have received their ballots for the tentative agreement that were sent out to the membership last month, and I ask everyone to please cast your vote on this tentative agreement. All ballots must be received by January 27, 2025, in order for it to be counted. I am sure we will have information on the results sometime in late January or early February. If the contract is ratified, members can expect to get their retroactive monies within a reasonable time. Stay tuned for the latest updates.

Next, we have done something that has been over 40 years in the making. For those Civil Service retirees who have worked other jobs over the years and had their Social Security benefits slashed by two-thirds by the G.P.O. and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), the Senate passed the bill overwhelmingly in the last hours of Congress by a vote of 76-20. This means once President Biden signs this legislation, it will become law, and all those future social security benefits will be paid fully to those who paid into it. This is a massive victory for all letter carriers and public servants that have been unfairly treated over the years. This was a huge effort by thousands of workers nationwide to get this bill over the top. Congratulations goes out to everyone who put in a lot of time and effort to get this bill to the floor. I can say I spent the entire week watching CSPAN, with a lot of my fellow CSRS brothers and sisters, waiting for the debate to end and the final vote to be cast. This was a cool way to watch our democratic process work, even though it was very tense to see if the bill would get passed. Now, we can move on to those other bills that need attention as well.

Next, I mentioned at last month's meeting about a **Safety Blitz** team the district is sending out on the street monitoring our members. Please be aware they are out there looking for you to do things they can hold you accountable for. Please don't wear earbuds, talk on your phone, drive without a seatbelt, etc. I ask if you encounter anyone out there to please ask for their identification. I also ask if they engage you to please tell them you would like to contact a union steward, or me personally, since we have not been made aware of their reasons for being out there harassing any of our members and we shouldn't be answering any of their questions. They are not your manager, so treat them as such.

Next, I haven't received any updated information on any S&DC's so far, but that doesn't mean they are not progressing. As soon as I get any information on a possible one opening in our area, that may affect our branch, I will let you know.

Next, I want to give a shout out to one of our own local heroes, Brother **Anthony Scardino**, out of our Stratford office. Tony alerted 911 when one of his customers had fallen and needed help. His actions helped save the life of one of his customers. Way to go Tony. We will also be giving him an award at our retirement dinner this year, so please come out and support his effort in going above and beyond.

Lastly, it was nice to see another great turnout at last month's meeting. I'm hoping this is going to be the same going forward, as this is your union, and you need to stay involved and become engaged in what is happening. Always feel free to bring your questions and concerns to the meeting, since we are there to help everyone. Remember, there is strength in numbers, and as long as we stay together, whether we agree or disagree on certain things, we will always prevail.

President-Gary DiGiacomo

Winter Has Arrived Be Prepared for the Weather Coming: FYI From the EVP

First and foremost, hope everyone had a great holiday and all is well. Everyone should have received their ballots in the mail by now to vote on the new tentative agreement. Exercise your right to vote please, this is your time to be heard no matter what your vote will be, that is your decision. What's most important is your participation in voting, don't let someone else decide the fate of the agreement, get involved. Now to cover what the headline of the article is about. I have written about the following subject before, I would like to just remind all of us of some tips on how to handle the weather we are sure to encounter in the next few months. This month is a good opportunity to discuss how we handle snow conditions, particularly when it comes to walking between houses. Management will have you believe that snow/ice conditions do not affect delivery or your times. Obviously, that's completely wrong. Management does not factor in the safety issues of cutting lawns when you can't see the surface below the conditions. Here is the proper response to these situations. **M-00273 June 15, 1978 Step 4 MOU:** Postal Service policy does not advocate that management issue blanket orders requiring letter carriers to cross every lawn or take every shortcut. **Lawn crossings are governed by Article 41.3.N which provides the following:** Letter Carriers may cross lawns while making deliveries if customers do not object and there are **no particular hazards** to the carrier. **JCAM** explains this provision as follows **Lawn Crossing:** good example is Arbitrator Garrett stated in his Cincinnati Lawn Crossing decision (NC-NAT-13212, August 20, 1979, C-03228) National Arbitrator Sylvester Garrett did not set down clear standards for determining when customers have objected to "carriers" crossing their lawns and when hazards exist which would make crossing lawns unsafe. Garrett did set down the following general guidelines: A carrier may be instructed broadly to take all "obvious shortcuts" and to cross all lawns where there is no reason to believe the customer may object. However, the determination of what constitutes an obvious shortcut or whether a hazard exists is made in the first instance by the **carrier. The carrier's judgment** can be exercised only in the light of the specific conditions at the location involved. A

supervisor may conclude, after personal observation and discussion with the carrier, that a particular lawn should be crossed and order the carrier to cross the lawn. The carrier may not ignore such an order with impunity. His remedy is to file a grievance. However, discipline should not be imposed upon a carrier who had exercised his discretion and not crossed lawns, merely because a supervisor later decides that some of the lawns could have been crossed. The determination of what constitutes an obvious shortcut or whether a hazard exists is made in the first instance by the carrier. See JCAM Discussion above. So please don't take weather conditions as a blanket reason to not cut lawns, rather determine on a house-to-house basis. Remember this is your determination, just be prepared to explain each instance if questioned. A blanket order to just cross lawns is not in itself a reason for discipline. If you are being forced to do anything different than the points above described, please notify your Shop Steward. We have great Stewards they are prepared to fight this if it occurs. Always remember their bad day is not yours, they also have a responsibility to follow the rules. **Stay Strong, Strength in Numbers. Feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions. Executive Vice President Shawn McBride (856)649-9317**

Comments From the VP

Happy New Year to all our active and retired members and their families! I would like to thank the members of Branch 908 for all your support and having the confidence in me to serve as your Vice-President. I would also like to thank all our active carriers and CCAs for a job well done throughout the year and especially during the hectic holiday season. As in past years, I recommend that everyone start the New Year off by checking their Personnel file for mistakes and for discipline that should have been removed from their file. The Postal Service, in compliance with OPM, has gotten rid of the paper versions of the OPF (Official Personnel File), the files are all digital now and you can view your file from your home computer. I know this sounds like a broken record, but I would like to remind all our active members to serve their routes in a safe and professional manner. Do not be bullied by management and their projections to run through your route. Take your lunch and breaks and take the time that is necessary to complete your route safely. Make plans now to attend our annual Branch Banquet on Saturday, April 12, 7 – 11pm at the Elizabeth Ballroom in Gloucester City NJ 08030. **Tickets are \$20 for active members and guests, \$10 for branch retirees** and will be on sale starting on February 1. Contact VP Mike Powell at (856)-906-2026 or 908vp@comcast.net or your shop steward for info or tickets. Over here at the Camden, aka shit hole, Annex we are still in an intervention due to management's blatant disregard for the contract. I want to encourage all our active members, retired members and CCAs to try to attend our monthly meetings. It is not only your chance to get valuable information on things happening in the Branch but more importantly to ask questions or voice your concerns to your elected officers. You can also grab a bite to eat, have a beverage of your choice and meet and mingle with new and old friends. If any active, CCA or retired member needs my assistance on any issue please contact me anytime at (856)-906-2026 or 908vp@comcast.net. **Proud to be Union. Mike Powell – Vice – President**

NALC Health Benefits Plan

Everyone should have received a new insurance card effective 1/1/25. Even if you were already with NALC HBP, they sent new cards with new member ID numbers. Eyeglass reimbursements should be sent to Branch 908 Optical Fund P.O. Box 1223, Blackwood NJ 08012.

A 44 Year Uphill Climb And Now We Plant Our Flag in Victory!

August 13, 1981, will go down in American history as probably the most horrific day ever for a Social Security beneficiary. The day I'm referring to is when then President Ronald Reagan signed into law The Omnibus Reconciliation Act Of 1981. Two months later in October 1981, a 22-page report highlighting legislative changes and Medicare provisions was published. The person who wrote the report was then Social Security Commissioner, John A. Svahn. On January 20, 1981, President Reagan made it very clear (in his inauguration speech) that he wanted to change the way the economy was during that time. President Reagan stated, "We

suffer from the longest and one of the worst sustained inflations in our national history. In the days ahead I will propose removing the roadblocks that have slowed our economy and reduced productivity. Steps will be taken aimed at restoring the balance between the various levels of government. And these will be our first priorities, and on these principles, there will be no compromise". With that being said, The Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) program had 4 major changes placed under the law (3 of these, we have been fighting to get rid of for decades!) A: Elimination of the minimum Social Security benefit for both current and future beneficiaries and payment instead of a wage related benefit based on the worker's average earnings. B: Payment of the lump-sum death benefit only when there is a spouse who was living with the worker or a spouse or child eligible for immediate monthly survivor benefits. C: Offset of Social Security disability benefits when the total public plan benefits based on disability exceed pre disability earnings-a "Megacap" provision. For 44 years, our union and our Civil Service Retirees were climbing an uphill battle trying to fix this dreadful "slap in the face" decision by our 40th President of The United States of America. Finally, the uphill climb was over!!

On December 20, 2024, The Senate summed up The Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82) in 2 words....**NO MORE!!** The Retirees and Gold Card members of The N.A.L.C. will **NO MORE** endure the reduction, subtraction or elimination of their Social Security benefit. In an overwhelming vote of 76 to 20, we now as a union can plant our flag in a long fought legislative battle and claim victory! I want to thank the members of Branch 908 who reached out to their members in Congress and The Senate during the "**Take Action**" alert. The "**Take Action**" alert sends a direct email to the politician telling these men and women in Washington to please sign and support our piece of legislation, in this case H.R. 82. Also, I want to sincerely thank all my members over the last few months for signing up to The Letter Carrier Political Fund. The selfless acts you did signing up for the first time or increasing your contribution truly got us over the hump as a union! This is another reminder to me that all things are **POSSIBLE** when we continue to stick together, fight and don't give up on the goal at hand. Retirees and Gold Card members of 908, if you are not a contributor to our PAC, please consider signing up and joining our legislative fight. I am **RESOURCE** for you, and you can contact me anytime. Signing up is simple and doesn't cost a lot of dollars. In addition, if you are a Retiree that was affected by the Windfall Elimination Provision or Government Pension Offset there is a National Social Security Hotline you can contact for questions or info Monday to Friday, 8am to 7pm (wait times are shorter to speak to a rep from 8am to 10am and 4pm to 7pm). The phone number is **1 (800) 772 -1213**.

In other news, Tuesday April 1st is our 2nd Annual Branch 908 CCA/PTF Night. The meeting starts at 7pm. Please continue to attend the monthly general meetings and read our monthly newsletter to get further updates.

Finally, I want to thank this month's LCPF contributors: **Jason Axilbund** (Westville), **Kevin Breitenstine** (Retiree, Stratford), **Mike Breyer** (Retiree, Sewell), **Mario Illiano** (Bellmawr), **Keith Mitchell** (Bellmawr), **Steve Petrillo** (Haddon Heights) and **Aaron Wallack** (Clementon). My phone number is **(856) 220-8658** and my email address is opleckyjr@gmail.com if you need to get a hold of me. I look forward to saying hi to you all at January 15th's meeting. **In Solidarity, Ozzie Lecky**

**(By making a contribution to the LCPF, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the NALC or of employment by the USPS, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. The LCPF will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled. Contributions to the LCPF are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the LCPF from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administration staff, or their families.)*

“The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress. Out of its bold struggles, economic and social reform gave birth to unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, government relief for the destitute and, above all, new wage levels that meant not mere survival but a tolerable life. The captains of industry did not lead this transformation; they resisted it until they were overcome. When in the thirties the wave of union organization crested over the nation, it carried to secure shores not only itself but the whole society.”

- **Martin Luther King Jr.**



Next Meeting

The next regular monthly meeting of the Branch will be held on **Wednesday, January 15th @ 8 p.m.**, at the American Legion Hall, 502 Colonial Ave., North Woodbury. The regular monthly meetings of the Branch are held on the Third Wednesday of each month @ 8 p.m. The Executive Board and Shop Steward meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. The Executive Board meets @ **7:30 p.m.**, and the Shop Stewards @ **8 p.m.** The next meeting of the Executive Board and Shop Stewards will be on **Wednesday, January 8th @ 7:30 and 8pm** respectively.

Attendance Prize Winner!

At the regular monthly meeting of the Branch on Wednesday **December 18th, Jordan Isreal**, a member out of our **Vorhees** Office won the **\$250** attendance prize. The prize now stands at \$25 and will increase \$25 per meeting, up to a maximum of \$250, until a member in attendance has their name drawn.

Tentative Agreement

The deadline to return your ballot has been extended until January 27, 2025. If you have not received your ballot, call the National @ **202-393-0614** between 9am and 4:30pm.

2025 Branch Budget Approved

Those in attendance and eligible to vote at the regular monthly meeting of the Branch held on December 18th unanimously approved the Branch 2025 Budget. The budget estimates the receipt and expenditures of the Branch at \$301,454.00 for 2025.

Save the Date

Annual Branch Banquet – April 12, 2025, start planning to attend now. The 18th Annual Branch 908 Banquet will be held on Saturday, April 12, 2024, 7 – 11pm at Elizabeth’s Ballroom located at Highland Blvd. & Sylvan Ave., Gloucester City NJ. This is a great night to eat, drink, dance, and socialize with good friends and especially to honor those members who have retired in the past year as well as those who have been selected to receive Branch Awards.

MDA

We will be doing a block pool for the big game this year. <https://superbowlpoolsite.com/contest/569155?p=> is the link to purchase a block for \$25. See your steward to purchase a block without the link. Half the proceeds will go to MDA. All contest rules can also be found on the link. We will also be raffling off a PS5 Digital edition with NBA 2K25 bundle along with some gift cards at the June meeting. Tickets are \$5 each and will be available to purchase soon from your shop steward, at the general meetings or you can call/text **Jason Dempster 856-503-5007**. All proceeds benefit **the Muscular Dystrophy Association**.

National Day of Mourning

To honor President Jimmy Carter the Postal Service will observe Thursday January 9th as a National Day of Mourning.

Unfortunately, CCA’s are not entitled to be paid for the National Day of Mourning. PTF’s will be paid what hours they were scheduled to work. Both PTF’s and CCA’s may be utilized that day. PTF’s who are utilized that day will be given administrative leave to be used at a future date within 6 months. See page 184 of the National Agreement or section 519.4 of the E.L.M

CCA/PTF Night

We will be hosting our second annual CCA/PTF night on Tuesday April 1st at 7pm. Starting in February **Ozzie Lecky** will be contacting CCA’s and PTF’s. If you do not hear from him by March 1st call or text him @ 856-220-8658.

PTF CORNER

Each month we would like to take a few minutes and go over some talking points for PTF’s. It is so important to help you folks understand your rights. This is a great forum to do this in. We encourage you to please send us your input and any future questions we can list them and give answers to help you all. Below are a couple items from the Questions and Answers for PTF’s that the national put together, mainly the difference between CCA’s and PTF’s. Each month we will try to touch on different points.

Q. What are PTFs?

Answer: PTFs are career carriers who are a part of the regular workforce and have flexible work hours rather than a fixed schedule. PTFs are identified by USPS designation activity code 43-4 on their PS Form 50, Notification of Personnel Action and in the Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS). Article 7 of the National Agreement defines the different classifications of employees, including PTFs: **ARTICLE 7 EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS A. Regular Work Force.** The regular workforce shall be comprised of two categories of employees which are as follows: 1. Full-Time. Employees in this category shall be hired pursuant to such procedures as the Employer may establish and shall be assigned to regular schedules consisting of five (5) eight (8) hour days in a service week. 2. Part-Time. Employees in this category shall be hired pursuant to such procedures as the Employer may establish and shall be assigned to regular schedules of less than forty (40) hours in a service week, or shall be available to work flexible hours as assigned by the Employer during the course of a service week.

Q. Do PTFs have a work-hour guarantee?

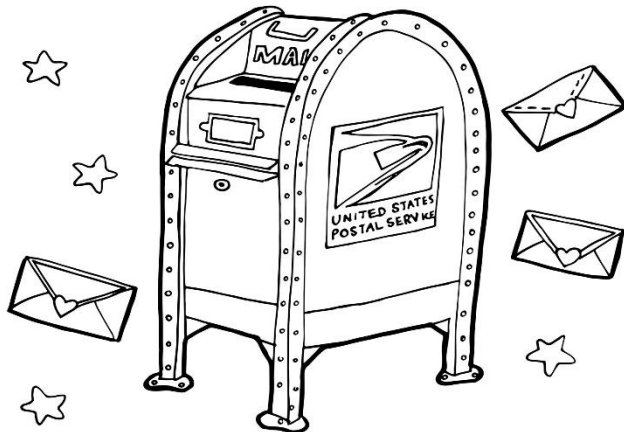
Answer: While PTFs have no weekly work-hour guarantees, they maintain the daily work-hour guarantees that apply to CCAs. Article 8, Section 8.C provides the same work-hour guarantees to PTFs as Article 8, Section 8.D provides for CCAs: C. The Employer will guarantee all employees at least four (4) hours work or pay on any day they are requested or scheduled to work in a post office or facility with 200 or more work years of employment per year. All employees at other post offices and facilities will be guaranteed two (2) hours work or pay when requested or scheduled to work. D. Any CCA employee who is scheduled to work and who reports to work in a post office or facility with 200 or more work years of employment shall be guaranteed four (4) hours of work or pay. CCAs at other post offices and facilities will be guaranteed two (2) hours work or pay.

Q. What hours/schedule will I be expected to work as a PTF?

Answer: Article 8 of the National Agreement describes the workweek, work hours and work schedule for letter carriers. PTFs work a flexible schedule and most of scheduling/ work hour guidelines for PTFs are similar to CCAs; however, there is one important difference, found in Section 6: **ARTICLE 8 HOURS OF WORK Section 6. Sunday Premium Payment** Each employee whose regular work schedule includes a period of service, any part of which is within the period commencing at midnight Saturday and ending at midnight Sunday, shall be paid extra compensation at the rate of 25 percent of the employee’s base hourly rate of compensation for each hour of work performed during that period of service. An employee’s regularly scheduled reporting time shall not be changed on Saturday or Sunday solely to avoid the payment of Sunday premium payment. While PTFs may be required to work on Sunday, they will receive an additional 25 percent of the base hourly rate for each hour worked.

Look for more information next month and months ahead!

Thanks for



ALL you do!

LANA'S SHOP

To share any questions, comments, original artwork or photographs send to aprillitty@gmail.com.

Check us out online @ nalcbranch908.com
And on Facebook NALC Branch 908

CCA CORNER

Each month we would like to take a few minutes and go over some talking points for CCA's. It is so important to help you folks understand your rights. This is a great forum to do this in. We encourage you to please send us your input and any future questions we can list them and give answers to help you all. Below are a couple items from the Questions and Answers for CCA's that the national put together. Each month we will try to touch on different points.

Question: How are CCA's considered when applying the letter carrier paragraph?

Answer: CCA's are considered as auxiliary assistance. Accordingly, management must seek to use CCA's at either the straight time or regular overtime rate prior to requiring letter carriers not on the overtime desired list or work assignment list to work overtime on their own route on a regularly scheduled day.

Question: is there a limit on the number of hours CCA's maybe scheduled on a workday?

Answer: Yes, CCA's are covered by section 432.32 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual, which states; Except as designated in the labor agreement for bargaining unit employees or in emergency situations as determined by the PMG (or designee), employees may not be required to work more than 12 hours in 1 service day. In addition, the total hours of daily service, including scheduled work hours, overtime, and mealtime, may not be extended over a period longer than 12 consecutive hours. Postmasters, Postal Inspectors, and exempt employees are excluded from these provisions.

Question: Do CCA's receive Night Differential or Sunday Premium?

Answer: CCA's receive Night Differential as defined in Article 8.7 of the National Agreement. CCA's do not receive Sunday Premium.

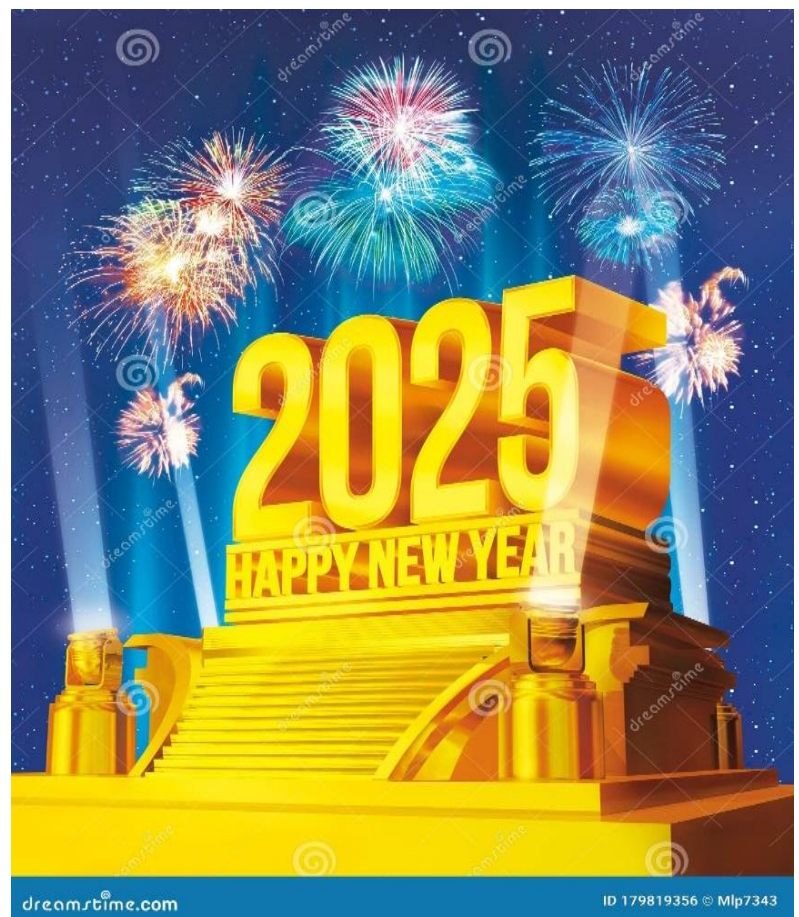
Question: Can CCA's be required to remain on "stand-by" or remain at home for a call-in on days they are not scheduled to work?

Answer: No

Non-Members

Gianna Giunta-Ruiz, Paul Heil, Lawrence Trimmer-Woodbury
Luis Luna, Dawayne Sanders-Williamstown
Walter Lyons-Hammonton Mark Robinson-Swedeseboro
Nocole West-Stratford Tyrone Johnson-Riverton

If you know someone who is not a member but would like to be, tell them to see their steward or they can contact any branch officer, and we'll take care of them.



Thank you all for your hard work throughout the year especially the Holiday season. The Branch Officers wish you a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year!

Branch Attorneys

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