

The PONY EXPRESS



May 2015

The History and Purpose of Labor Unions

You may be wary of labor unions. Our attention tends to be focused on the very few situations that seem to impede our rights. The focus needs to be on the important role that labor unions fulfill. Workers need fair treatment today as much as ever.

Unions began forming in the mid-1800s in response to the impact of the industrial revolution. National labor unions began forming in the post-Civil War era. Today, unions continue to serve the same purpose for which they were originally founded. Unions are important because most businesses focus on creating profits at the expense of the employees. Executive compensation is skyrocketing, while the middle class suffers from layoffs, unemployment and stagnant wages.

Unions have been doing a lot of good in sustaining the middle class life style. Most studies suggest that with a decline in union memberships, middle class income decreased correspondingly. The percentage of workers belonging to a union peaked in 1954 at almost 35%, with the total number of union members peaking in 1979 at an estimated 21 million. In 2014, the average weekly income for union workers was \$973 in 2014, compared with \$763 for non-union workers. In Idaho, we currently have over 75% membership in the Idaho Rural Letter Carriers' Association amongst rural carriers.

Today, most labor unions in the US are affiliated with the AFL-CIO, but make note that the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association is NOT. We are an association created solely by rural carriers for rural carriers. Unions can bring important benefits to the company as well such as improving morale, reducing turnover, and improving productivity.

The NRLCA is currently in negotiations with the US Postal Service for the next contract. Only union members have the right to vote to ratify the new contract when it is presented. When disputes arise over the contract, the NRLCA, through the grievance process, holds the USPS accountable. We enjoy Weingarten rights, which guarantee representation in

investigatory interviews. If management questions a rural carrier on a matter that may lead to discipline, the carrier can request representation by their union steward.

More than ever, we need the collective voice and bargaining power that the union provides to keep our employer from making the workplace look as it did in the early 19th century. Without collective representation, the threat of sweatshop conditions, unlivable wages, and 70-hour work weeks may become a part of our future as well as our past.

Without this union, and the efforts of others, we may not have been able to save the six-day delivery that we have now. What would that have done to the RCA's or to the regular carrier's ability to utilize their annual and sick leave? When there is no accountability, management is capable of doing tremendous harm.

Take a hard look at what you benefit from, every day, through the efforts of the union. Are we a perfect union? Of course not, no one is. But we can become a stronger union with your help. Join today.

IDRLCA Secretary-Treasurer Lori Bennett

NRLCA President Jeanette Dwyer

will speak to the IDRLCA 2015 State Convention. Jeanette P. Dwyer, of Lake Waccamaw, NC, was re-elected President of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association at the 110TH National Convention in Grapevine, Texas on August 15, 2014. She previously served as President from 2011-2014, Vice President from 2008-2011, and as Executive Committeeman from 2002-2008.



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Please report corrections to addresses and telephone numbers to The Pony Express.

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Boise Boi-Five Mile				
Boise Boi-Garden				
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Craigmont				
Culdesac				
Deary				
Eagle				
Emmett				
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Grangeville				
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Greenleaf				
Hayden Main				
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Southern Idaho District Representative's Report

Salt Lake City/ Nevada-Sierra District Representative Brian Draper

Management Gave Me a Direct Order Today

Direct Orders: I have an idea for a new t-shirt for rural carriers; on the front it will say, "*Management Gave Me a Direct Order Today*"; on the back, "*Ask for Additional Pay and Watch it Go Away*".

The reports from the field seem to have a lot of managers coming up with new directives from the "District." I will briefly address some I have heard. In all cases, contact your ADR if this is happening:

No more DACA 3 or DACA 5 allowed: This is fine but if the regular carrier works their relief day, DACA 3 or DACA 5, they must be paid.

RCAs cannot work overtime: No problem, but if RCAs work over 40 hours, they will be paid overtime. If this is so, then how does Sunday Amazon figure in? If not using RCAs, is the alternative to pay the regular Carrier DACA 3 or DACA 5? What would be a good business decision based on regulars making more than RCAs?

NO RCA can work six-days: If the RCA is on a six-day auxiliary route, they cannot be kept from working.

Make your daily evaluation or take your DPS to the street: First, we have a weekly evaluation not a daily. Secondly, the carrier has the right to choose to case DPS letters or not. Thirdly, prior to being made to do so, the carrier must have issues with the customer window, weekly evaluation and dispatch. Finally, the decision must be on a case by case basis and cannot just be an announcement that all the routes are doing this. The PO-603 Section 223 must be followed.

Every route will only have three pieces of equipment: The PO-603, Chapter 2, must be followed and the basic rule is minimum one inch per address. If the route, like most now, has over 700 customers, then three pieces of equipment will not do it.

If you do not make dispatch you have to take the mail to the Plant: Only if you are an RCA and you are on the clock and are given mileage if you are using a POV.

You can come in early but put 7:00 a.m. on your PS 4240: Plain and simple, the manager is having you falsify a USPS document and putting both their job and yours at risk. **NO OFF THE CLOCK WORK ALLOWED.**

When given a direct order or directive by your manager you must first follow it, unless it puts you in an unsafe condition. If it is unsafe, file a *PS 1767, Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice*. Otherwise

follow the order, then discuss it with the manager and ask where the directive originated. If they state the "District," ask who at the district, specifically. Then ask if you can see it in writing or get a copy. This would serve two purposes: first we can see if the manager is interpreting the order correctly and, secondly, see if the order violates the National Agreement. If they cannot say who or show you in writing, then odds are it is something that cannot stand the light of day to shine on it as it would be a violation. That being the case file your grievance and contact your local steward or ADR and we will get the answers and adjudicate the grievance in accordance with our National Agreement.

Management continues to try and control rural carrier overtime, but never takes into consideration that the only things they can control are regular carrier DACA 3 and DACA 5 and RCAs working green card or overtime. Regulars are on an evaluation and only mail counts, growth or route adjustments can effect what a regular earns.

There is a very simple solution to eliminate both DACA payments and RCA overtime. Get this: all they need to do is follow Article 30.2.A.2 and hire a leave replacement for every route. Managers will tell you they cannot hire or they have tried. However, management has proven just the opposite in the past year as they have easily hired hundreds of CSAs for the city craft. Why not do the same for the rural craft?

Nevada has no excuse as their unemployment rate is 7% higher than the national average of 5.6%. Idaho and Utah have a better unemployment rate, but have not made any real attempts at advertising rural jobs. Management can no longer just put the posting on the web and sit and wait for applicants. There is little cost involved with notifying the Job Service, utilizing direct mailings, job fairs and using lobby or parking lot signs.

There are many more things flying around out there but, if it doesn't sound right it probably isn't right and a grievance may be in order. It always comes back that most of our issue are in part due to the shortage of leave replacements.

In the meantime if any of you want to use my t-shirt idea, have at it, but send me one, size 3X.

Support your Union and Steward

The only way to have an effective union is with the strength of numbers. Every member needs to support the union and the local union steward in your office. Solving problems on the job depends far more on the courage and unity of the members than on our claims or arguments. If the union members don't really care,

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Northern Idaho District Representative's Report

Alaska District Representative Patrick Pitts

Seatbelts Save Lives

The carriers in the Long Life Vehicles (LLVs), shown below, survived in large part because they were wearing their seatbelts.



That should be all I need to say. You know it. I know it. Everyone knows it. Seatbelts save lives.

When a traffic accident occurs there are actually two collisions. The first is the initial collision between the vehicle and whatever it hits or hits it. The second collision occurs inside the vehicle when the occupant is thrown, often violently, against the steering wheel, dashboard, or windshield. According to the National Safety Council, in a recent reporting year, more than half of those killed in traffic accidents were not wearing seatbelts.

While you may not be able to avoid or prevent the first collision, you most certainly can avoid or minimize the second collision, of you colliding with the interior of the vehicle, by properly wearing your seatbelt. The belt and shoulder harness gives you the greatest level of protection by spreading the force of the collision evenly throughout your upper body.

You drive a lot of miles each day, week, month and year, at times delivering on very dangerous roadways in all weather conditions and, as we can all attest, there are some crazy drivers out there. The possibility of hitting, or being hit by, is something that should always be on your mind.

We all know, or should know, the requirements for seatbelt usage while on the route. It's spelled out pretty clearly in Handbook PO-603, *Rural Carrier Duties and Responsibilities* (section 171.51 if you're interested in

reading the specific requirements in detail). Seat belts must be worn at all times when operating a Postal Service owned or leased vehicle. If a privately owned right-hand drive (RHD) vehicle is used on the route, seat belts must be worn at all times. Carriers driving RHD vehicles equipped with both shoulder and lap belts may disengage the shoulder belt only in those situations when the shoulder belt prevents their ability to deliver or collect mail from curbside mailboxes. It's that last sentence that I would like to focus on for just a moment.

At issue is disengaging the shoulder harness and when it's appropriate for a carrier to do so. For more than 20 years, most managers understood that rural carriers had a great deal of common sense and knew when it was safe to unfasten the shoulder harness in those situations where the harness adversely impacted their ability to deliver and collect the mail. However, back in June, 2009, a manager in a local office decided rural carriers had to have the shoulder harness fastened any time the LLV was in motion. Meaning the carrier pulled up to a box and, after coming to a complete stop, could disengage the shoulder harness if it prevented their ability to service the box but must refasten the shoulder harness before proceeding to the next box regardless of the distance traveled.

Now, there is language in Handbook EL-801,

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Support your Union and Steward

management will know it. Count on it. It does not matter if you elected this person or not; they are the union representative for your office. If the steward and the union have no support in the office then the steward must face and deal with an office torn by doubts, wild rumors, resentment, bad morale, cynicism, and warring factions. How does the union and steward deal with all that? They simply do their job and educate our members as best we can.

Educated members support the union when it fights for improvements and defend the union when it is under attack. This association gives plenty of information to those who want to be informed. As stewards, we're working for the members. That's why it's our job to keep them informed. The association provides the opportunity for any member to attend all the meetings in each state, area or district. There are state board meetings, district meetings, informational meetings, mail count meetings, trainings and conventions. Each state provides a state paper or newsletter in addition to the national magazine and website at nrlca.org. The local stewards are required to update the bulletin board and the steward is available in the office with knowledge of, or at least access to, the right answers for your questions.

The association gives you every opportunity to learn; it is now time to get educated. The conditions around us are getting harder and blaming the union by those not involved or educated to the facts will only make the conditions more difficult. The attacks on our craft are consistent and our strength in numbers is needed, more than ever, to build a united, organized, and involved membership in every office. It's time to get involved; step forward, go to a union meeting and say, "I am here. What do you need me to do?"

How can I support my union?

There are a number of things members can do to make the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association even stronger than it is today. Participating in your local union meetings, sticking together, and educating potential members and the public about our union are simple, everyday ways we can support our union. Here are a few others:

- **Attend local union meetings regularly.** If you cannot attend meetings, talk to your local steward or other members about what took place and try to make the next one.
- **Stay informed.** Keep up with current events and what's happening in your workplace. Visit nrlca.org (idrlca.org for Idaho members) and read your state newsletter to keep up with news that affects you and your union.
- **Participate in union elections.** Whether it's elections for officers, contract votes or local union business,

your opinion counts and can make a difference.

- **Get to know your steward.** He or she is your primary contact with your union and can answer many of your questions or refer you to the appropriate resources.
- **If you do not have a local steward,** look into holding an election and get the right person in your office to step forward.
- **Get to know your local officers and state board members.** Do that by attending meetings.
- **Review your district or state constitutions.** Each state, while under the NRLCA constitution, is still autonomous and has its own set of rules and guidelines.
- **Attend union rallies and events when you can.** We have had days of action and marches and need better attendance, especially by RCAs who have the most to lose if five-day delivery becomes a reality. You may not be able to make them all, but standing together shows strength in numbers.
- **Spread the word.** If you hear about an issue that concerns you, tell your friends, relatives and co-workers and show them how to get involved. Educate others. Tell them what being a NRLCA member means to you. Tell your friends, relatives and other workers about the benefits of being an NRLCA member.
- **State Conventions are approaching soon and the National Convention will be held in Reno, NV, this year. I hope to see you all there.**

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Seatbelts Save Lives

Supervisor's Safety Handbook, specifically section 3-5.8, that says when driving a long-life vehicle they, the Postal Service drivers, must wear the lap belt and shoulder belt whenever their vehicles are in motion, but the section also provides an exception: when shoulder belts prevent drivers from reaching to deliver to or collect from curbside mailboxes, they may unfasten the shoulder belt, but never the lap belt. The strict interpretation of the language, creating an office policy that the shoulder belt must be worn whenever the vehicle is in motion without due regard to the exception, was challenged in the grievance/arbitration procedure and we now have guiding language on the question.

At Step 4 of the grievance procedure, the parties agreed, in writing, that "*rural carriers are not expected to continually unfasten and fasten the shoulder belt when traveling between mailboxes in situations when the shoulder belt prevents their ability to deliver or collect mail.*"

The Step 4 agreement identifies that "*In these situations (where the shoulder harness prevents the carriers ability to deliver or collect mail), the safety conditions listed below should be considered before making a determination to leave the shoulder belt disengaged.*"

Those safety conditions listed are: distance between stops; traffic density and weather conditions; road

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IDRLCA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

IDRLCA President Sharon Atkins

Join Our Union; Give Us Your Strength

I want to give a big shout out and thank you to all those carriers who have agreed that the union is important in their working lives. Your monthly dues help us to be relevant when the union is negotiating

for our working conditions. Those of you who have chosen not to join, for whatever reason, are sorely missed. Numbers add up when the union officers can go in and say we represent this many rural carriers across the nation and we need to do right by them and their families.

That is what a union is for; to negotiate proper pay for what we do each day.

Yes, we are there for everyone. If discipline suddenly becomes an issue or contractual issues are violated by management, the union is obligated to represent you, member or not. Do remember that, even though that is a very important aspect of union responsibility, there are many things that are just as, and maybe more, important.

The union is set up to provide information, to members only, about your job through district meetings, state conventions, Western States Conferences and national conventions that you can attend in person and talk to people who know the answers to your questions or can find the answers for you. We also have publications to offer information; the IDRLCA has *The Pony Express* newsletter and the NRLCA has the *National Rural Let*

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Seatbelts Save Lives

design characteristics, such as number of intersections traversed, road shoulder width, and surface conditions; and other factors affecting safety such as the speed limit.

If your office policy regarding seatbelt usage is not in line with the Step 4 agreement mentioned above, and available in its entirety on the "What's New" page of the NRLCA website, please contact the NRLCA representative for your office so we can assist your manager in correcting the policy.

Now, there's a reason I began this article with "Seatbelts Save Lives." It's because they do. There is nothing more important than safety. Rural carriers in the Seattle District drive nearly 50,000 miles every day. That's 300,000 miles each week – more than 15 million miles each year. Please drive them safely.

BUCKLE UP!

ter Carrier magazine. Both the IDRLCA (idrlca.org) and the NRLCA (nrlca.org) have websites which provide members with information on almost any rural matter.

Please think about joining us to provide the needed clout to get our message heard by our representatives and senators in Washington D.C. They need to know that the Postal Service is still viable and needed. Do you let your friends, neighbors and acquaintances know what we do for them? Many do not understand the process of how their mail gets from place to place. It just happens... right?

Our state convention is being held in Pocatello this year on June 11th through the 13th, hosted by District Three. NRLCA President Jeanette Dwyer will be in attendance and will share with us information that we should all be aware of. But, if you are not there, will it get passed to you? Come join us, just for a day if you can't get away for the whole session.

Have you contacted your representatives in Washington, DC? All of us need to do that to keep our message of service to the American public on their minds. If not, we'll hear that we can take a pay cut and survive or we can pay more for our health benefits (only when they start having to do the same thing, right?) or we can cut back service standards because no one cares about mail anymore; it's not relevant. We must educate them so they know what we do and can do for their constituents; the people they are supposed serving.

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NRLCA President Jeanette Dwyer

Jeanette began her postal career in 1981 as a Designation 73 substitute and became a regular carrier in 1987 and has devoted 33 years to the rural carrier craft. She has served this association as both local steward and state steward, representing 3,548 routes in the state of NC. Jeanette has served on Task Force II, along with three other members, on the Stewards Reference Guide. She also served on the Appeals Committee at National Convention, both as a member and as chairman of the committee.

Jeanette served six years as an Executive Committeeman dealing with labor relations issues in five postal areas with six USPS Area Vice Presidents. Her extensive labor relations background serves this association well in her present position as President of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association. She remains in touch with rural carriers at all levels so she can continue to be informed about the daily issues that confront our craft. She continues to have the strong support of Larry, her husband of 45 years. Jeanette will continue to work to represent the interest of all rural carriers.



IDRLCA VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

IDRLCA Vice President Patti Upton

Would You Consider...

Are you a member of this union? Do you realize all it has done for you? There is always strength in numbers and those numbers play a key role in keeping and protecting our jobs.

I know we do not always agree with the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association or management. I also realize that we can't always have what we want, but without the NRLCA we wouldn't have anything. It has fought tirelessly for our wages, and for maintaining six-day delivery. The NRLCA is currently negotiating our new contract with the Postal Service and will never give up when it comes to our craft. Where would we be if we didn't have a union? I shudder to think and realize that joining is the best choice a rural carrier can make.

The recent mail count brought about changes for many of us. I can honestly say that this count was different for me on many levels. I, as well as every other person in our office, have never been so sick in my life. It was chaotic with a new postmaster and a new clerk. However, they were mindful of the importance of count. They strived to make this count honest, and accurate. There wasn't any fighting! The end result was a plus for me. Not only did I gain for the first time in my career as a regular, I gained respect for the leadership in our office.

Congress holds our destiny and fate in their hands, and most of the congressmen haven't a clue about the job that we do each and every day. Have you ever wondered, how can we educate them?

I recently sent a post card mailing, requesting contributions to our national political action committee (PAC). Did you understand its importance? I hope it didn't get lost in the other mail that you've received. I value each and every donation that comes into PAC. I recognize that money is important to each and every one of us. So, I ask this, "Is your job important to you, too?"

When I first decided to give to PAC years ago, I never dreamed of the impact that it would have on our jobs. I truly believe that it is the reason that we still have all of our benefits. I trust and believe that PAC speaks volumes in Washington, DC. When giving, consider this, it's like putting money in a savings account. Your money is being used to try to protect your job!

So, would you consider giving \$5.00? Even if you think that it isn't enough money, it is! If we all donate together, that amount becomes enough and will make a difference on Capitol Hill. If you have any questions

on doing a monthly donation, please feel free to call me, send me a text or email me. We need YOU and we need ALL of us to work together to influence congress.

Please consider giving; it is like putting money in the bank, the bank of your future as a rural carrier.

Have you thought about becoming an active participant in your future as a rural carrier?

Have you ever thought about being a local steward?

Have you ever thought about going to a district meeting?

Or better yet, have you ever thought about attending a state convention or even the national convention?

There are many ways to participate! You are the key to your future as an employee of the USPS and we welcome your new ideas. Consider attending an upcoming meeting to learn all there is to know about the rural carrier craft. Together our voice is and will be stronger!

THE PSALM of the NON-UNIONIST

The dues paying member is my shepherd.

I shall not want.

He provideth me with rest days and vacations

So that I may lie down in green pastures

Beside still waters.

He restoreth my back pay

He guideth my welfare without cost to me.

I stray in the paths of the non-righteous

For my money's sake.

Yea, though I alibi and pay no dues

From generation to generation,

I fear no evil, for he protects me.

The working conditions which he provides,

They comfort me.

He annointeth my head with the oil of workers

Compensation, sick pay, holidays

and a pension.

He represents me in grievances

And my cup runneth over with ingratitude.

Surely, his goodness and loving kindness

Shall follow me all the days of my life

Without cost to me.

And I shall dwell in his house forever

And allow him to foot the bill.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
AUTHORIZATION FOR DEDUCTION OF DUES

RURAL CARRIER CLASSIFICATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular	<input type="checkbox"/> PTP	<input type="checkbox"/> Postal

<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	OR	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
(SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER)		(USPS EMPLOYEE ID NUMBER)

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LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MI

MAILING ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE + 4
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POSTAL INSTALLATION WHERE EMPLOYED	ZIP CODE OF INSTALLATION	INSTALLATION FINANCE NO.
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SECTION A - AUTHORIZATION BY EMPLOYEE

I hereby assign to the **National Rural Letter Carriers' Association** any salary or wages earned or to be earned by me as your employee (in my present or any future employment by you) such regular and periodic membership dues as the union may certify as due and owing from me, as may be established from time to time by said Union. I authorize and direct you to deduct such amounts from my pay and to remit same to said Union at such times and in such manner as may be agreed upon between you and the Union at any time while this authorization is in effect.

This assignment, authorization and direction shall be irrevocable for a period of one (1) year from the date of delivery hereof to you, and I agree and direct that this assignment, authorization and direction shall be automatically renewed, and shall be irrevocable for successive periods of one (1) year, unless written notice is given by me to you and the Union not more than twenty (20) days and not less than ten (10) days prior to the expiration of each period of one year.

This assignment is freely made pursuant to the provisions of the Postal Reorganization Act and is not contingent upon the existence of any agreement between you and my Union.
Contributions or gifts (including dues) to the NRLCA are not tax deductible as charitable contributions. However, they may be tax deductible under other provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.

SIGNATURE OF EMPLOYEE	DATE	PHONE
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SECTION B - FOR USE BY STATE EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATION

R - NATIONAL RURAL LETTER CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION

SIGNATURE OF ACCEPTING UNION OFFICIAL	DATE
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I hereby certify that the dues of this organization for the above named member, for the applicable designation, are currently established at _____ per pay period

LOCAL	STATE
DATE	REMIT #

_____, STATE SECRETARY

SECTION C - FOR USE BY NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

Date of Delivery to Employer (For National Office use)

ANNIVERSARY DATE TO BE USED AT USPS PERSONNEL OFFICE →

Important!
Be sure to include Postal Finance# Where indicated.
Submit Original and Copy to
NRLCA Membership Dept.

Send to
LORI BENNETT
NRLCA Secretary-Treasurer
306 N DAKOTA AVE
FRUITLAND, ID 83619 2413

IDRLCA DISTRICT REPORTS

District One

Cindy Pettit, District One Vice President

The District One election meeting was held at the Sunrise Cafe in Caldwell on April 2, with 18 members present.

District President Hargrove began the meeting by going over the meeting agenda and asking everyone to introduce themselves.

District secretary Paula Grigg read the minutes and financial reports which, after a few changes were made, were approved and accepted.

IDRLCA President Sharon Atkins told us that it is still an ongoing fight to maintain six-day delivery. IDRLCA Secretary Lori Bennett spoke about the RAFT program which is still in effect until June 30. Lori also told us that the national board is working hard on our new contract. District Representative Brian Draper told us that the grievances he is dealing with are more contractual rather than disciplinary.

PAC Chair Patti Upton explained the importance of PAC and that our Idaho representatives have no clue about the postal issues nor are they willing to listen. Patti auctioned off a chocolate Easter Bunny and gave away four gift cards and an Easter basket. PAC raised an amazing \$872.00 for the evening. Thank you to everyone who supports PAC.

Committees were assigned and we resumed the meeting with the results.

There was one proposed constitutional change and zero resolutions submitted.

The audit committee found the records to be in order.

The nomination committee submitted their nominations for district officers and for Carrier of the Year. The results are as follows:

President, Mikea Hargrove

Vice President, Cindy Pettit

Secretary/Treasurer, Glenda Sanders.

Robin Carver was named Carrier of the Year for her outstanding dedication to the NRLCA.

Delegates to the state convention were nominated and elected. Brett Helle was designated to serve as delegate at large.

The meeting closed with the swearing in ceremony of the newly elected district officers.

District Two

Darren Chernoh, District Two Vice President

The District Two election meeting began at 6:10 p.m., April 9th at Idaho Joe's in Twin Falls. Thirteen members were in attendance including three guests: IDRLCA President Sharon Atkins, IDRLCA Vice President and PAC Chairman Patti Upton and Atkins'

husband, Jerry, who took time from their own busy schedules and drove to Twin Falls from the Boise area to help us with our election. To these folks we wanna take time to say thanks and we appreciate the hard work you do for all of us.

District Two President Russ Hutchison discussed unfinished business and the RAFT recruiting program which will end on June 30th of this year. This program was designed to encourage non-union rural carriers to enroll in the Idaho Rural Letter Carriers' Association. District Two Secretary Amber Warr read the minutes from our last meeting, which approved and accepted by the members.

Election committee members were selected and met separately until 7:11 p.m. When the meeting reconvened, the members voted for the delegates to the state convention.

The delegates for the 2015 IDRLCA State Convention in Pocatello are as follows: Deb Hurd, Delegate-At-Large; Amber Warr; Wayne Vaughn; Connie Vaughn; Renae Samples; Glenna McCoy; Mary Morris; Lou Freeman; Tina Lyon, Nancy Stewart; Teresa Knobbe; Laurie Loveland; Chad Anderson; and Russ Hutchison. The District Two alternative delegates are Lyndsey Marsh and Darren Chernoh, Sr.

\$435.00 dollars was raised for PAC. Well done!

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

The next District Two meeting will be held July 16th at Centennial Park in Twin Falls. This will be our annual picnic meeting and members are asked to bring a covered dish. The district will provide soft drinks and table ware.

Hope to see you all there.

District Three

John Thomas, District Three Vice President

District Three met at the Stockman's Cafe in Blackfoot, on March 19, for its annual election meeting. Stockman's provided a great meal and a meeting room. We had ten members, IDRLCA President Sharon Atkins, IDRLCA Vice President Patti Upton and two guests in attendance.

The usual business was conducted: paying bills, Brett Parkinson talked about NGIC Insurance for rural carriers and, of course, we heard about PAC from Patti. She raised a good sum of PAC funds from our small group. Western States Conference in Seaside, OR, coming up April 22-24, was discussed.

Most of the rest of the meeting was used discussing the upcoming IDRLCA State Convention to be hosted by District Three, on June 11-13, in Pocatello. Committee assignments were reviewed and final plans were laid. A slate of 18 delegates and four alternates was

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VOICE of the COMMITTEEMAN

District Two President Russ Hutchison

A Monkey Could do this Job

A few years ago, in District Two, a situation developed where no carriers were available to run a route. So, the acting postmaster of the office involved had to run the route. He took a PTF clerk

along to help him. While I was delivering my route I thought I would stop for a minute to text him and see how he was getting along.

His reply was, "A monkey could do this job."

Even though I had heard this statement thrown around by management before, I had never had it directly expressed to me.

"Really?" I thought, "Is this what you really think of rural carriers?"

In the few years since, I have often thought about our responsibilities as rural carriers. Could a monkey actually do our job? What do you think? Do we take our jobs seriously? Maybe it's not the most difficult job, but we are responsible for insuring that thousands of letters and hundreds of packages are delivered on each route daily.

Our customers are counting on us. Many times we are entrusted with very valuable or sentimental items and are expected to deliver them to businesses or loved ones worldwide. Even if it is 'just a bill', every item placed into a mailbox is a trust placed in us. We must take care to remember that.

The Rural Carriers Duties and Responsibilities Handbook (P.O. 603) states in its opening paragraph,

"Rural letter carriers perform a vital function in the U.S.P.S. serving thousands of families and businesses in rural and suburban areas while traveling millions of miles daily. Rural letter carriers are highly respected by the American public. This respect has been earned by many years of dedication to the postal service and postal customers during national and local emergencies, including prolonged periods of extreme weather conditions. Rural carriers have demonstrated great responsibility in providing mail service to postal customers." There is no mention of monkeys anywhere in this paragraph.

As rural carriers we deal with all sorts of different conditions. Snow, rain, mud, dust, dogs, vehicle break downs, and yet our customers count on us to be on time, courteous, friendly, and efficient. None of these are monkey traits.

We have heard many stories of rural carriers who have gone beyond their regular duties and helped customers retrieve livestock or lost pets and even in medi-

cal emergencies. Unlike UPS and Fed Ex, the Postal Service serves every house and business every day. We know their homes, their vehicles, their animals, and their children. We notice when things don't look right. Would a monkey?

My point is that we, as rural carriers, play an important part in communication, commerce, and community. We have a responsibility to the public to be professional and efficient, courteous and friendly, and helpful and positive. We should take care to remember every day what we expect from our own mail carrier. The kind of service we expect at our own homes. Take our jobs seriously. Give the best customer service possible. We already know our customers appreciate it maybe our managers will too.

So, when this postmaster and PTF were out delivering the route and texted me "a monkey could do this job." I replied, "well maybe two monkeys."

P.S. The next day the regular carrier was back and reported that she picked up many incorrect deliveries.

Watch for Committeeman Brett Parkinson's article in the September issue of The Pony Express.

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IDRLCA DISTRICT REPORTS

District Three

John Thomas, District Three Vice President

continued

elected. John Thomas was elected as delegate at large. Our next meeting will be held on May 14, at the Clarion Hotel, the site of the convention, in Pocatello, at 6:30 p.m.

Attention district members! We still have needs. If you would be willing to help in any way. Donations of raffle or door prize items would be great or you can volunteer your time or talents. They would not be refused.

In any event, if you have ever attended a state convention, come be with us again. If you never have attended before, come. It's close to home. It's a great opportunity to become involved, informed, and meet other rural carriers from around the state as well as some national officers.

Hope to see you there!

District Five

Tony LeBlanc, District Five Vice President

No Report Received

2015 WESTERN STATES CONFERENCES

Seaside OR April 22 - 24, 2015

Filing A Grievance

Reported by Sharon Atkins

The coast was a great place to hold the Western States conference. Seaside is fun and we stayed right on the "Prom" next to the beach.

What a great time to hear from our national officers about things that are happening and coming up. The officers participated in a question and answer panel, so many learned things they wanted to know.

Each of the IDRLCA members at the conference was tasked to write about a section of the conference so I won't cover everything that took place, but I will tell you about the steward section that took place on the first night. The program was geared towards non-steward member who must understand the procedure for filing a grievance before it becomes a moot point.



Sharon Atkins

The Postal Service and the NRLCA agree that disagreements should be settled at the lowest possible level if at all possible. Does that mean that you cannot be accompanied by a steward to file a grievance? No. it is good to talk to your assigned steward, particularly if you are unsure of what to do, so that you feel comfortable about approaching management. That first step of discussing the grievance with the manager is in the carrier's hands. If it can't be settled with that discussion, then it is turned over to the steward. (Do not check the denied box at the initial discussion.) Remember the grievance must be filed within 14 days of the incident. Example: If it was an accident, the date you count from is the day you receive discipline, not the date of the accident.

It is the carrier's responsibility to forward the grievance to the steward. Grievances can always be withdrawn if the issue is corrected. Example: pay issue - keep it timely, but if it is corrected on the next paycheck and you have extended the time limits, then the grievance can be withdrawn.

Discipline has to meet the challenges of Just Cause. Contractual grievances- Was there a violation?

If an issue is important to you, then you have some responsibility toward getting it corrected. Document everything and prepare a written statement ("your testimony") for further action. Be prepared to assist in obtaining relevant documents in support of your issue.

Retirement Seminar

Reported by Lisa Hall

The Western States Conference was held in Seaside, OR, this year. I was assigned to report on the retirement seminar presented by Ronnie Stutts and Larry Waligora.

Your retirement from the Postal Service, under the Federal Employees Retirement System plan, is based on the three-legged stool concept. Your Postal Service pension is based on the number of years you served and your income for the highest paid three consecutive years of service. Congress is trying to change this to your highest five years of service which would actually reduce the amount of your pension. What would that mean to us? When you retire you will have a number of choices to make on how you want your money divvied out:



Lisa Hall

health insurance, survivors' annuity, life insurance, etc.

The second leg of the stool is your Thrift Savings Plan in which you have contributed a portion of your earnings over the years of your service. The Postal Service matches up to 5% of your contributions to the plan. So you should be putting at least that amount in. You can choose from several different funds to invest your money in. If you don't want to have to watch it or move it, you can choose to place your money in the life funds that are designed to provide you the best security and highest earnings based on the length of time remaining until you retire. When you retire you can choose to withdraw your money through an annuity, a lump sum or a little of both. If you place your money in a traditional IRA, you will have to pay taxes on it when you draw it out. In a Roth IRA, you pay the taxes up front.

The third leg of your stool is your Social Security. The amount you get will depend on many variables: how long you have worked, how much you have paid into social security and your age at retirement.

One thing you need to know is that to have insurance when you retire you have to have been insured for five consecutive years prior to your retirement in some sort of federal health insurance plan, and retire on an immediate annuity. That means within 30 days. If you want coverage for your spouse have a family plan or new self plus one.

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2015 WESTERN STATES CONFERENCE

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Retirement Seminar

For surviving spouse health insurance coverage, the retiree must elect a survivor annuity benefit and be enrolled in family coverage when retiree dies. The premium is deducted from survivor annuity benefit.

You can go to the OPM website, opm.gov, when you approach retirement to help you decide some of the issues. You can also call toll free 1-888-767-6738. You should call real early or be prepared for a long wait. You should also go into lite blue and print your employment files before you retire, otherwise they take you out of the system and you can't get them at that point.

If you have never been to a Western States Conference, I encourage you to go. It's like a mini-national convention and our national officers are there to answer any questions you might have.

Rural Carrier Benefit Plan (RCBP)

Reported by Lori Bennett

At the recently held 2015 Western States Conference in Seaside, OR, I was assigned to report on Larry Waligora, Manager of Health Programs and the Rural Carrier Benefit Plan (RCBP). This year marked Larry's 26th year in attendance at the Western States Conference.

After the open season for making changes in health benefits ended last December, the RCBP gained over 1000 new members. Waligora believes that this was due in part to the significant cost savings over other health plans. The standard option for Blue Cross Blue Shield, for instance, cost approximately \$1900 more in premiums alone. Also, prescription co-pays saved over \$2000 over other health benefit plans. The next open season opportunity will be November 9th thru December 8th, 2015.

Cameron Deml, Assistant Manager of Health Programs, said that the current premiums for the RCBP are: Self at \$76.45 /pp and Family at \$110.15/pp. They are also looking forward to an option to select Self plus One during the next open season, with a rate slightly less than the family plan rates.

New this year is the Aetna Provider Network which has over 110,000 providers and the CVS Vaccine Network with 52,000 participating pharmacies. Flu and



Lori Bennett

pneumonia vaccines are currently covered at 100% with additional vaccines to be offered throughout 2015.

A Memorandum Of Understanding was signed in November, 2014, to make available to any non-career rural carrier who is eligible, to participate in the USPS Non-Career Employee Health Benefits Plan. The USPS will make a bi-weekly contribution of \$125 for self only coverage leaving the rural carrier paying \$35 per pay period. If the non-career rural carrier wishes to enroll in family coverage, they are responsible for the full family portion. To be eligible, the non-career rural carrier has to work an average of 30 hours per week over a 12 month period usually from October to October. This coverage meets the minimum requirements of the Affordable Care Act. There are four levels in the ACA: Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. The RCBP for full time regular carriers is between the gold and platinum levels, with the federal non-career plan at the bronze level. Please refer to the nrlca.org website for more detailed information.

The Postal Service mailed out letters of eligibility to all non-career rural carriers. Approximately 2500 RCAs took advantage, with 300 more enrolling during open season. The Affordable Care Act penalty for not having health insurance for 2015, is \$325/adult or 2% of your income. Be sure to verify your Social Security numbers for all family members with your health benefit provider. They will be reported to the IRS by the insurance companies to verify coverage.

And as a reminder for those wishing to continue their health insurance coverage into retirement, there are two requirements. One, you must retire on an immediate annuity and two you have to have been enrolled in an FEHB Program for five years immediately before retiring. If you wish to enroll in the Rural Carrier Benefit Plan, membership in the NRLCA is mandatory.

Question & Answer Session

Reported by Brett Parkinson

It was my opportunity to report on the Friday morning session of the Western States Conference, held in Seaside, OR, April 22nd -April 24th.

NRLCA Executive Committeeman Don Maston, who was scheduled to address the conference, was unable to attend because his mother had fallen ill. President Dwyer excused him from attending the conference. Therefore, following drawings for prizes from Employee Assistance Program and the national auxiliary, we resumed the Q & A session carried over from Thursday afternoon.

Questions that were addressed by the national officers present, included the following topics:

- Proper scanning

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2015 WESTERN STATES CONFERENCE

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Question & Answer Session

- Shorted maintenance on LLVs by the Vehicle Maintenance Facility
- Academy training following completion of the of the engineered time standards study
- Carriers being out late delivering parcels
- Union involvement in EAP
- RCAs delivering parcels on Sunday
- Leave replacements doing a poor job of working routes, causing headaches and extra work for the regular carrier
- Possibility of a VOE survey with questions that matter or are pertinent
- DRs being unresponsive to issues raised by carriers
- Back pay for carriers who worked on routes that were eventually rebuilt, but have since moved to other routes
- Delivering oversize and overweight parcels
- Recruiting and supporting more local stewards
- Tax on high value health insurance plans (Cadillac tax) starting in 2018
- Regular carriers working as OICs in other offices without their routes being posted for bid.
- Possibility of DRs or ADRs going back to work their routes two weeks per year
- Using accident investigations to train new RCAs
- Number of hours being worked by DRs and ADRs
- Number of training hours being given to new RCAs (24 hours class time and 24 hours route time minimum)
- Working leave replacements on alternate routes when they are not yet proficient on their primary routes
- Managing seasonal routes
- Changes in increased costs of benefits
- Retribution toward RCAs during their probationary period

If you have questions about any of these topics they could likely be answered by a steward or one of our state officers.

Following the Q & A session, we moved into the business session of the conference which included the following:

- Roll call of Officers of the Western States Conference
- Roll call of states
- Minutes of 2014 Western States Conference
- Reading of WSC financial report prepared by Lori Bennett
- Q & A regarding the financial report



Brett Parkinson

- Recognition of first timers
- Recognition of Years in attendance (Roger Moreland 43 years, Sharon Atkins 22 years)
- Time and place for WSC in 2016 - April 21-23, in Salt Lake City, UT.

Unfinished business: Audit of books was done and approved

New business: A suggestion was made to print an agenda of upcoming Western States Conferences in the national magazine

Election of officers: President Sharon Harvey (OR), Vice Pres. Michelle Tate (UT), Sec/Treasurer Lori Bennett (ID).

PAC prizes were awarded to those with winning tickets followed by passing out the remaining door prizes.

The new Western States Conference officers were installed by NRLCA President Jeanette Dwyer and the conference was adjourned.

NRLCA President Jeanett Dwyer

Reported by Patti Upton

The Western States Conference was informative and well attended this year. Each year, when I attend this conference, I am reminded of the closeness of rural carriers on the west coast. We share a commonality and I believe together we can affect change.

Jeanette Dwyer, President and leader of the NRLCA,



Patti Upton

always delivers when she addresses us. She communicates from her heart with integrity and passion. Anyone who knows her, knows that she speaks openly and freely, candidly and truthfully!

President Dwyer spoke about the most recent mail count. Sadly, it cost the postal service \$25 million per week. This year's count cost \$75 million and resulted in an average gain of 18 minutes per route.

Contract negotiations are in full swing and the NRLCA board is working closely with our attorneys. Endless hours are spent working to achieve the best contract possible. It is their desire to negotiate a fair and reasonable contract for all of us. The good news is that the time standards cannot be challenged due to the engineering study!

The engineering study should be close to being complete now. The NRLCA has high expectations for the study and will not settle for anything less. Even

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2015 WESTERN STATES CONFERENCE

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NRLCA President Jeanett Dwyer

though the finish day of May 15th will come and go with the study not completed, it is imperative that the study not be hurried. We continue to wait for the Postal Service to provide and validate accurate information for the engineers. We are reminded that upon completion of this study, some things will make us happy and some things not.

Dwyer shared with us that a coalition was entered into by all postal craft unions. This alliance was made to save the Postal Service from shooting itself in the foot and rendering it insignificant in our ever changing world.

President Dwyer was invited to and attended the swearing in of the first female Postmaster General, Megan Brennen. Brennen intends to make her own path and indicates that she will do things differently than Past-Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe. She seems to be open to our needs, but the jury is still out on her support of six- day mail delivery.

As always it appears that the Postal Service is broke. However, we are told that without the \$5.5 billion prefunding health retiree benefits payment, mandated in 2006, that we would have had a profit of \$1.4 billion last year alone.

For those of you who became regular carriers before 1991, it is very important that you go to liteblue.usps.gov. Once logged on, you will need to check your Form 50. Evidently, there were errors in some regular carriers' placements for steps A-C. If you find an error in your step, please contact District Representative Brian Draper or District Representative Patrick Pitts for further instructions. Again, it is up to you to check your Form 50. Many mistakes have been found and many corrected.

Dwyer reminded us that we have the power to affect change; that this is the time to call, write or email your legislators. We were also encouraged to write to our local newspapers. Please contact Paul Swartz for a generic letter or for ideas when doing so. Always remember to be calm and professional when sharing your passionate thoughts about our job.

As always, President Dwyer brings valuable information and this time was no different. It is always a pleasure to catch up with the other rural carriers from the Western Area. The information from this conference is invaluable. I always leave with a better understanding of the never ending challenges that face us.

EAP and NRLCA Vehicle Insurance

Reported by Robin Carver

Employee Assistance Plan.

One of the benefits we have, as USPS employees, is access to the Employee Assistance Plan. This is a pre-paid plan set up by the Postal Service to assist you with professional resources for any of your needs. The scope of this plan is wide and yet detailed to help with your specific needs.

Some of the counseling helps with improving health and wellness, balancing work and life, managing stress, improving relationships, maintaining recovery over addictions, caring for children and aging parents, working with grief and loss and coping with change and conflict.



Robin Carver

This is a life-management program tool designed to help sort through life's ups and downs. The EAP has a website, www.EAP4YOU.com, or you can call 800-327-4968 in person; both are accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This resource is also available for your spouse and children.

A special thank you to Brenda Hawes and Wendy Averette, who represented EAP at the Western States Conference. Their new version of the song, 'Downtown', was delightful.

NRLCA Vehicle Insurance

This year at the Western States Conference, Shirley Corno, a long time representative and supporter of the rural craft, announced her retirement from the National General Insurance. Shirley has been a representative for 28 years. She has attended 24 Western States Conferences. National General has given back \$20 million in promotional fees and \$100,000 in raffles as well as \$300,000 in scholarship funds for the NRLCA Junior Program and billions of band aid holders. If you get a quote from National General for your insurance needs you will receive a \$10 visa card. The rates are reasonable and they will cover everything. The number is 1-888-325-7727. Be sure to use the Idaho code R22 when getting your quote.

Thank you, Shirley, for your dedication and service. Happy Retirement.

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Only members have access to all the informational venues provided by the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association! Join Today!

2015 WESTERN STATES CONFERENCE

(from previous page)

Paul Schwarz, Governmental Affairs Mark Gisler, NRLCA Legal Counsel

Reported by Bret Helle

Greetings, fellow rural carriers. My name is Bret Helle.

Over the past ten years or so, I've attended many local meetings, state and national conventions but, other than a Western Area Conference in Meridian, hosted by District One, I have yet to attend an area conference in April. This year I was able to attend the WSC in Seaside, OR. It was nice to be able to visit with the national officers of the NRLCA as well as catching up with some of our other state officers and members.



Bret Helle

This year I am reporting on two segments of the conference. The first speaker I am proud to report on is our Director of Governmental Affairs Paul Schwartz. Schwartz went right into the meat of what is changing in congress and what we need to do to protect the viability of our jobs and our postal service. Senator Sanders (VT) proposed a postal amendment to the Keystone Pipeline bill to include a two year moratorium on plant closures and consolidations. It would also protect current service standards for first class mail for two years. This amendment has the support of ten democratic senators.

So far, we are somewhat safe with six-day delivery, unless a trigger sometime between now and October 1st causes a knee jerk reaction to fight for five-day delivery again. Because this issue came up against so much opposition last year, they have put it toward the back of major concerns since their primary focus currently rests on the keystone pipeline, DHS funding, budget resolutions and appropriation requests. These distractions don't mean we are out of the woods on the delivery aspect of our problems; it just means we are showing a little more profit and less loss with what we have achieved in the past couple years.

Senator Carper (DE) is trying to propose postal reform and Representative Darrell Issa is no longer trying to dissolve the postal service. The House Oversight and Governmental Reform Committee has a bipartisan co-sponsorship on House Resolution 12, which advocates for continuation of six-day delivery. We are also gaining more support with H.R. 54 on slowing down or trying to eliminate the plant closures to protect the

service standards that are being affected by this. H.R. 28 focuses on keeping door to door delivery as opposed to central delivery units on every corner across the nation.

In 2005 we had 685 processing facilities. In 2014, we are down to 320 and they still want to close 82 more!

Other issues on the horizon continue to focus on pay freezes, deficit reductions and furloughs for government employees. They also want to take 318 billion from federal and postal employees and require us to pay an additional 6% to pensions. H.R. 1563 focuses on the federal employee tax accountability act which would require firing of tax delinquent employees of which we have 3% compared to 8-9% overall, not to mention 5% in the legislative branch. Lastly, we recommend everyone contact their legislative contacts and tell them what is really happening. Go to the National website for more information and who to contact in your district.

This portion of my report on the Western States Conference is on the speaker Mark Gisler, Esq., of Peer, Gan & Gisler, LLP, Washington, D.C., the general counsel for the NRLCA.

Gisler mentioned, as we go into contract negotiations, it was a monumental year with our first female NRLCA president negotiating with our first female Postmaster General, Megan Brennan.

Gisler learned his first lesson of working with an incentive type of pay system while working on his family's Corvallis farm where he moved irrigation pipe during the summers to water the crops. He and friends would move the pipe overhead to clear the corn crops and if both were motivated and worked fast, they made the same amount of money and were allowed to finish earlier to do with their time as they wished. As they progressed, they learned many ways to speed up the process, but in the end, worked so hard and so fast, that they burned themselves out both physically and emotionally. Once you reach your breaking point, you realize you need to reel it in a bit to work fast, but safely and efficiently so as not to tear up your body.

The same goes for the rural route carrier craft. It is an incentive program which allows us to be motivated and get finished with our routes early, yet get paid for the same time. This is why the sound and industrial engineering systems engineering study is so important, so we can do our jobs quickly and efficiently, yet get paid appropriately for what we do.

Another topic that has been hot on the list is the cyber intrusion event that happened last year to sensitive information of thousands of employees of the Postal Service, yet the NRLCA was not notified promptly, nor were we advised of any remedy until the night before they launched a campaign to offer the one-year monitoring service for all employees.

(turn to next page)

2015 WESTERN STATES CONFERENCE

(from previous page)

Paul Schwarz, Governmental Affairs Mark Gisler, NRLCA Legal Counsel

By the way, if you have not taken advantage of this, it is highly recommended that you do so for your protection. As far as any settlements on this matter are concerned, the USPS did not provide information or bargain with the NRLCA on this matter.

In March, NRLCA President Jeanette Dwyer and Attorney Mark Gisler filed labor charges. Furthermore, the labor board stated a filing of 10J injunction for unfair labor practices. After this, the USPS took the NRLCA a little more serious about dealing with remedies for these issues.

There are other litigation and arbitration cases going on that we are not privy to, but be assured our national board and legal counsel are working diligently in our behalf!

Apparently, a city carrier was forced to go back out in the heat and finish a route when he was not feeling well, and he died of heat stroke, so if anyone has symptoms like this or are being forced to work unsafely, we need to let our stewards, district representatives and assistant district representatives know of these circumstances, so we can remedy the situation before anyone else has to suffer.

On an ending note, Michael Gan is healing well from his tragic cycle accident and more benefit rides are being considered in the future. This concludes my report from Western States Conference of 2015.

An Open Invitation to All Rural Craft Non-Members

The IDRLCA State Board invites you to join forces with a union that cares about you and your rights. In today's world of instant communications via cell phones, faxes and the internet, as well as competing mailing

systems, our employer, the USPS, is challenged continually to remain a viable business. Rural craft employees need a voice to protect their rights and benefits through these critical times and that voice is the NATIONAL RURAL LETTER CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION.

We are a strong union and our strength is in our numbers. The IDRLCA State Board encourages rural craft employees to join the only organization with exclusive bargaining rights for rural carriers to protect your working conditions, benefits and future. This invitation extends to all regular rural carriers, PTFs, Subs, RCAs and RCRs.

When you become a member of the NRLCA, you have a voice and vote in the only organization that can help you. As a non-member, you have no say at all. The NRLCA negotiates with the Postal Service all aspects of your employment concerning wages, benefits and working conditions. For example, in the next rounds of negotiations, our health benefits can be put on the negotiating table if those on the other side of the contract have their way. If you have difficulty on the job and need representation before the Postal Service, only the NRLCA can help you.

In addition, the NRLCA offers many benefits which are not available to non-members, such as health and life insurance, automobile and homeowners' insurance, the monthly national magazine, The National Rural Letter Carrier, and the IDRLCA newspaper, The Pony Express to name a few. Moreover, as a member you have exclusive access to the NRLCA website, something you lack as a non-member. The NRLCA also lobbies Congress on many aspects of postal policy affecting the rural carrier craft.

It's easy to become a member of the NRLCA. Simply fill out the Form 1187 Dues Withholding, and return it to the state secretary Lori Bennett at the address listed on the form. It's the best way to remain informed about your rights and benefits.

Are You an Active Member

Are you an active member
The kind that would be missed,
Or are you just content
That your name is on the list?

Do you attend the meetings
And mingle with the flock
Or do you stay at home
To criticize and knock?

Do you take an active part
To help the work along

Or are you satisfied to be
The kind that just belongs?

Do you ever go to visit
A member who is sick
Or leave the work to just a few
And talk about the "clique?"

Think this over, member,
You know right from wrong,
Are you an active member
Or do you just belong?



Idaho Rural Letter Carriers' Association Election Notice

A secret ballot election for the Delegates of the IDRLCA to the 2015 NRLCA National Convention to be held in Reno, NV on August 18 - 21, 2015 is being conducted by mail. Ballots for this election will be in the mail no later than May 22, 2015. Any eligible member who has not received a ballot or any member who spoils a ballot may request a new ballot by contacting Election Chairperson Lesley Greenwell at 208-221-2912. If you request and return another ballot, only the replacement ballot will be counted.

Instructions For Mail Voting

Please read the following instructions carefully before marking and mailing your ballot:

Clearly mark the box next to the name of the individual(s) candidate(s) of your choice not to exceed the total number that the State is entitled to as identified at the ballot heading. There are no write in candidates allowed. Do not place your name, initials, or any other identifying information on the ballot. Ballots containing any identifying information will be voided.

Place your marked ballot in the small envelope labeled "Secret Ballot" and seal it. Do not write on this envelope. You must use the Secret Ballot Envelope to insure that ballot secrecy is maintained. If your ballot package does not contain a Secret Ballot Envelope, you may obtain one by contacting Election Chairperson Lesley Greenwell at 208-221-2912.

Insert the sealed Secret Ballot Envelope containing your marked ballot into the return envelope pre-addressed to the IDRLCA Election Committee and seal it. DO NOT remove your pre-printed name and address mailing label from the back of the return ballot envelope.

Your name on the back of the return ballot envelope will identify you as an eligible voter. Your vote will remain secret because the Secret Ballot Envelope containing your ballot will be separated from the return ballot envelope and mixed with other Secret Ballot Envelopes before it is opened and the ballot counted.

Ballot secrecy can only be preserved if you personally mark and mail your ballot. DO NOT allow anyone else to mark or handle your ballot or see how you vote. DO NOT give your ballot to anyone else for mailing. Voted ballots must be sent via the USPS and in no instance hand delivered.

IMPORTANT: Mail your ballot in sufficient time for it to be received at P.O. Box 4128 Pocatello, ID 83205-4128 no later than 12:00 p.m. on June 11, 2015.

CANDIDATES FOR NATIONAL DELEGATE

to the 2015 NRLCA National Convention

You will soon receive an envelope containing a list of candidates for the position of Delegate to the National Convention for 2015 and a ballot with which to vote for your choice of Delegates to represent YOU at the National Convention in August.

In past elections, only 30% or fewer of the IDRLCA membership bothered to vote for their Delegates to the National Convention. This means that fewer than 30% of the Idaho rural letter carriers decided who would represent 100% of the IDRLCA membership at the National Convention.

DON'T LET SOMEONE ELSE DECIDE WHO WILL REPRESENT YOU! TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO REVIEW THE CANDIDATES' STATEMENTS AND CAST YOUR VOTES FOR THE CANDIDATES YOU THINK WILL BEST REPRESENT YOUR INTERESTS!

Glenda Sanders

Hi all, I'm Glenda Sanders and I am asking for your vote to be a national delegate this year and travel to Reno, NV. I have been a mail carrier in Meridian, ID for 12 years and have been a union member for all those years. In 2008 Brian Draper asked me to run for local steward. I was thrilled at the chance to be a steward and put my heart and soul into it.

4 years ago I created and have maintained our State Association website as the Idaho State Webmaster. I am proud to do the work on the website (idrlca.org) and to serve on the board as a non-voting member. Sitting on the board has been a growing experience. I have offered my opinion on many issues, and believe the IDRLCA is headed in the right direction.

I want to be a delegate to the National Convention because I would like to have a voice on the current issues. Job losses and office closings across the country are very unnerving. I am looking forward to the new time standards, but I reserve the right to agree or disagree with the results. I am against 5 day delivery and have gone to great lengths to make sure that never happens. Please consider casting a vote for me, Thank you.



Sharon Atkins

Have you considered who you would like to represent you at national convention this year? It is at this time that I would like you to consider me as one of those delegates. I am amazed at how fast change comes to our work place. We must be prepared to accept these changes by knowing what is coming.

National is the venue that is used to ask for changes in our work conditions by passing resolutions that we

feel would be of help in our everyday lives. We also hear from many who provide information of what the Postal Service is thinking. Also, we hear from those who can give us information about our vehicles, our health plan, and our retirement to name a few.

This year we will convene in Reno, Nevada, right next door for us in the west. What an opportunity to hear from these various people. The information will be brought back to the districts (but you have to come to hear it) as well, as reported by those attending. I want to be one of those delegates to represent all Idaho rural carriers. Mark your ballot when it comes for me and I will represent you to the best of my ability. Thank you.



Jo Aguirre

I would like to be considered as a delegate to the 2015 National Convention. I have been a member of the Idaho Rural Letter Carriers Association for 40 plus years and have held many positions in our organization. I am an appointed member of the State Board and serve as the Retirement Representative. Currently I have been tasked to talk to the newly hired RCA's about joining the Association.

I attend as many district meetings as I can and go to our State Conventions. I feel I have kept up to date on what is happening with the rural

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(from previous

Jo Aguirre

carrier craft and can fairly represent you.

I would especially like to attend this years National Convention so that I might attend the Retirement Seminars so that I can be more fully informed about what is happening with CRS and FERS retirements. It has been awhile since I retired and I would like to keep current with all things concerning current and future retirees.

Patti Upton

My name is Patti Upton and I am once again asking you, to select me, as one of your National Delegates to Reno, Nevada. It seems like yesterday I was beginning my career with the Postal Service. What seems



like a short time ago has turned into 19 years of service with 12 of those years as an RCA. Because of the years I served as an RCA, I have a greater desire to make sure that we take care of these valuable carriers. They are the backbone of the rural carrier craft and they work so very hard to relieve the regular carrier when necessary. I am concerned about the future of the Postal Service and for my job as a regular, but also for the

jobs of thousands of RCA's if a 5 day work week is implemented. I am currently acting as your IDRLCA Vice President and PAC Chair. As an Ad Hoc trainer, I am lucky to meet the new hires and future of our craft. What a privilege it is to share my knowledge and experience with them.

I am proud to be a member of the Idaho Rural Letter Carriers Association. I realize the challenges that face us. No one knows what is to come, but I continue to be active in the union for that reason. I am committed to protecting and preserving our livelihoods. It is imperative that you select representatives that will speak your concerns to the National Board. Please carefully consider and then exercise your right to choose delegates that you feel will best represent you. I sincerely hope that you will allow me, Patti Upton, the honor to represent you. I value and welcome your thoughts and opinions. Thank you for your consideration.

Please take the time to mark your ballot and mail it. It's very important and takes only a couple of minutes.

Lisa Hall

Greetings fellow Idaho Rural Letter Carriers! It is once again that time when we elect our delegates to the national convention to be held in Reno Nevada. My name is Lisa Hall. I have been a carrier for 29 years now and have been involved in the union for most of it. I work out of the Fruitland office. Every year we learn more things that define our job for us. I would like to be a part of the process that helps define our jobs. When Mary Lee Smith took me to my first union meeting, I didn't know where this would take me. I was once the new person



at the meetings. Going to union meetings and conventions is where you really learn about your job and you gain a few friends also. I have filled many positions at the district and state level, and have learned from every one of them. I am currently an Ad-Hoc trainer in the Caldwell academy. I try to keep informed as the post office changes. Our union is what keeps our great jobs for us. This convention will be like many others a time to decide what is important to us as carriers. This is where we let our voices be heard and to make sometimes some tough decisions. Elect national officers and vote on all the resolutions sent up by the states. I always vote as to what is good for our state and membership. I once again ask for your consideration when you cast your ballot. Thanks and be safe out there.

Lori Bennett

My name is Lori Bennett, and I would like to ask for your consideration for Delegate to the National



Convention in Reno, NV. I have over 24 years of membership and service in the IDRLCA. I am currently serving as State Secretary/Treasurer. I am an Ad Hoc Academy Trainer and a Local Steward in the Fruitland office.

There are always many important issues to discuss and vote on during the National Convention; having delegates who are active and informed are vital to the process. It seems that every day there is something new to contend with. I don't mind change, but with that change there needs to be fair compensation.

(continued on next page)

National Delegates

(from previous page)

Lori Bennett *continued*

With the ever increasing reduction in services to our postal customers, we have to not only stay strong in contract negotiations, but inform Congress and the public the important role that rural letter carriers perform every day. There is an ongoing need to keep in close touch with our National Board members. It is through the resolution process that we inform them of not only what we would like to gain, but also what we are unwilling to give up. With the constant changes that we face as postal employees, we need to unite in protecting our livelihoods.

The threat of five vs. six day delivery is not gone. We must stay vigilant. Plant closures and many other challenges facing us today need our constant attention. There is never a good time to sit back and just see what happens. We need to be proactive, and not just reactive. I know that rural carriers are still a vital part of the Postal Service. We need to fight to maintain what we have.

With this in mind, I ask for your vote for National Delegate.

Welcome New Members

<i>John Alberg</i>	<i>Nampa</i>
<i>Janice Alderman</i>	<i>Nampa</i>
<i>Chad Anderson</i>	<i>Heyburn</i>
<i>Andres Bueno III</i>	<i>Emmett</i>
<i>Franklin Castro</i>	<i>Idaho Falls</i>
<i>Justin Coe</i>	<i>Preston</i>
<i>Jessica Dodge</i>	<i>Mountain Home</i>
<i>Briana Evans</i>	<i>Wendell</i>
<i>Frank Fabianski</i>	<i>Coeur d'Alene</i>
<i>Crystal Garlock</i>	<i>Wilder</i>
<i>David Glassmoyer</i>	<i>Hayden</i>
<i>Elizabeth Goldsmith</i>	<i>Victor</i>
<i>Ronald Guardipee</i>	<i>Coeur d'Alene</i>
<i>Irlene Hanson</i>	<i>Post Falls</i>
<i>Stormi Hass</i>	<i>Filer</i>
<i>Dacia Hawkley</i>	<i>Eagle</i>
<i>Lezlee Heft</i>	<i>Hayden</i>
<i>Alex Hoffenbacker</i>	<i>Blackfoot</i>
<i>Larry Hogan</i>	<i>Troy</i>
<i>Elisabeth Holst</i>	<i>Idaho Falls</i>
<i>Darrel Homer</i>	<i>Idaho Falls</i>
<i>Jerry Hughes</i>	<i>Parma</i>
<i>Josephine Jordan</i>	<i>Hailey</i>
<i>Melissa Kunyu</i>	<i>Pocatello</i>
<i>Natalie Lewis</i>	<i>Twin Falls</i>
<i>Tina Nalley</i>	<i>Gooding</i>
<i>Keira Newby</i>	<i>Buhl</i>
<i>Jacob Newman-Holmquist</i>	<i>Nampa</i>
<i>Michael Norton</i>	<i>Kuna</i>
<i>Elizabeth Ordaz</i>	<i>Moscow</i>
<i>James Pace</i>	<i>McCall</i>

CANDIDATES FOR IDRLCA STATE OFFICE

FOR IDRLCA PRESIDENT

Patti Upton

My name is Patti Upton and I am imperfect. This might seem an odd way to start my declaration of intent, but it is important that you realize this. I am seeking the position of President of the Idaho Rural Letter Carriers. I have a deep determination and even though



not perfect, I love the IDRLCA and our union! I will give 100 % of myself to this position and you will have the best that I can give!

For three years I served as the District One Secretary/Treasurer and for once year I served as their President. I have been a local steward and currently teach in the Ad Hoc academy. I have appreciated the time spent serving as your Vice President for 4 years. I have also enjoyed being the IDRLCA PAC Chair and with your support have led Idaho to 3 consecutive 1st place finishes in the per capita race.

In the past I have watched other carriers before me fight for our rights, our jobs, and its security. These dedicated people made a difference and I choose to do the same. They taught me that personal growth comes from active participation and hard work.

I have enjoyed being a part of the IDRLCA State Board. I am asking for your support for the position of President of the Idaho Rural Letter Carrier's Association. I am dedicated to serving each and every carrier in this state and will continue to fight the battles before us. I look forward to seeing you in Pocatello, as we do the business of our State once again. I may not be perfect, but I will give you my all. I appreciate your continued support and ask for your vote this June. Thank you.

Welcome New Members

<i>Cynthia Rhinevault</i>	<i>Hailey</i>
<i>Jonathan Rivera</i>	<i>Nampa</i>
<i>Oscar Rubio</i>	<i>Idaho Falls</i>
<i>Randall Slate</i>	<i>Driggs</i>
<i>Tabitha Tollefson</i>	<i>Nampa</i>
<i>Nathan Torwal</i>	<i>Boise</i>
<i>Sheryl Tresner</i>	<i>Twin Falls</i>
<i>Cheryl Ver Hagan</i>	<i>Melba</i>
<i>April Woodland</i>	<i>Pocatello</i>

Idaho State Convention Registration
“Pow Wow in Poky”
 June 11 - 13, 2015

Clarion Inn
1399 Bench Road
Pocatello ID
208-237-1400

Room Rate: \$75.00 + tax Group Code: IDRLCA
Be Sure to Mention the Group Code When Making Reservations
Rate Cut-off Date: May 31, 2015

Registration Fees

Convention and Banquet \$50.00
Convention Only \$25.00
Banquet Only \$25.00

Type:	M=Member	A=Auxiliary	J=Junior*	G=Guest
Type	Name/City	Convention	Banquet	
	<i>*If Junior, please list age after their name</i>	Total		

Make Checks Payable to IDRLCA District Three
 Send Payment & Registration Form to:
Lesley Greenwell
712 Marsh Creek Road
McCannon ID 83250



Please accept this KEY to:

KNOWLEDGE

SUPPORT

NETWORKING

OPPORTUNITIES

FRIENDSHIPS

SUCCESS

Please accept this invitation to join the organization that directly affects your success as a rural letter carrier, the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association. Act now to protect your future and start receiving the many benefits membership brings.

***National and State Publications • Voting Rights • Insurance Plans •
Websites • Meetings***

Currently, the NRLCA is offering 3 months of membership free to any new member under the RAFT (Recruit A Friend Today) program. In addition, the Idaho Rural Letter Carriers' Association is offering a \$50.00 incentive payment to all new members.

Membership dues for RCA's are \$8.60 per pay period or \$26.97 per pay period for Regular Carriers. This is a small price to pay for job security, COLA wage increases, representation in grievances, and so much more.

Complete PS Form 1187 today and return it to the State Secretary/Treasurer for processing at IDRLCA, 306 N Dakota Ave, Fruitland ID 83619.

If you have any questions about membership please contact one of the IDRLCA State Officers or your local steward.

Homemade Ice Cream

How we loved to go to Grandma's
In our carefree childhood days
When adventure always beckoned us
In new, exciting ways.

Something even more inviting
Than the stream we used to wade
Was the hand-cranked ice-cream freezer
That waited in the shade.

How our youthful eyes would sparkle
Seeing Grandma bring the cream
She had skimmed from all the milk pans
In the spring house by the stream.

We would watch her quite intently
As she added other things...
Eggs she'd gathered in the henhouse
And our favorite flavorings.

Then we packed in ice and rock salt
All around the freezer tank
And we waited to be told that
It was time to turn the crank.

We can still taste that real ice cream
The rich, smooth kind Grandma made
And how we long to see once more
That freezer in the shade!
Joy Belle Burgess

Go to the IDRLCA
Website, idrlca.org, for the
latest and most
comprehensive postal
news.

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Please send address changes to:
IDRLCA Secretary Lori Bennett
306 N Dakota Avenue
Fruitland ID 83619

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Coming Events

**IDRLCA
State Board Meeting**
June 11, 2015
8:30 a.m.
Clarion Inn,
1399 Bench Road, Pocatello
IDRLCA Members Invited

**IDRLCA
State Board Meeting**
June 13, 2015
Following Close of Convention
Clarion Inn,
1399 Bench Road, Pocatello
IDRLCA Members Invited

**2015 IDRLCA State Convention
"POW WOW IN POKY"**
Clarion Inn
1399 Bench Road
Pocatello ID
208.237.1400
June 11 - 13, 2015

IDRLCA District Meetings

District One
Time and Place
To Be
Announced

District Two
July 16, 2015
Centennial Park
Twin Falls
Picnic Meeting

District Three
May 14, 2015, 6:30 p.m.
Clarion Inn
1399 Bench Road
Pocatello

District Five
Time and Place
To Be
Announced