

The PONY EXPRESS



December 2017

Merry Christmas

Rural Carriers and Customers Amazed by the 2017 Total Eclipse

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I took the photo during totality along a rural auxiliary route out of the Papillion, NE post office. Along the route that day there were many customers excited about the pending celestial event. It was great to see so many smiling faces over one thing.

Thanks for the interest in my photo. You can see more of my work at <https://www.instagram.com/jeremyinomaha/> ❁



Photo by Jeremy McLarty, RCA from Omaha Nebraska

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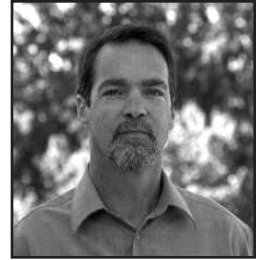
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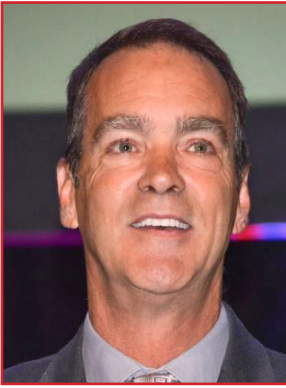
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Boise Boi-Five Mile	John Urquidi	34276 Hot Creek Rd	Bruneau 83604	(208) 599-0979
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Filer	Marilyn Carrico	56 Northridge Way	Jerome 83338	(208) 326-5220
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Northern Idaho District Representative's Report

Seattle/Alaska DR Patrick Pitts

The Value of a Letter

What is a letter worth?

A magazine or newspaper; is one worth more than the other? A parcel; the scan you perform when you deliver a barcoded item;

the distance you walk from your vehicle to a required delivery point; what is the value of each of the varied and sometimes overwhelming work functions you perform each and every day? Would you be surprised if I told you any one of these, individually, could be worth more than \$2,000 annually?

If you are required to put your floor mat on the desk at the end of the day or week so the floors can be swept, does the time it takes you to do that become part of your yearly salary? What about scraping the ice and snow off

your windows so you can safely drive, is that also something that should be added? How do you know?

I cannot stress

enough the importance of knowing all of the individual elements that comprise a mail count. A mail count is used to establish your rural route evaluation, your pay. And a national mail count is coming!

Unless there is implementation of an alternate method for evaluating routes, or the parties agree otherwise, a national mail count will be conducted for twelve (12) working days beginning February 24, and ending March 9, 2018. **All routes will be counted except those routes which both the regular rural carrier or the rural carrier associate (Designation Code 79), as appropriate, and management agree in writing not to count.** The mail count will be effective at the beginning of the fourth full pay period following the end of the count period (April 28, 2018). (See Article 9.2.C.3) Rural carriers, both regular and relief should understand the importance of a properly conducted mail count.

A mail count is the physical counting and recording, at specific times, the number of pieces of mail delivered, collected, or handled on rural routes. Mail counts are used to assemble data that provides the basis for individual route evaluations.

The evaluation of a rural route is determined by the mail volume handled, daily miles traveled, the number and type of boxes served, and fixed or variable time allowances.

Prior to conducting a mail count, a joint conference between rural carriers and managers must be conducted. This conference, commonly referred to as the Pre-Count Conference must be held at least 15 days prior to the beginning of the mail count. For the upcoming February/March mail count the conference must be held by February 9, 2018.

The pre-count conference is an important event as it's management's last opportunity to introduce administrative changes in carrier procedures. Once the conference is completed, procedures are locked in throughout the count. There can be

If you are required to put your floor mat on the desk... so the floors can be swept, does the time it takes you to do that become part of your yearly salary?

no changes in carrier work methods, casing equipment, or office procedures between the date of the local conference and the mail count unless

the changes were specifically discussed at the conference. Keep in mind it is not necessary that the carriers agree to the proposed changes; it is only necessary that the proposed changes do not violate postal service policy or the USPS-NRLCA National Agreement.

During the conference it is important to discuss count procedures so that any potential areas of disagreement can be identified and resolved prior to the start of the mail count. Rural carriers are well advised to take a pre-count conference checklist with them to the conference and take good notes. A pre-count conference checklist and a list of possible items for discussion is traditionally provided in the NRLCA Count Guide.

The mail count is of such importance to rural craft employees the NRLCA will be offering Mail Count Seminars across the Seattle District, which includes Northern Idaho, the latter part of January, and/or the first part of February, 2018. NRLCA members will receive notice of the count classes via US Mail. I strongly encourage all carriers, both regular and relief to take advantage of the opportunity to attend. How much is a letter worth? You decide.



Southern Idaho District Representative's Report

Salt Lake City/Nevada-Sierra DR Brian Draper

Stressful Times Ahead

This upcoming 2018 year is about to become the one involving the most changes ever with the rural craft and how we do our jobs. The stress experienced by rural carriers is ever increasing and the changes are going to contribute to that.

Right now, is the calm before the storm, because we all know that "peak season" is about to hit. It is troubling that even though all the overtime accumulated during the Christmas OT period by rural carriers represents less than 5% of the USPS total overtime, yet the rural carriers are getting 99% of the managers attention. It is not positive attention at all, it is giving carriers unrealistic timeframes to do the job properly. How can you not feel stressed when you are wondering to yourself how you are going to get back by 5:00 pm, then a manger comes and tells you that you have to be back by 5:00 pm, like you didn't already know that. I have told managers that, believe it or not, rural carriers do not want to be out after dark either. They are doing what they can and don't need to be asked every 15 minutes where they are and when will they be back.

Management starts tracking your time in November so they can compare your times and volumes during December. This tactic is to use those times against you when you had less packages and nicer weather. Next, they start with the threats of making you take DPS to the street.

Then no sooner than we get done with Christmas, will come the 2018 mail count. This goes above and beyond our normal everyday stress as it pits us against management with a goal to keep the same evaluation or better. We are well aware that the count affects our livelihoods and financial lives and all it is to the manager is business. It is the cause for the rural carrier to take every negative action by the manager as a personal attack. It is a time with potential detrimental changes and the level of stress hits new highs.

Shortly after the mail count, this year we will have a major change to our evaluated system that will indeed be a highly stressful time due to it being something new and change can be a scary ordeal. To help you understand what you are about to experience I will fall back to an old QWL training that we gave on change. There are four phases when dealing with change; phase one is denial, phase two follows with resistance, phase three becomes exploration and phase four boils down to commitment.

Phase 1 Denial: This is the first step and in the case of the new evaluated system, it is easy to deny the new system is ever going to happen. You are telling yourself that it is never going to happen, so it won't affect me. It has been three years or more in the making with many delays and rewriting of software and systems. Indeed, it has been a long trek but now it has been completed and the final version is expected on February 28, 2018. At that time implementation should commence.

Phase 2 Resistance: In this phase you may become angry that it is happening. You may be saying *I like things the way they were* or *I think change is bad for the organization*. There are going to be changes made and not everyone is going to know how or why these things need changed. At this point you will seem powerless as things are happening to you and you'll learn that your power is limited.

Phase 3 Exploration: It will get to a point where, everything is up in the air, but you are dealing with it. Once the worst part of the change is behind you, then you'll start getting educated on what the new system is and how concerns can be addressed.

Phase 4 Commitment: This phase may be a long time coming but it is hoped you will be able to see the entire picture and not just how it affected you personally. Then you'll say things like *I would not go back to the way things were before*. Remember, the reason for the new system was that the old system had been under attack for years and the time standards were being chipped away slowly and painfully.

There has always been a saying; *the thing rural carriers hate most is change*. With regards to the new evaluated system, rural carriers will have input on how this inevitability is going to happen. Just remember in the end you must have the ability to work under the evaluation. Otherwise, there is no reason to have an evaluated system.

One could look at this article and just say I am the bearer of bad news, but please look at the part that can help you deal with the stress. Knowing ahead of time that it is coming can help you prepare. Remember if you feel it is all too much, the USPS does provide assistance though EAP if things get too stressful to handle. The Association will be doing its best to keep you posted and don't be afraid to ask questions, get education and stand up to mismanagement. You are doing all you can and you feel good about what you do. Even if the manager or customers don't tell you that, others like myself, know you are doing a great job. Most of all hang in there!

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IDRLCA President's Report

IDRLCA President Patti Upton

Planning for Winter Delivery

It's the time of year when we are glad that summer is over, but is winter really any better? Last year, winter in our area of the state broke records. We

had snow ranging from three to four feet and the temperatures dipped well below zero on many occasions. Often resources were not available, due in part that our area is not set up for this type of weather. Have you heard the latest? Experts say that we are in for another rough winter. Personally, I am not looking forward to it. So, let's take a moment to think about this from a safety point of view.

We are told that our safety is a priority of the postal service. This may, or may not, be the case with the postmaster or supervisor in your office. Rural carriers are often faced with terrible weather conditions. I believe that we know best how to deal with all types of weather situations. Our experiences as carriers teach us how to conquer them day in and day out. Subsequently, what are some dangers to be aware of?

I love the vibrant colors of fall that paint the landscape of our routes. However, if leaves are left unattended they can become a slippery wet mess and a safety hazard for us. Also, treacherous, is the snow and the black ice that accompanies the weather when temperatures dip well below zero after a wet wintery day. While driving, allow additional time to stop. Be aware of your surroundings and above all slow down. If walking on these surfaces, there are precautions that you must take to secure your safety. Wear proper footwear, distribute your weight evenly, take baby steps, and never finger the mail while walking. Be aware of your surroundings and use every precaution made available to you. I have heard that Yak Trax (pull on cleats for your shoes) help when the ground is icy. These might be a wise investment for your safety.

Whether driving an LLV or a POV it is important that these vehicles are winterized. Tire tread, and chains or snow tires are a definite must at this time of year. Prepare a small box of things that

you might need in the event that your vehicle breaks down. This might include a blanket, water, flashlight, snacks and other things that will enable you to be safe until help arrives. YOUR safety matters to me, so please be safe this winter season.

I am being told that parcels will increase another ten percent this holiday season - WHAT? Mentally, this can be a bit overwhelming. The challenge before us, is to simply put one foot in front of the other. I challenge you to prepare yourself ahead of time this holiday season. If prepared, you will be able to conquer this holiday season with

I pray that everything about this season will bring you joy, peace and complete happiness. You all deserve to be blessed beyond measure.

confidence and peace of mind. It is amazing what we do as rural carriers to deliver the mail and packages each and every day. This holiday season

will be no different.

Stress levels will be running at an all-time high. I realize that we are all on overdrive at this time of year. It seems as if there are not enough hours in each day to complete even the simplest of tasks. So, I ask you my friends to do this for me. Even if just for a moment, take the time to STOP... LISTEN... and then ENJOY what this time of year is really all about. I pray that everything about this season will bring you joy, peace and complete happiness. You all deserve to be blessed beyond measure.





IDRLCA Vice President's Report

IDRLCA Vice President Brett Parkinson

Winter Blues or is it SAD?

Season's Greetings to all my fellow IDRLCA members. As I write, I am trying to envision the conditions we'll be experiencing when you read this article. We're into December, we've fallen back into standard time with only a little more than one-third of our day being lit by the sun and the temperatures are likely hovering around freezing. As the Winter Solstice (Dec. 21) gets near you may be experiencing a case of the winter blues, or could it be SAD? Have you heard of SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder)?

According to Wikipedia, seasonal affective disorder, also called winter depression, is a mood disorder in which people who have normal mental health throughout most of the year exhibit depressive symptoms at the same time each year, most commonly in the winter. SAD was formally described and named in 1984 by Norman E. Rosenthal and his colleagues at the National Institute of Mental Health. Although experts were initially skeptical, this condition is now recognized as a common disorder. SADs prevalence in the U.S. ranges from 1.4 percent in Florida to 9.9 percent in Alaska. Therefore, it may be logical to assume that one of the causes of this disorder is the lack of exposure to sunlight. It is well known that a lack of sunlight can cause the body to produce less serotonin which can lead to episodes of depression. The Mayo Clinic has listed the following signs and symptoms of SAD:

- Feeling depressed most of the day, nearly every day.
- Losing interest in activities you once enjoyed.
- Having low energy.

- Having problems with sleeping.
- Experiencing changes in your appetite or weight.
- Feeling sluggish or agitated.
- Having difficulty concentrating.
- Feeling hopeless, worthless or guilty.
- Having frequent thoughts of death or suicide.

These symptoms may start out mild and become more severe as the season progresses. It's normal to have some days when you feel down. But if you feel down for days at a time and can't get motivated to do activities you normally enjoy, it might be a good idea to see your doctor. This is especially important if

your sleep patterns and appetite have changed, you turn to alcohol for comfort or relaxation, you feel hopeless or think about suicide.

While the specific cause of seasonal affective disorder remains unknown, some factors that come into play include: Your biological clock (circadian rhythm), a decrease in sunlight may disrupt your body's internal clock and lead to feelings of depression; reduced serotonin levels which may trigger depression and an imbalance in melatonin levels which play a role in sleep patterns and mood. SAD proves to be more common among people who live far north or far south of the equator.

Due to space limitations for this article I have not gone into great detail about SAD. If you need to know more I would encourage you to go online and google "seasonal affective disorder" as there are many sources of information to educate oneself about this disorder. Through my research I have come to the conclusion that I am not among those who suffer from SAD. Even though I do exhibit some of the symptoms of SAD during the winter months I have decided that I suffer from another disorder that I have unofficially named EPDD (Excessive Parcel Delivery Disorder).

Happy Holidays Everybody!

We're into December, we've fallen back into standard time with only a little more than one-third of our day being lit by the sun and the temperatures are likely hovering around freezing.



IDRLCA Secretary/Treasurer's Report

IDRLCA Secretary-Treasurer Lori Bennett

USPS Informed Delivery

Brace yourself, the future is here and now. Ever heard of USPS Informed Delivery? This is one of the newer services that is offered to residential customers. It

provides users with digital previews of the mail that will be delivered to their mailbox.

Sign up and you'll receive an email each morning with black and white images of the front side of the letters and cards to be delivered that day. Knowing when that check really is "in the mail" could create some peace of mind. The program began in Northern Virginia in 2014 and has since been rolled out nationally.

Feedback from the pilot program showed that informed delivery was popular with people who had roommates. It confirmed what mail had arrived, so there were fewer issues amongst the parties. It's also a hit with people who travel and want to know what's in their mail, even if they can't physically access those letters.

Integrating the physical and digital is a smart move, according to Miro Copic, a marketing professor at San Diego State University. "This makes postal mail more interesting to millennials, who are on their devices all day long," Copic said. "And it just might change the equation of how millennials think about the post office longer term."

A few specifics about Informed Delivery: It is for residential mail customers and you must sign up for it at InformedDelivery.USPS.com. It is not currently available for mail delivered to PO boxes. At most, 10 images will be sent via a daily email. If you receive more, you'll get 10 images and a link to see the rest. These images are available to you for seven days. Emails are sent Monday through Saturday on days that mail is processed. If for some reason a piece of mail is not handled via automation, an image cannot be sent. If you get an image of a letter, but not the physical piece itself, informed delivery makes it easy to report that missing mail to the postal service. The image can help speed up the process of finding what's missing. Flat images are not captured. Mailers must provide an image to be used in lieu of the scanned image, or users will not see the incoming flat-sized

mail piece in their email or their usps.com dashboard.

In a world of instant communication, the USPS is searching for ways to compete in the marketplace. Informed delivery provides a way to reach the growing number of Americans who've shifted to digital communications. This scanning technology has been in place since the 1990s. It's part of the automation process that sorts the mail. This is a way for the USPS to exploit something that it's already doing. This digital presence also gives the postal service a way to deliver digital advertising. For now, it will be a free bonus for companies that use the mail. Additional impressions and interactive

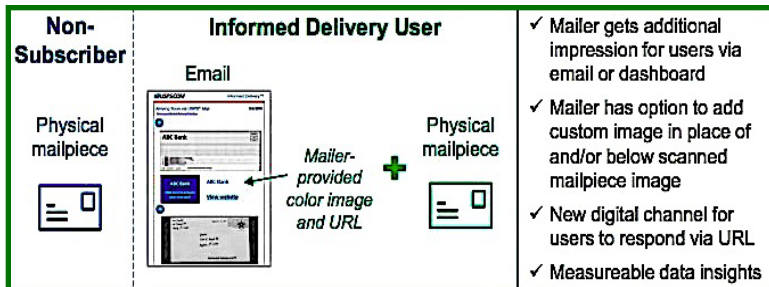
content can increase the opportunities for the recipient to respond to the mailer. Informed delivery creates new opportunities for mailers to engage with potential customers for financial services, retail, insurance,

ecommerce and telecommunications.

Mail theft can be a serious problem. It's one of the common ways identity thieves get personally identifying information to commit their crimes. Informed delivery can help you spot a problem in real time. If an important piece of mail that was supposed to be delivered isn't in the mailbox, a credit card bill, tax document or financial statement, you can assume it was stolen or delivered to the wrong address and start working to find out what happened. With identity theft, the quicker you discover a problem, the faster you can move to manage the damage.

As mail carriers, it is even more vital that we do our part in delivering each piece of mail accurately each and every day. If a residential customer is participating in informed delivery and no matter how trivial that mail piece may seem, if it is not delivered as expected, it creates doubt and mistrust. They might not trust us to deliver the really important items and look for alternatives.

I signed up for Informed delivery a few weeks ago, and it is human nature to compare the physical mail I received with what was expected. For now, I am only notified of the letters processed in DPS. I am excited to see how the USPS expands this service for further revenue opportunities, and to destroy the image of the postal service as only providing "snail mail".



Tips for Rural Carriers from Your ID State Board

✿ If you have considered trying to take DPS to the street, but are intimidated by the thought, try taking one or two trays to start. Work your way up to all the DPS. It doesn't have to be an all or nothing approach.

✿ *Keeping the inside of your windows clean is just as important as the outside.*

✿ I was always afraid to not mark my parcels thinking I had to memorize all of them. I found that I could just section them i.e. 0-9. Then put each section in order of delivery while out on the route. This way I only have to remember the next one. It has saved me hours per week.

✿ *Take your time. Enjoy the drive.*

✿ Investing in my job has made my life easier. I have purchased Yak Trax, a wooden sculch tray and a mail hawk among others. My favorite buy was a box holder tray for the LLV that sits right between the dash and the door! My favorite shop sites are postalproducts.com, pjsigns.com and -God forgive me- amazon.com.

✿ *Do all your Christmas shopping in October!*

✿ If asked to do something that is not part of your job (carrying city mail, clerk work, etc.) ask if it is a direct order and get it in writing before you do it. Then, you can grieve it with proof and get paid for it.

✿ *Fill out 3849s at the door while waiting, it gives the homeowner a chance to come to the door and you are less likely to have them yelling at you from the door as you are pulling away!*

✿ Know who your union DRs and ADRs are and the numbers to reach them. (see page 3)

✿ *Know your Weingarten rights.*

✿ Read your PO 603 to know what your job includes..

✿ *Round date and make a copy of your leave slips before you turn them in.*

✿ Safety in the office and on the street is important. It is our job to keep ourselves safe and aware of situations that might harm us. **WORK SAFE** so that you can go home each and every night to the ones that you love.

✿ *Use the LLV door-step mat for extra traction when stuck in snow.*

✿ Two minutes spent at one box means 20 more boxes could have been filled. Don't overthink it.

✿ *A hand towel on your right leg will help keep you and the mail dry during light rain.*

✿ WD40 - Never leave the PO without it!

September 2017 Board Meeting Minutes

Reported by IDRLCA Secretary-Treasurer Lori Bennett

Officers' Resource Manual Training

Friday, September 29, 2017 beginning at 8:30 am the IDRLCA State Board received training on the Officers' Resource Manual conducted by IDRLCA President, Patti Upton. The following IDRLCA State Board members were present for the training: Patti Upton, Brett Parkinson, Lori Bennett, Mikea Hargrove, Russ Hutchison, John Thomas, Jim Sullins, Glenda Sanders, Jo Aguirre, and Bradie Olivera. Each board member was assigned a section of the officers' resource training manual to train. After those segments, the following scenarios were discussed: Scenario #1, #4, and #6. The training was adjourned at 4:50 pm.

Welcome

The regularly scheduled IDRLCA State Board Meeting was called to order at 8:35 am on Saturday, September 30, 2017 at the Candlewood Suites, Meridian ID.

Attendance: President-Patti Upton, Vice President-Brett Parkinson, Secretary-Treasurer-Lori Bennett, Executive Committeemen-Mikea Hargrove, Russ Hutchison, John Thomas, Jim Sullins, Editor- Glenda Sanders, Webmaster-Bradie Olivera, and Retired Representative-Jo Aguirre.

Ground Rules

Vice President, Brett Parkinson read the ground rules.

Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and adopted as amended.

Reports

The following reports were presented and placed on file: President; Vice President; Secretary/Treasurer and Financial Reports; Executive Committeeman: District One and Provident Guild; District Two; District Three and Legislative; District Five and Auto Rep.

Voucher Review

Chair, Brett Parkinson presented their report.

Reports

The following reports were presented and placed on file: Editor; Retired Representative; Webmaster.

Unfinished Business

Contact Sheet Review

The Contact Sheets were reviewed.

RAFT Incentive Program

Changes to the National RAFT Incentive program were discussed. The state board took no further action at this time.

Equipment

Mikea Hargrove presented information on different PA sound systems and costs. Jim Sullins made a motion "that the state purchase a PA sound system for up to \$600", a 2nd was made, discussion. John Thomas amended the motion to "Mikea is to research PA sound systems within \$600, and present it at the next board meeting". The amendment passed. The motion passed as amended.

Junior Auxiliary

Jo Aguirre brought up discussion regarding how the Junior program is administered at State Convention. Jo Aguirre and Lori Bennett will work on a draft of guidelines regarding junior sponsors, auxiliary, and state responsibilities. This report is to be presented at the next board meeting.

Library of Training Items

President Upton appointed Glenda Sanders, Lori Bennett, and Mikea Hargrove as a special committee to develop a PowerPoint Library of training tools to be available to the District Officers for use at District meetings. Lori made a motion "that the Training Library Committee meet for up to 3 days and will be paid UDOP and mileage per day"; a 2nd was made, after discussion the motion passed.

District Representative

Salt Lake District Representative, Brian Draper addressed the board. He shared that the Utah board

(From previous page)

held a symposium based upon Idaho's past presentations. He talked about upcoming mail count issues, engineered time study, and grievance activity. Brian discussed steward changes and training. He also talked about oversight over the rural training academies. There should be a count school sometime in January pending mail count.

Governance Policies

IDRLCA Whistle Blower Policy was reviewed. Russ Hutchison made a motion to adopt, 2nd, passed.

IDRLCA Record Retention and Destruction Policy was reviewed. Russ Hutchison made a motion to adopt, 2nd, after discussion, passed.

IDRLCA Conflict of Interest Policy was reviewed. Russ Hutchison made a motion to adopt, 2nd, passed. Each member of the board signed theirs individually.

Board Policy Review

The following changes to the IDRLCA State Board Policy were presented:

Lori Bennett made a motion to add - Section II.B.i The IDRLCA Editor shall be allowed up to five (5) UDOP days per year (excluding seminar/training days). A 2nd was made, after discussion the motion passed.

Jim Sullins made a motion to add – Section XI TRADEMARKS AND LOGO a. The Idaho Rural Letter Carriers' Association was issued Trademarks for: Idaho Rural Letter Carriers' Association, IDRLCA, and the Logo, for our organization. Use of any of these identifiers for other than association business needs to be authorized by the State Board. A 2nd was made, after discussion, the motion passed.

Lori made a motion to add – Section IV.H. Regional Conference i. IDRLCA State Board members attending the Western States Conference in its entirety and providing an article to the state paper by the required deadline shall be paid three (3) days per diem. A 2nd was made, discussion, Lori made a motion to table the proposal, 2nd, motion was tabled. Patti Upton and Bradie Olivera are to research and bring proposals to the next board meeting.

Russ Hutchison made a motion to add – Section IV.D.iii Attendees at IDRLCA State required State Officer trainings shall be paid one (1) day UDOP and mileage. If trainings are held in conjunction with other state meetings (multiple days), additional days per diem shall be paid for those travelling in excess of fifty (50) miles one way; not to exceed one per diem paid per day. A 2nd was made, after discussion, passed.

Brett Parkinson made a motion to add – Section V.B.iii If the Committee meeting is held in conjunction with other state meetings (multiple days), additional days per diem shall be paid for those travelling in excess of fifty (50) miles one way; not to exceed one per diem paid per day. A 2nd was made, after discussion, passed.

Jim Sullins made a motion to add – Section V.D.iv If the Committee meeting is held in conjunction with other state meetings (multiple days), additional days per diem shall be paid for those travelling in excess of fifty (50) miles one way; not to exceed one per diem paid per day. A 2nd was made, after discussion, passed.

State Convention

Russ Hutchison updated information on the upcoming 2018 state convention. It is scheduled for June 11-13, 2018 in Burley.

New Business

Correspondence

Pocket Calendars: Russ motioned that the state order 12 pocket calendars, a 2nd was made, discussion, passed.

Glenda motioned that the state purchase 100 of the sample pens from National Pen Company, a 2nd was made, discussion, passed.

Camera

The state camera assigned to the Webmaster needs to be utilized at all business functions.

Next Board Meeting

The next board meeting was scheduled for December 2, 2017 at 8:30 am, location to be determined.

Personal Concerns

The board members were allowed to address any personal concerns.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm

Voice of the Executive Committeeman

District Two President Russ Hutchison



Safety Shell Game

We have all gone into a McDonald's, Subway or any fast food establishment and been served by a latex glove wearing attendant behind the counter. In fact, almost

everyone in these places are wearing gloves. Keeping us safe from foodborne illness is their top priority. The management of these restaurants have developed guidelines for their employees to follow in order to protect the public and themselves. But do you really watch what is happening behind the counter?

On a recent trip to my local McDonalds I observed the young lady who was taking my order at the register. She was wearing latex gloves. After punching my order into the register, she took my money, placed it into the cash drawer, and gave me my change. She then proceeded to adjust the ponytail in her hair, turned around and bagged two orders plus mine. Next, she walked around behind the heat lamp and boxed up some fries for the next order. After placing them in a bag with the rest of the food she handed it to a customer and went back to the register and took another order. All this while wearing the same pair of gloves.

This young lady was very productive and personable. She was doing an outstanding job. As I watched her, at any single point in her activity, she looked safe and clean. She was wearing gloves, an apron, and had her hair pulled back. When everything was put together though, she was wearing the same pair of gloves while handling money, her hair and the food. The shell game here is that the gloves give the customers (and the cashier) a false sense of security for cleanliness when in reality without gloves, the cashier might have washed her hands between tasks.

If you think about it, we can compare the postal service with this scenario. The postal service has policies and guidelines designed to help us do our jobs safely. We have safety shields on equipment, safety guidelines for lifting procedures, speed limits on route vehicles, seatbelt requirements, and many more guidelines designed to keep us safe. Some of these come from other government agencies such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Department of Labor (DOL). Others are put into place by the USPS itself such as the EL-814 (Employee Guide to Safety). These are all designed to bring you safely back home to your family.

The shell game here begins with district managers and trickles down to postmasters and supervisors. From the time of hire and all through the orientation process and training, new hires are constantly preached to about safety, safety, safety, but when they get out on the route, on their own, it becomes hurry, hurry, hurry.

Unrealistic dispatch schedules and heavy parcel volumes are pushing carriers to cut corners in order to make up time thus diminishing safety.

Requiring new RCAs to take their DPS mail to the street for the first five pay periods is just one way management is creating an unsafe environment on the route. Taking DPS mail to the street in itself is not unsafe when done correctly. When a new RCA with limited knowledge of the route and its customers is shoved out onto the street with all of the mail, which includes hold mail, expired forwards, and all of those extras that would be cleaned out if the mail was sorted in the office, safety is probably not the first thing on their mind. Adding to the pressure is management constantly looking over their shoulders with their computer look down programs and pushing them to make times that are just not possible until they get more experience. All of these factors tend to push new carriers to save time by throwing safety rules out.

Management knows, but won't admit, that with DPS mail in your vehicle the opportunity to finger the mail while driving is possible and they can nudge the carrier into hurrying. With the Christmas season and parcel volumes increasing, managers will be making it their business to "make the numbers."

Whichever way you carry your mail, don't fall into managements trap of hurry, hurry, hurry. Take time to be safe. Pay attention to the road while driving between boxes and work your mail after you get to the box. Safety is ultimately our own responsibility.

In the food industry gloves are supplied to facilitate food safety and hygiene but if not used properly they are no safer than using no gloves at all. We as carriers, are supplied with the resources and training to be safe. It's up to all of us to use common sense. Bad road conditions, heavy parcel loads, and higher volumes of mail are just around the corner. Please, please, pay attention to your surroundings. Take the time you need to deliver your mail correctly and safely. **Don't compromise your safety just to help your managers "numbers" look good.** Stay safe out there and remember to keep an eye on your fast food server.

2017 Scholarship Winner

Son of RCA Robert Crook and Wife Teresa



Dear Idaho Auxiliary Board, thank you for choosing me to receive a scholarship this year.

This fall I will be attending the engineering program at the University of Idaho with hopes to eventually move into the fields of aerospace and astro-engineering. During this next year, I plan on taking an Intro to Engineering class as well as Calculus II, both are going to be extremely fun

to be involved in and I am extremely excited. This scholarship will go a long way in helping relieve the stresses of affording the many expenses involved with attending college. Thank you again for helping me and my family afford to give me this chance at a college education.

Thank you, Robert Crook.

New Year's Resolutions for ~~2015~~ ~~2016~~ ~~2017~~ 2018

1. Lose ~~weight~~ ^{more} again. } walk more
2. Get fit next year
3. Give up alcohol ^{and cigarettes!} Drink less
4. ~~Stand up to boss.~~ ^{find a job} Work smarter
5. ^{Try to} Be nicer to my ^{ex} wife
6. Sort out junk in ~~shed~~ ^{life}



From the Collection of Seattle/Alaska District Representative Patrick Pitts

Idaho Auxiliary Report

Auxiliary Secretary-Treasurer Jeff Marler

IDRLCA Financial Reports



The stated purpose of the Auxiliary of the Idaho Rural Letter Carriers' Association is:

The Purpose of this Auxiliary shall be to unite fraternally its members, to help create a greater interest in rural mail service and association work and to cooperate with the Idaho and National Rural Letter Carriers' Association to seek beneficial legislation.

In a nutshell, the auxiliary consists of the spouses of rural mail carriers. **Did you know that if your husband/wife is a rural carrier and receives this magazine, then you are already a member of the auxiliary?**

Idaho Auxiliary members meet once per year at the IDRLCA State Convention to discuss and vote on officers and scholarship entrants.

Please think about joining us this upcoming year in Burley at the 2018 State Convention. Your rural carrier spouse will be in meetings most of the day, so we will be freed up to see sights around town, shop, hang out with the juniors, play a hand or two of cards or come up with something else that we all would like to do. Please contact me if you want more information on the Auxiliary of the Idaho Rural Letter Carriers' Association.

Jeff Marler Secretary/Treasurer
208-731-2730

IDRLCA Statement of Financial Position

As of November 5, 2017

ASSETS

Current Assets

Checking/Savings	3,808.68
APCU-CHECKING	37,496.19
APCU-SAVINGS	27,126.86
CD-APCU 70 APRIL 4	26,558.67
CD-APCU 71 OCT 23	21,334.71
CD-APCU 72 JULY 20	26,187.09
CD-APCU 73 JAN 18	142,512.20
Total Checking/Savings	142,512.20
Total Current Assets	142,512.20

TOTAL ASSETS

142,512.20

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
Payroll Liabilities	1,073.87
Total Other Current Liabilities	1,073.87
Total Current Liabilities	1,073.87
Total Liabilities	1,073.87
Equity	
Net Assets	136,103.16
Net Income	5,335.17
Total Equity	141,438.33

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY

142,512.20

IDRLCA Statement of Activities

July 1, 2016 through November 5, 2017

Income

Incentive Program	150.00
Interest / Dividends	341.93
Membership Dues	53,132.51
Miscellaneous	1.00
National General Insurance	3,193.35
Reimbursements	75.00
Sales	36.00

Total Income

56,929.79

Expense

Accounting Fees	1,100.00
Awards & Recognition	454.15
Education & Training	131.28
Equipment Maintenance	0.00
Equipment Purchases	1,344.66
National Convention	21,369.00
Office Expense	1,032.80
Payroll Taxes	921.59
Per Capita Dues	4,058.50
Postage	434.52
Printing	1,193.78
Rent	360.00
Salaries and Wages	10,938.69
State Meetings	683.54
State Paper	1,796.88
Telephone & Internet	661.63
Travel	4,620.60
Western States Conference	0.00
Worker's Compensation Insurance	493.00
Total Expense	51,594.62

Net Income

5,335.17

BY THE NUMBERS

13.3 billion

Number of bills sent and received by U.S. businesses in 2016

9 billion

Number of First-Class Mail pieces sent by U.S. households in 2016

513 million

Number of personal letters sent and received by U.S. households in 2016

54,490

Number of address changes processed by the Postal Service in one day

13,000

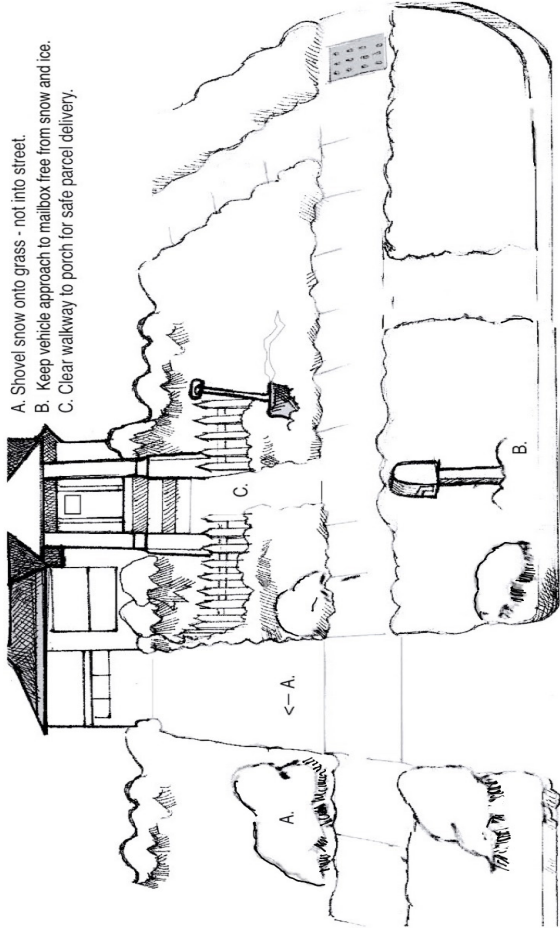
Number of Main Streets in the United States

0

Amount of tax dollars received for operating USPS

SNOW SHOVELING TIPS FROM YOUR MAIL CARRIER

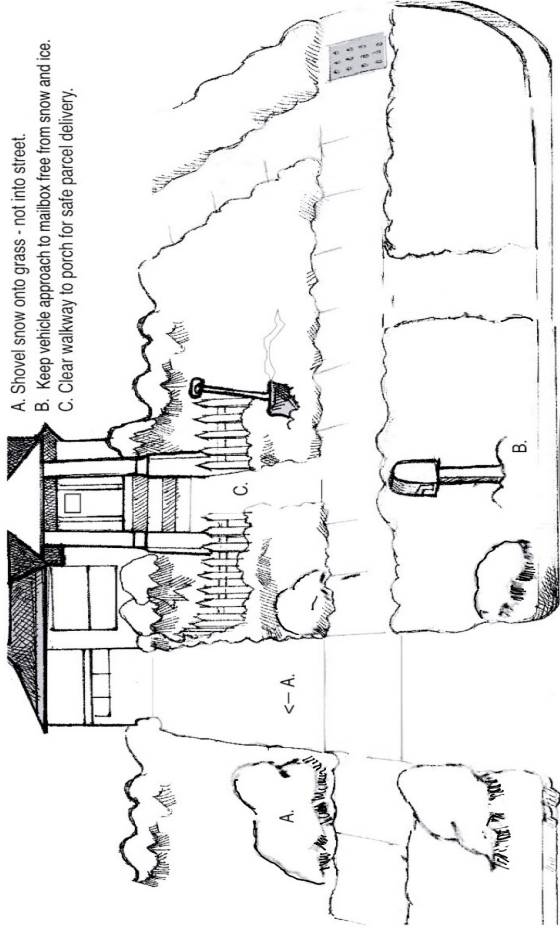
- A. Shovel snow onto grass - not into street.
- B. Keep vehicle approach to mailbox free from snow and ice.
- C. Clear walkway to porch for safe parcel delivery.



B. Snow Free Zone

SNOW SHOVELING TIPS FROM YOUR MAIL CARRIER

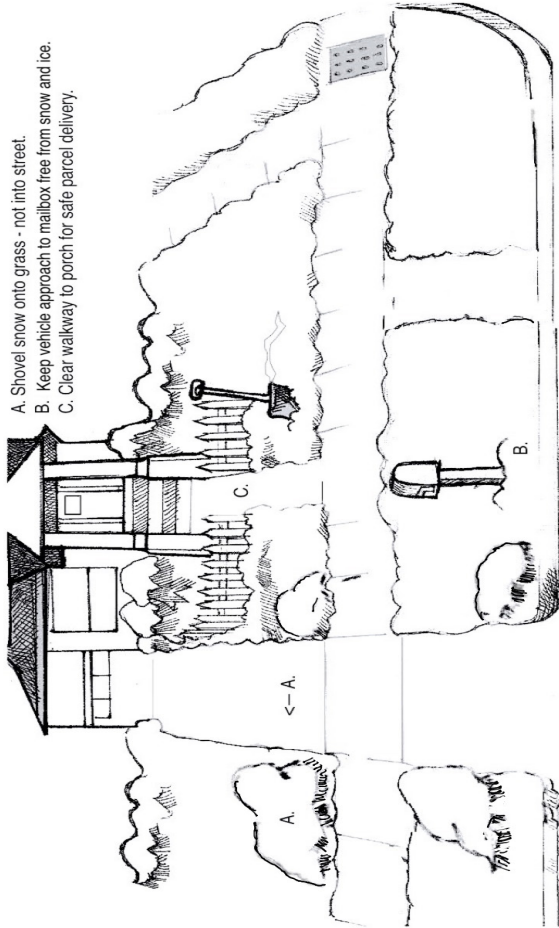
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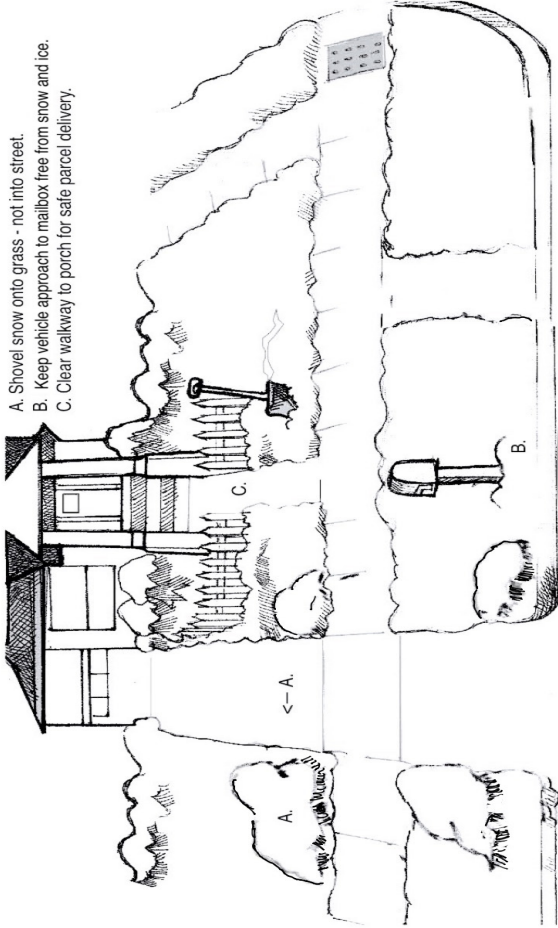
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B. Snow Free Zone



Letters to Santa and the US Postal Service

As much as history reveals, the postal service began receiving letters to Santa Claus more than 100 years ago. However, its involvement was made official when in 1912 Postmaster General Frank Hitchcock authorized local Postmasters to allow postal employees and citizens to respond to the ever-growing number of letters received every holiday season.

In the 1940s, mail volume for Santa increased so much so that the Postal Service invited charitable organizations, community groups and corporations to read and respond to the children who wrote letters to Santa.

Over the past 60-plus years, the program has taken on a life of its own. Today, cities around the country have hugely successful Letters to Santa programs working with recognized charitable organizations, major corporations, local businesses, postal employees and private citizens to make a difference in the lives of children from coast to coast.

- Hundreds of thousands of children of all ages send letters to “Santa Claus, North Pole, Alaska” every year.
- Unless these letters contain a complete Alaska address; the letters remain in the area they were mailed.
- Postal “elves” go through the letters and separate those that wish Santa a happy birthday from those that express serious need.

For more information see <http://about.usps.com/holidaynews/>

Go to the IDRLCA website, idrlca.org, for the latest information and events

NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE PAID
Meridian ID 83642
PERMIT # 47

The PONY EXPRESS



Photo by Glenda Sanders

Coming Events

IDRLCA
State Board Meeting
December 9, 2017
Candlewood Suites Boise
8:00 am to 5:00 pm
IDRLCA Members Invited

USPS Mail Count
Mail count school
time & place TBD
12 Day Count
February 24
to March 9, 2018

NRLCA
Western State's Conference
April 19-21, 2018
Little America
Cheyenne, WY
IDRLCA Members Invited