

News and Views



Official Publication of Central Kentucky Bluegrass Branch 361, NALC

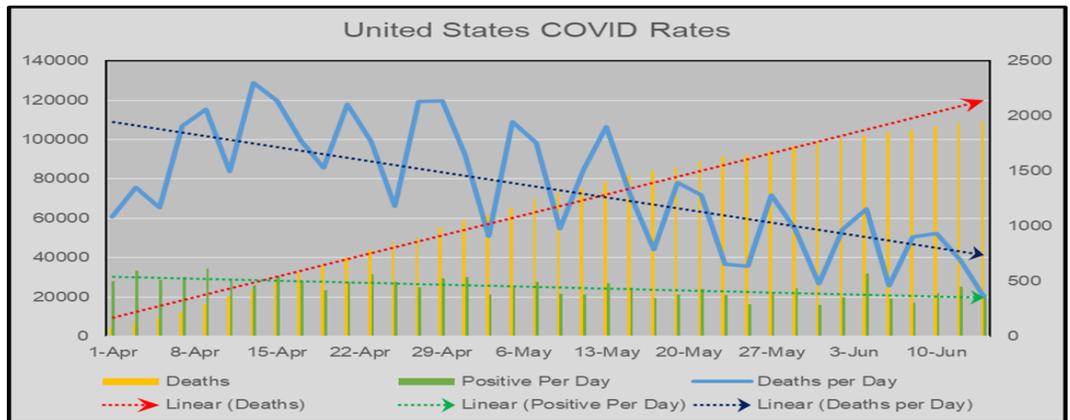
2020 Issue 6

Jul. 2020

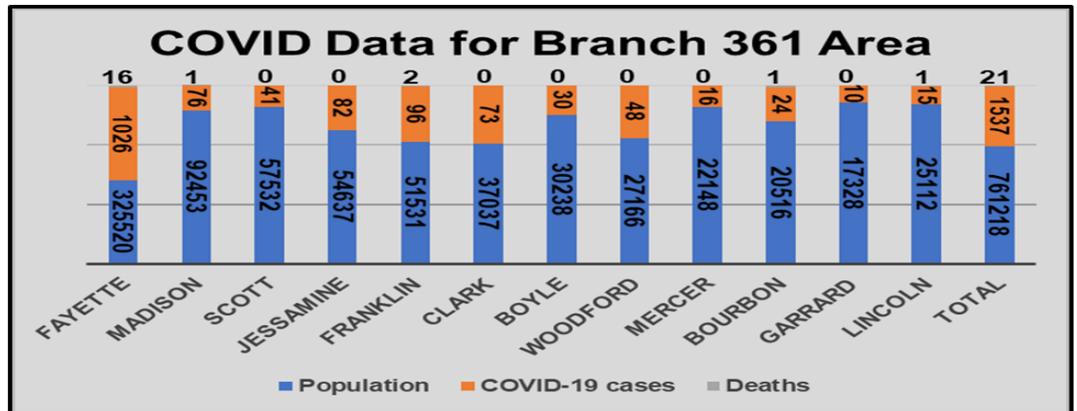
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President's Page - Ken Becraft



Graph 1: As of June 13, 2020. Data from covidtracking.com



Graph 2: As of June 13, 2020. Data from govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19

County	Case Increase in last 30 Days	Percent of Total cases in last 30 Days	County	Case Increase in last 30 Days	Percent of Total Cases in last 30 days
Fayette	658	64.13	Madison	42	55.26
Scott	9	21.95	Jessamine	36	43.90
Franklin	79	82.29	Clark	53	72.60
Boyle	13	43.30	Woodford	31	64.58
Mercer	5	31.25	Bourbon	15	62.50
Garrard	7	70.00	Lincoln	10	66.67

Table 1: As of June 13, 2020. Data from govstatus.com/kycovid19

President's Page continued

In the last couple of articles I've discussed some of the basics of COVID-19 and its effects on everyday activities of the branch and the Postal Service. As I wrote last month, I wish that I could report that the virus was under control, or gone, but that is simply not the case, as the number of cases is increasing on the average of **100,000** per day around the world. The cold hard truth is that we will be probably be discussing COVID and its effects this time next year, not only in regard to the health and welfare of our co-workers, but also in relation to the financial health and existence of the company we work for.

As you can see from the graphs on the front page, in the United States the total number of deaths continues to rise at a pretty steady upward trajectory. The number of deaths per day is on the decrease, but is still running around 1,000 per day, and the number of new cases each day is averaging around 22,000. It is also of note that the number of cases in and around the Bluegrass is on the uptick over the last 30 days. Lexington is up 658, Frankfort is up 79, Winchester is up 53, Richmond is up 42, Nicholasville is up 36, and Versailles is up 31. Some of this may be attributed to more testing, but more than likely it is also being affected by the reopenings.

Point is, the virus is still running rampant across the United States, the world, and Central Kentucky. It is additionally important to understand that none of these statistics addresses the number of asymptomatic people walking around spreading the virus, unaware that they are infected.

How does COVID-19 spread? Coronaviruses like COVID-19 are most often spread through the air by coughing or sneezing, through close personal contact (including touching and shaking hands), or through touching your nose, mouth, or eyes before washing your hands.

Why doctors are worried. "What we're seeing from footage -- especially from the states where we see these cases rising -- is that states are not opening gently. They're opening with lots of crowds," said Dr. Rochelle Walensky, chief of the infectious diseases division at Massachusetts General Hospital. "They're opening with a lack of face masks ... And when that happens, you don't need too many infections for cases to soar." That's because without social distancing this coronavirus can be twice as contagious as the flu. It's easy to infect others even without symptoms. And it has a lengthy incubation time, meaning those who eventually get sick can be contagious for days without knowing it.

What is Social Distancing? Social distancing or physical distancing is a set of infection control actions intended to stop or slow down the spread of a contagious disease. The objective of social distancing is to reduce the probability of contact between persons carrying an infection and others who are not infected, so as to minimize disease transmission, morbidity, and ultimately, mortality.

Social distancing is most effective when an infection can be transmitted via droplet contact (coughing or sneezing); direct physical contact, including sexual contact; indirect physical contact (e.g. by touching a contaminated surface); or airborne transmission (if the microorganism can survive in the air for long periods).

Social distancing may be less effective in cases where an infection is transmitted primarily via contaminated water or food or by vectors such as mosquitoes or other insects, and less frequently from person to person. Drawbacks of social distancing can include loneliness, reduced productivity, and the loss of other benefits associated with human interaction.

Why won't people wear masks? Good Question! According to an article on Healthline.com, there may be a lot of people walking around who have COVID-19, but have no idea they are spreading the virus. The first word of this possibility came in early April from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) director, Dr. Robert Redfield, in an interview with National Public Radio affiliate WABE. "One of the [pieces of] information that we have confirmed now is that a significant number of individuals that are infected actually remain asymptomatic. That may be as many as 25 percent," Redfield said. Then a few days later, researchers in Iceland reported that 50 percent of their novel coronavirus cases who tested positive had no symptoms.

In another report, the CDC stated that researchers in Singapore identified seven clusters of cases in which presymptomatic transmission is the most likely explanation for the occurrence of secondary cases. That report was backed up by a study published in mid-April which concluded that people with no symptoms are the source of 44 percent of diagnosed COVID-19 cases. In addition, a study published about the same time reported that people might be most contagious during the period before they have symptoms. Then, in late April, it was reported that the first known person to die from COVID-19 in the United States was first reported to have died of a heart attack on February 6, at her home in Northern California.

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President's Page continued

Finally, two studies published in late May indicated that a high percentage of people with COVID-19 could be without symptoms. In one study, researchers reported that 104 of 128 people (81 percent) on a cruise ship who tested positive with the novel coronavirus were asymptomatic. In another study, researchers reported that 42 percent of people who tested positive for COVID-19 were without symptoms. "Of those of us that get symptomatic, it appears that we're shedding significant virus in our oropharyngeal compartment, probably up to 48 hours before we show symptoms," Redfield said. "This helps explain how rapidly this virus continues to spread across the country, because we have asymptomatic transmitters."

How transmission works

"It isn't a strange idea with respiratory viruses that such an inadvertent transmission could take place," said Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious disease expert from Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Tennessee. "It's to the virus' benefit, because if you have seemingly healthy people moving around spreading the virus, that maximizes the transmission," he told Healthline. "Once you get sick, you tend to restrict your encounters with others."

To demonstrate how fast the virus transmission works among people who may be unwittingly infecting others, Dr. James Hildreth, president and chief executive officer of Meharry Medical College and an infectious disease expert, illustrated the spread in a public service announcement. He said people who study virus spread assign viruses basic reproductive spread numbers. "One that comes to mind is measles. Measles is one of the most contagious viruses we've ever known and its number is somewhere between 12 and 18," Hildreth told Healthline. "By comparison, the COVID-19 virus, its basic reproductive number appears to be about 4. What that means is that each person who is infected by the virus has the potential to spread it to four other persons in a susceptible population."

"If you do the math, the number of people infected would double every 6 days or so. But the actual data in some parts of the country is that the virus is doubling every 3 days," Hildreth added. He noted that this novel coronavirus that began in December in a market in Wuhan, China, has infected 1.4 million people in 4 months. "When you're dealing with a virus like that, everything we can do to break the chain of transmission is exceedingly important, because there are people who are spreading the virus and are not aware of it," he said.

This makes masks more important

After first telling the public there was no need for anyone to wear a mask unless you were sick or coughing, the CDC did an about-face in early April. Now, the agency is recommending that people wear a face covering if they go to a public place. They've posted instructions on how to properly wear a cloth mask. **But does a cloth mask work?** "It actually works in both directions," said Schaffner. "But we're surer that masks inhibit the spread out rather than the acquisition in." **Why the CDC reversal?** "Two reasons. One is very practical. Early on, they didn't want there to be a run on masks and respirators by the general public, siphoning them off from the healthcare environment. That was a very real concern," Schaffner said. "The second thing is the appreciation of pre-symptomatic transmission has become more evident over time," he added. "It takes a little bit of time for those discussions to go on and for everyone to agree to ask the American public to do something that is culturally alien."

What we are doing?

We have cancelled the July monthly meeting.
We will have a joint person and zoom meeting in August.
We have stopped renting the hall.
We have ensured that the hall was cleaned and disinfected.
We are allowing all the Branch Officers and Stewards to work from home, instead of congregating at the Hall.
We are holding virtual Executive Board Meetings.

I hope that, as the 120 thousand deaths in the United States demonstrate, everyone understands that this virus is **serious**. So, take it serious, practice good hygiene, and be aware of social distancing guidelines. It may not be you who gets sick. It may be your companion, spouse, parent, grandparent, or child.

Postal Finances. A big "Thank You" to everyone who sent emails, letters, or called your representative. Just remember that the fight is not over; so please continue to put pressure on your congressmen to include the Postal Service in any upcoming economic relief packages that may come out of the House and Senate.

New Postmaster General. For those of you who missed it, our new Postmaster General took office on June 15th. I haven't read anything about the transition, but I do know that he held meetings with management during the two-weeks prior.

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President's Page continued

The biggest directive I've heard come out of those meetings is cost cutting, and to the sum of 35-billion dollars. Imagine whose backs that is going to fall on. I'll give you one guess, and it's not management.

Vice President. As some, if not most, of you know, David resigned his position as Vice-President a few weeks ago. I appointed Denise Preston to fill out the remaining six-months of the term.

Election. As an early reminder, the Branch is holding elections for all positions this year. Due to the COVID restrictions and social distancing, we may have to make some alterations to the nominations process. The Executive Board will be discussing this issue at their next meeting and will present their recommendations to the membership at the August monthly meeting.

Monthly Meetings. Due to COVID Social Distancing guidelines and the size of our meeting room, we will be making some adjustments to our monthly meetings. There will be no food or drinks served at the meetings, social distancing and masks will be strictly enforced, and all meetings will also be presented in the Zoom format. The last will be a work in progress, so please allow for the usual technical hiccups that come with trying something new. Ken

This is the meeting link for the August meeting:

Topic: August Monthly Meeting

Time: Aug 4, 2020 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting: (you can copy and past the link below from the news and views digital copy on the branch361.org website.)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89806844339?pwd=S1dmK3cxanN2NDZtNTZvUjZkNVFVdz09>

Meeting ID: 898 0684 4339

Password: 683361

One tap mobile:

+13126266799,,89806844339#,,,,0#,,683361# US (Chicago),
+16465588656,,89806844339#,,,,0#,,683361# US (New York)

Dial by your location:

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago), +1 646 558 8656 US (New York), +1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown), +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston), +1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose), +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 898 0684 4339

Password: 683361

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89806844339?pwd=S1dmK3cxanN2NDZtNTZvUjZkNVFVdz09>

Robert's Ramblings - Robert

Thanks to all the officers, stewards, and members of Branch 361 who have answered the call of NALC to contact our two US Senators and US Rep. to urge support for Fiscal Stimulus for the US Postal Service to survive. Kentucky has the Majority Leader of the US Senate, Mitch McConnell, who can shape or control facets of the next stimulus package, including providing essential funds the US Post Office will need to survive this Covid-19. You have read the details in the last few issues of News and Views. The threat to US Mail and all our jobs and benefits, and the probable benefits of retirees, would all go away. The reasons are numerous and can be discussed later this year, but we all need to continue to contact Leader McConnell and the other two at nalc.org; our loved ones can go to heroesdelivering.com to contact the two Senators from KY, and your US Rep. The message is simple: fund the survival of USPS. The letters many have received or emails about providing \$10 Billion is deceptive. That loan authority from the Treasury would gut our Collective Bargaining, benefits, health benefits, retirement. Explain that to your family, or significant other that the source of this wonderful income could be going away because Congress does not want to fund the Post Office any more. We can discuss the reasons later, as I said earlier, but now you will have a hellish family crisis when your income goes away. We are not talking about college tuitions, think about standing in one of the food assistances lines we all have worked to get full every Letter Carrier Food Drive Day (at least most of us). If you have never gone hungry, that is good for you. We could join the 40 million + Americans out of work, and looking for food. We must continue to influence our elected Reps. to vote to fund USPS, in this vital election year. They pay consultants who will notice this issue from the constituents in Kentucky. Do not fail to act and wish you had, if this job as Letter Carrier goes away as we know it.

Recently during a nationwide teleconference with President Rolando, EVP Renfro, NBA Clark, LPO Mudd, Your State and Branch Officers, Kentucky Letter Carriers were praised for contacting the aforementioned US Reps. But we must continue to contact them every day until we get the funding we need in the next stimulus package. Congress has funded airlines, Boeing, Hotels, taxpayers, and others, and all are worthy. But so is the Postal Service since 1775, before we had a country or Constitution. It binds the nation together. Especially during this awful virus that has no cure or vaccine yet. The Branch here has answered the call, and it has informed our members through this superb newsletter which

continued at the bottom of the next page

Voice of the V. P - Denise Preston

Hello everyone, I hope you are doing well. I do the orientation for new CCA's. I understand that the CCA's learn a lot in their classroom training. I also understand that it is hard to remember every little thing they are taught in class. Some things I like to reinforce during the orientation is that you have to follow all state and federal laws and the safety rules of the Postal Service. Such things as not parking on the wrong side of the road, don't drive down the wrong side of the road, when you park in a parking lot, park so you can drive out of spot not back out, always put your vehicle in park, set your parking break, and ALWAYS remove the key if you remove yourself from the seat for any reason after shutting off engine. Everyone needs to use common sense to do your job. If you think what your about to do may not be safe or legal then DON'T DO IT. If you question whether or not you are doing something the correct way don't guess, ask questions. Please ask your supervisor, station manager, or call your Union Steward there are no stupid questions you learn more about your job from asking questions and it could keep you out of trouble. I have been a city carrier for over 15 years and I still ask questions.

Each and every one of us should be using good housekeeping practices. I don't know a single carrier that wants to get into a truck for the day and have to clean your garbage, leftover food, or empty tubs or DPS trays. It is your job to clean up after yourself. I have in my career seen a lot of disgusting things left in the trucks. The trucks belong to the post office not you. Not to mention everyone should be sanitizing their truck since Covid hit. Plus, if you check your truck at your last stop to get it ready to empty you can make sure you don't have any mail, SPR's or parcels you have missed. This is a good habit to get into to eliminate mistakes and you stay out of trouble.

I also give the CCA's a work hour tracker to keep track of their hours. This is also a good habit to get into for your career, so there are no questions if your hours are correct or not on your check. I have some CCA's and regular carriers call and ask questions and I do my very best to get the cor-

rect answers they need.
 rect answers they need.
 The last thing I would like to talk about is our jobs and how we want to keep them. Please contact your Senators about keeping the post office going. We all need our jobs. We passed out letters to everyone, I really hope that everyone mailed them in to voice keeping your job. You can also go online and send them emails. Go to NALC.org, we need to join together to get this done. I know how everyone has heard the rumors about the post office struggling financially. This is REAL!! I still have copies of the letters if anyone needs them just contact me or contact your steward, we can get them to you.

Allegra Printing on Moore Drive donated printing a thousand copies of these letters to our Union. They are also Union and wanted to support us. So, I want to give a shout out for their support.

Denise

Grievance Report May 2020

OFFICE	FILED	SETTLED	OPEN
Beaumont	0	0	0
Berea	0	0	0
Bluegrass	3	0	3
Brentwood	0	0	0
Danville	0	0	0
Frankfort	1	0	1
Gardenside	4	1	3
Georgetown	0	0	0
Harrodsburg	0	0	0
Lancaster	0	0	0
Liberty Road	1	1	0
Nicholasville	0	0	0
Paris	1	1	0
Richmond	0	0	0
Stanford	0	0	0
Versailles	0	0	0
Wilmore	0	0	0
Winchester	0	0	0

Mac

Recording Secretary - Randy Wiles

I hope everyone is dealing with the COVID virus along with everything else going on in the world today. These are some trying times that we are going thru and unfortunately no one has a crystal ball to predict what is going to happen when things go back to what will be the new normal, especially with the Postal Service and the letter carrier craft. There have been some long hours put in by postal workers during this pandemic. We need to have all letter carriers, retired and active, regular and CCA's to get on board and contact their Senator and Representatives repeatedly to get them to support a stimulus bill that will include getting the Postal Service the money needed to keep it operational. In addition to the National, State and Local elections in November, our Branch elections are coming up this October and we need to make sure the data base is current, this includes updates such as name, address, status (CCA to regular), work location, and phone number changes. To make the election run smoothly we need all the corrections and changes to ensure you will be able to select the steward that will represent your zone. Other things that will affect the election include, but not limited to:

not completing the ballots correctly, not signing the return envelope, not returning the ballot in the specified time, not voting at all..

Provide all changes to your steward or send the information to the branch secretary or News and Views editor via email or text. Include your name with the information needing to be updated. Hope to see you at the August monthly meeting.

Randy

Financial Report for April 2020

Deposits	\$19,499.33
Checks	\$ 9,923.52

Financial Report for May 2020

Deposits	\$12,707.08
Checks	\$ 2,171.52

Balances

Checking	\$69,151.32
Savings	\$71,693.82
Building Fund	\$10,178.06
Retiree Fund	\$14,039.11
Hall Rental Fund	\$11,619.04

Sgt. at Arms - Zed Waltz

Its that time of the year again when things really start to heat up and I am not talking about just the weather. Politics is back on the main stage again and with that come many different opinions. The thing to realize is that we all have an opinion on who should hold the office of Presidency and who should hold local offices in the state of Kentucky. I would encourage all USPS employees to reach out to their Senators and Representatives in their District to see where they stand on issues. Things we need to pay attention to are things like Pre-Funding of Retiree Health Benefits 70 years into the future, Privatization of the USPS, where they see the USPS in the future and of immediate concern, inclusion of emergency funding for the USPS during the pandemic, in the next economic stimulus package.

The office at work is not the place to converse about politics and our personal views on the issues and doing so would be a direct violation of the Hatch Act. Something to be aware of, is that we are not allowed to talk politics while on the clock or in uniform. This includes any social media post like Twitter, Facebook, and many other online sites. While you are at work in uniform or even in a Postal vehicle while on lunch you should not be posting, liking, and sharing political views. I would encourage everyone to get online and google the rules for Federal employees. The U.S. office of Special Council has issued Hatch Act Social Media Guidance rules for all Federal employees. They have also issued a 50-day suspension without pay of a USPS employee for partisan social media post on a wide range of political issues, while on the clock. So, please do not talk politics while working and do not post your political views while on the clock in uniform. Lets just do our jobs and keep the politics at home.

Zed

MDA - Ron O'Bryant

Since we haven't been together for quite some time, our fund raising for MDA has languished. To begin to get back on track, I would like to ask everyone who plans to attend the next scheduled monthly meeting (Tuesday August 4th) to come prepared to make our MDA 50/50 drawing a really good one and hopefully whoever the lucky winner is will also be blessed with a kind heart and donate their winnings back to MDA.

Until the cure is found

Ron

Share Your Views!

The deadline for submissions to News and Views is the 1st of each month. Interested parties are encouraged to submit articles to be printed subject to space available and approval of the President. To submit an article to News & Views please send it to;

President Ken Becraft
P O Box 911203
Lexington, KY 40591
or electronically to;
kbecraftbranch361
@gmail.com

Editor Mike Holbrook
PO Box 371
Richmond, KY 40476
mhkynalcde@aol.com

All articles must be typed in Ariel 11 font and signed by the author, or submitted on electronic media.

The articles in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or the local Branch. The Editor reserves the right to edit, delete, or reject any article in the interest of the good of the Branch.

In the interest of benefitting the goals of the NALC, permission is hereby granted to other parties to use any part of this newsletter as long as credit is given.

New Members Applications to be read at the August 4th meeting from the following newly hired CCAs.

Kelsey Harrison
Anthony Chance
Stacey Middleton
Albert Williams
Kymberly Rechenmacher
Molly Duncan
Kelly Gess
Zachary King
Tonya Perdu
Craig Snowden
Michael Kenealy
Dominique Walker
James (Scott) Taylor
Nyesha Lee

The next scheduled monthly meeting is slated for August 4th with no meal, physical distancing and masks required to attend. If regulations governing meeting size at that time do not permit, the meeting will be canceled. Be sure to check the next issue, the website and Facebook for updates.

All social activities normally sponsored by the Branch are cancelled until large gatherings are deemed safe.

This includes the Picnic, Fall Festival and Holiday Party

Central Kentucky Congressional Delegation

	Local Phone #	D.C. Phone #
Rand Paul, Senator	1-270-782-8303	1-202-224-4343
Mitch McConnell, Senator	1-859-224-8286	1-202-224-2541
Bret Guthrie, 2nd District Rep	1-270-842-9896	1-202-225-3501
Thomas Massie, 4th District Rep	1-859-426-0080	1-202-225-3465
Hal Rogers, 5th District Rep	1-606-679-8346	1-202-225-4601
Andy Barr, 6th District Rep	1-859-219-1366	1-202-225-4706

Central Kentucky Branch 361
NALC, AFL-CIO
P.O. Box 911203
Lexington, KY 40591-1203



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NEWS AND VIEWS



NOW OPEN

NEW MAIN OFFICE
124 Louie Place
in Townley Center

BRANCH OFFICE
1088 Nandino Boulevard
Behind the main post office