

# NEWS BY NINE

## NEW ROUTE EVALUATION AND ADJUSTMENT AGREEMENT

As we had predicted, the National parties have entered into another JOINT ROUTE ADJUSTMENT AGREEMENT. New name (Modified Interim Alternate Route Adjustment Process). New acronym (MIARAP) but the same concept as last year's plan.

The new agreement lays out different periods from which data will be taken for the evaluation, but generally data will be used from March and/or April or May 2009. The exact period of data is entirely dependant on when your station was last evaluated and adjusted. Evaluations in this new process will begin May 1<sup>st</sup> with the actual adjustments being implemented June 1<sup>st</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>. The agreement also lays out evaluations for this fall and actual adjustments are scheduled for November 1<sup>st</sup> through February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The National parties agree that we are not in a "usual mail volume environment". While day to day the mail volumes vary, the fact is that total volumes are at historical record lows. This has created increased daily confrontations over work load. Many carriers have been pivoting consistently all winter long. We can all agree these are unusual times, and understandably, so are the plans.

The fundamental similarity with both the new and old route adjustment processes is that the regular carriers' demonstrated performance, along with historical volume and base count information is coupled with a joint consultation with each regular carrier. Every carrier with a route will meet directly with a local joint team. There has never been a route adjustment process either formal or new fangled that has been considered fair or accurate by ALL letter carriers. I don't believe that is even possible. But, at least with these joint agreements, every regular carrier with a route being evaluated gets a chance to talk to those in charge of the information and evaluation.

Some of the specific particulars are still being hammered out by the National parties. Fortunately we have our National Rap Session in just two weeks. This will provide the 10 representatives from Branch 9 that will be at the Rap Session a perfect opportunity to talk face to face with our officers at the National as well as other branch leaders from around the country who are facing the same challenges on the ground that we are. We are all in this together.

These are not necessarily the best of times. Mail volume is down and continues to fall each accounting period. Overtime as a whole is down too, and what is being worked is for the most part still in violation of the contract. And, while one would think the grievance payouts for these violations would somehow change management's behavior, it hasn't yet. We'll just continue to win money until they get it right. The stewards and Step A advocates for Branch 9 have been doing a tremendous job of filing grievances and beating management's arguments at every level. Thank your steward today...they're doing an incredible job!

Looking back at any time in history, especially that with enormous changes and challenges, you'll find that **PEOPLE AND CAUSES THAT STAND THEIR GROUND ARE THOSE WHO SUCCEED!**

We must remain strong in our actions and our beliefs.

Thank you for your membership!

Pam Donato & Mike Zagaros