

Official News Publication
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Peace Garden State
www.ndrlca.org

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North Dakota

Rural Letter Carriers' Association

VOLUME 32

FALL/WINTER 2009

PAC Gary Thompson

Thank you to all of those who wrote to our Congressmen about the recent bills going through Congress involving the Postal Service. The effort did help give the entire Post Office a break with the current fiscal mess.

I never thought I'd be writing this but Congress is our boss. They write the laws that govern how the Postal Service is operated. As such, **we** (the PTFs, RCAs, and regular carriers) have to get their attention.

We have to use the PAC funds to get the attention of our elected officials. They are busy and it helps to point out specific issues that involve the interests of our rural carriers. That is the name of the game.

This year could help us in the future and the next year is also important as both Senator Dorgan and Representative Pomeroy are up for reelection. So keep on giving!

A special thanks goes to Phil Quick and Jerry Fossum for last year, this state was great. Thank you, again, to all of those at National for your donations as it is our future. Help support PAC to keep our jobs.

2009 Outstanding Member of the Year

Ida began her postal career in 1995 as an RCA for route 2 in Wyndmere, ND. She became a regular carrier in August 1997 and is still serving route 2. Ida has been an officer in her local unit, Richland County, since 1997. She has served as Secretary/Treasurer and is currently the President. Ida was elected to the state board in 2005 as District I Committeeman. She was chairman of the 2006 state convention where her unit hosted at the Dakota Magic Casino. At the 2006 National Convention, Ida received Honorable Mention from the PAC committee, for increasing PAC donations in her state by more than 100%. In 2007, Ida was elected President of the North Dakota Rural Letter Carrier Association, and is currently serving as President.

Ida is an active member of her community. She has served on numerous committees and boards for the school and local church. She currently is the secretary/treasurer for the Wyndmere 125th Celebration and All School Reunion to be held June 2010.

Ida is married to Jeff, who is employed by a local farmer. They have 2 children.



Ida Volesky, Wyndmere ND

**State Convention June 4-6
Doublewood Inn, Fargo**

For reservations call 701-235-3333

President Ida Volesky

Dear North Dakota Rural Letter Carriers, it is my privilege to serve you as your State President for a third year. Thank you for your continued confidence in me.

A huge appreciation goes out to Dorene Haugen, Janet Pfaff, Janice Sackman, Diane Berger, Mary Wertz and the units of Capital Tri, Mclean County, and Missouri Slope. They did an excellent job of putting together a very successful state convention. I would also like to thank the members who attended the state convention and served on committees. You, the membership, are why a convention is held. The results of the business transacted affect how the association can serve the membership. After the record snowfall this winter and overland flooding this spring, we were not surprised to have snowfall at our convention in June. How appropriate to show our National Officer, Ronnie Stutts, the wonder of weather in our great state. We had the great honor of having the Director of Steward Operations, Ronnie Stutts, attend our convention. He was a valuable resource for our stewards and the questions they had.

LEGISLATIVE: This past May, Gary Thompson and I attended the Legislative Seminar in Washington, DC. Our main objective is to meet with our state congressional delegation and lobby for the issues that affect our union members. This year, legislation was needed to provide relief for the U.S. Postal Service during this time of economic hardship. The focus was on the payment schedule that funded the retiree health benefits for the future. House bill H.R.22 was in committee and addressed this issue; however there was none in the Senate at this time. I am happy to announce that as of September 25th, we have a temporary solution to this issue. Check out our website (www.ndrlca.org) or the National website (www.nrlca.org) for more details. Some of the other issues we discussed with Senator Conrad were the FERS sick leave, and social security reform.

CONSTITUTION: There were 19 constitution changes that were passed at the state convention. Seventeen of the changes were suggested by the national committee to put our constitution on the same language as the National Constitution. The other two had to do with our state dues. There is no change to the amount of dues withheld, only where the funds are allocated. We passed to finance the auxiliary, \$4 per member to the National Auxiliary, and \$5 per active member, \$3 per retired member to the State Auxiliary. We were doing this already but had no official language in our constitution. The other change had to do with the distribution of local dues, of the \$6.00, \$2 goes to the local unit, and \$4 goes into our state steward fund. The steward fund is used for training of local stewards and expenses incurred by union representation. Thank you to the constitution committee for their work and the membership for their attention to these changes.

MAIL COUNT: We will be having a complete mail count training and steward question and answer session at the **Winter Booster meeting, Sunday, January 17th**. Please try and attend as this year's count is only a 2 week count, (February 27 – March 12), and you, as a carrier, need to pay attention. There will be a few more count training sessions through out the state. The date and time will be listed on the website as soon as they are scheduled.

WELCOME: I would like to welcome Dustin and Tricia Allen as our new Editor and Webmaster. Dustin is a RCA out of the Bismarck office and Tricia has her own business called "*Tricia's Bakery*". They are working as a team and the best way to contact them is by email: tricia.allen@bis.midco.net. Thank you Tricia and Dustin.

I would like to thank the members of my board for their help and guidance this past year. We have a great group of officers and they work very hard to serve this association. To the membership of this great state of North Dakota, it is a pleasure to serve and represent you as your President.



State Board
(left to right):

Gary Thompson;
Ronnie Stutts,
National Officer;
Dorene Haugen;
Ida Volesky;
Jerry Fossum;
Mary Wertz;
Jerry Axtman

Vice President Gary Thompson

Hello fellow rural carriers, I want to thank you for allowing me to be your vice president for a second year. Each month is a more rewarding, interesting, and learning experience.

Every time I attend a meeting or talk with a fellow rural carrier, I realize how important it is to attend meetings to learn what is happening with both the Post Office in general and especially to us rural carriers.

Being in Washington with President Ida Volesky to represent North Dakota to our Congressmen was an eye opener. North Dakota's Congressmen know that we are mostly rural and do much to support us with Senator Kent Conrad even agreeing to meet us in person to talk. We also discussed the flooding last spring as well as rural carrier concerns. I won't go through all of the bill numbers but the outlook appears that the Post Office will get a one year break from mandated payments. Yippee. (There is more on this in the PAC section on page one.)

Thanks to everyone who appeared at the State Convention in Mandan, which was both fun and informational. I believe some people got a lot out of the convention, because anything that provides more information helps your job and career. Thank you to Ronnie Stutts who came from National to talk to us because at the State Convention, you can meet the big wigs. If you can't make the trip to the State Convention, you should go to your local unit meeting. Sending someone to the State meeting and reporting back to your unit is helpful but actually talking to someone in person is always better.

I think it looks like the Post Office will count us all again. If you are being counted, go to the mail counting seminars because it is your money the district wants from you. Remember, one minute can make or break you for an hour per week. RCAs should go if the regular doesn't go because it's your money, also.

I was also elected by my fellow carriers to go to the National Convention held in Texas, which was another learning experience. Learning is the key word there. We are a small state but being part of the mid-states conference gave us a bigger voice at National.

In closing, we are in for a change, which is not always good...but isn't necessarily bad, either. It's important to remember that you can have the greatest Postmaster or OIC ever but if they're told to do something and you don't know it goes against the contract then you lose. The odds are that anything they are told goes against us. So, go to a local, booster, or state meeting. If I hadn't gotten bored or mad in 1993, I could have been full time by 1995 instead of 1998 just by going to the meetings.

National Convention Mary Thompson, NDRLCAA Secretary/Treasurer

The national convention held at the Gaylord Texan near Dallas in mid August was great and I felt fortunate to be able to attend as a delegate along with Rochelle DeFoe and Dottie Ewer (Schafer). Rochelle accepted the Auxiliary of the Year award for North Dakota.

The auction went very well on Monday night with Clara Hauck's painting selling for \$300 and the prints she had made sold for \$30 each. The profit from the auction went to Give the Kids the World project. Thanks to Clara for all her work and talent.

A scholarship was drawn for an alternate winner from North Dakota. This means if the winner that was chosen is not able to attend college then he would become the winner of \$5,000. Many scholarships were thrown out for many reasons and the posters were the same way. A title is important for a poster besides following the theme idea.

The scholarships need to be in to the national officer by March 1, 2010. The North Dakota scholarship needs to be in to Sandy Fischer by May 20, 2010. This scholarship winner will be selected at the state convention in June. The applications may be picked up at the unit meetings or you may write or call any state officer for any. The Juniors work on posters and essays at the state convention or may be done at home and brought to the state convention. The instructions are in the Auxiliary pamphlet for 2010.

"It is indeed an honor to be chosen as the Outstanding Member of the Year by my fellow carriers. Being a part of this Association has been a blessing. Thank you for bestowing me this great award."

~Ida Volesky

Secretary/Treasurer Doreen Haugen

It is that time of year when the State & National Convention are over for another year, and it won't be long before there is snow under our feet.

The Postal Service in *crisis*! This is the title of the subcommittee hearing that took place August 6. Hearings on the financial status of the Postal Service have been ongoing. A very small glimpse of relief with the amended version of HR 22 passed on September 15, 2009. The amended version gives a one year short term financial relief for the US Postal Service from the Retirements Health Benefit Fund due September 30, 2009. We will see more fiscal relief but at what cost?

The Senate mark-up of the S. 1507 "poison pill" amendment surely has kept the Postal Unions busy trying to have this horrible provision stricken. The bill in its original form could have been supported. Thanks to a hard line anti-union Jim Coburn (R-OK) amendment would give postal management an unfair advantage in future collective bargaining. All the Postal Service has to do is put their financial status in dire straits. The Coburn amendment would require an arbitrator to consider the Postal Services' financial situation before issuing an arbitration award. I've been with the Postal Service 24 years and it has always been doom and gloom the years of contract negotiations. Please write or call our congressmen and oppose this bill. You can go to our website, www.ndrlca.org for sample letters.

Postmaster General Jack Potter was a guest speaker at the National Convention. I just knew he was going to give us a rehearsed speech and no kidding the first thing that came out of his mouth was "the one thing we can give to our customers is service." My first thought was then let us do just that. One example is start time. The mail is sitting their waiting for us carriers in the morning. What customer doesn't like the mail early? We also have the problem of delivery dates that aren't being honored. The last couple of weeks we have been delivering mail that the sales have been expired. It doesn't take long before this type of erroneous neglect hurts the USPS.

Mr. Potter did bring on a couple of boos from the floor when he pushed for the 5 day work week. I along with the delegates believe this is being short-sighted. What we need to do is expand our business. Question to Mr. Potter: And if a 5 day work week doesn't save us do we go to a 4 day work week then 3 days etc...? We don't need to destroy the Postal Service to save it! One big thing on that subject *is* it takes an act of Congress to change the days of delivery. If this happens there will be another business there to step in and deliver that mail on Saturdays. It happened with the parcels business, oh how soon we forget. No company, whether it's FedEx, UPS or DHL, provide the service we do.

Mr. Potter also said we are the most trusted agency in the government. He did finally say one thing that was forward thinking about growing the business. He suggested we could renew license plates, be a bank, census taker or sell cell phones or life insurance as additional services to generate financial support for universal service. Mr. Potter took questions from the delegates. After just one question about carrier's everyday affairs we deal with at the office; I realized we have just enlightened him. He is just too far removed.

Membership is going down nationwide and that holds true here in ND. As of today we have 703 and members 56 non-members. ND did receive an award for the highest percentage for over all membership at the National Convention this year.

The Post Office will be conducting 2-week mail count in February. Bob and I will be doing count schools around the state. One will also be held at the Booster Meeting in Mandan.

I was visiting with a couple of the national officers while I've been in Washington DC. One of the officers said they went to Jack Potter's office to discuss several issues. Our officers were asked to concede something from the Rural Carrier to help out the USPS because of their finances. They answered by saying we give back every year. Our evaluated system lets you rise or reduce our salary ever year if you want. The rural carrier craft is the best craft for your buck.

I had the opportunity to hold in my hands the \$1.4 million dollar check in Jeanette Dryers' office that our union received from the Postal Service. The check was for the

award we received from an arbitration settlement on hiring TRC over the 80%. I think now the postal service will probably try a little hard in hiring RCA and not make that costly mistake again.

Would you like to be on my ND carriers e-mail list? Send your e-mail address to dbhaugen@bis.midco.net so you'll be included in updated information. We must stick together, carry our routes professionally and know the contract compliance is the right and fair way to continue the labor/management relationship.

Happy Mail Carrying!



"Don't Panic" were a couple of the first words out of PMG Potters mouth in his speech at the national convention this year. Then "five day delivery" finally dropped on the anxiously awaiting ears of the delegates. Well after the moans and groans and a few boos and hisses subsided, he proceeded to try and convince us it was all in our best interest if we are to survive. Don't panic....Hah!! Seems like a kneejerk response to me. He claims the polls show the public wants five day delivery. I have a feeling the question was asked; 'what would you rather have, five day delivery, a rate increase, or small offices and branches closing and combining with another?' What would be the response of the ones being polled? He went on to say our competition doesn't work on Saturday and the customers aren't affected by it, and UPS charges a surcharge for Saturday delivery. Duhhh! We delivery on Saturday now, filling the gap. And when we lose that, it appears to me the ones that will be taking the brunt of this and suffering the most will be our customers (reduced service), the postal service themselves, and us rural carriers. The ones coming out ahead on the deal will be our competition, UPS, FedEx, and Speedy. Does Potter and his cronies and advisors actually think our competition will pass up the chance to take over our last mile delivery if we give it up? They have the ability to change their policies and rates overnight. Do you think they won't drop the Saturday surcharge in order to pick up more business? Sounds like a good business decision to me. How do you think they got the idea to start in the first place. UPS saw a niche in the parcel business that the PO wasn't providing, FedEx saw an opportunity to deliver something overnight coast to coast which the postal service couldn't and still can't do without the help of FedEx. And of course the PMG and his cohorts at L'Enfant Plaza in Washington DC aren't going to be harmed any, either way it goes.

I was looking at the statistics they are so proud of. The 100 million work hours they eliminated, the 57,000 positions they eliminated. There may be places in the country where the volume is down quite a bit and there are more employees than work load demands. But not everywhere, so the cookie cutter approach might not work. Those of us out here in the real world have seen drops in volume but we still get our fair share of mail. Even if we drop from 5 or 6 pieces to 2 or 3, we still have to go by the same number of boxes and travel the same amount of miles. Instead of being so proud of all this cutting they have done, they should sit back and see how this has hurt the service to the customers. After all we are still called the postal SERVICE. I have said this before but it bears repeating, we went backwards on customer service, at least the small office and last mile area, when we went from the postal service to the Postal Company. Enough said on this subject for now.

I must give PMG Potter credit for having the nerve to answer questions after his speech. It could have been quite an ordeal, but the delegation maintained a civil and respectful tone to the questions and comments.

I have stated in past articles and website entries the importance of your eyes and ears out there. The only way we hear issues or 'funny' things happening is by carriers alerting us to them. So I am appealing to you all again. With the upcoming winter season just around the corner I am asking every carrier and RCA out there to watch how the storm days and deviations are handled and to inform us when they occur and if possible get a copy of any emails sent from "them or they", or at the very least remember what it says if you are shown anything in writing. Storm days (Acts of God) are to be handled in the following manner. These examples are from the F-21 time and attendance, Art. 572 and Art. 582. EL-902 Art 9.2.13

572 Temporary Route Deviation

572.1 Recording Temporary Route Deviation

When a temporary deviation is necessary, an increase in the EMA will be authorized if the total daily miles traveled, including deviations, exceeds 40 miles per day. Miles recorded in the Route Deviation (Route Dev.) block must be in whole miles (3-digit field). Payment is at the current mileage rate (see exhibits 572a and 572b).

572.2 Recording Temporary Route Deviation in Excess of 30 Calendar Days

Any temporary route deviation of more than 30 calendar days shall be added via PS Form 4003 to the evaluation, and the salary shall be adjusted accordingly. Discontinue reporting the route deviation on PS Form 1314. Upon termination of the deviation, the route evaluation shall be adjusted to its former status. No special count shall be made at either the beginning or ending of the deviation. All salary changes become effective at the beginning of the first pay period following completion of the first 30 days of the deviation and at the beginning of the first pay period after the deviation is terminated.

PS Form 1314 — Route Deviation — Over 40 Miles

Because of a bridge closing, the carrier must take a detour starting the first Friday and ending the second Tuesday. This is a 58-mile, 46-hour, heavy-duty J route. The carrier must travel an extra 9.6 miles for 4 days.

Week 1 The regular carrier is compensated for 6 days worked, 6 trips EMA, and 010 miles deviation.

Week 2 The regular carrier is compensated for 2 days worked, 3 days' annual leave, plus 2 trips EMA, and a route deviation of 019 miles. The replacement carrier is compensated for 4 days and 4 trips, plus 010 miles deviation for the second week. **Note:** All route deviation is paid at the current rural carrier mileage rate.

582.2 Acts of God

582.21 Definition

An act of God involves community disasters such as fire, flood, or storms. The disaster situations must be general rather than personal in scope and impact, and must prevent groups of employees from working or reporting to work

582.23 Rules

The following rules apply in the given situation for rural carriers when employees are dismissed from duty before the normal completion of their scheduled tour or are prevented from reporting to work due to an act of God.

582.231 Situation 1

If a rural carrier is scheduled to work and due to an act of God (adverse weather conditions, roads closed, blizzard, etc.) is unable to report to work, the following rules apply:

- a. The carrier must call in and advise the postmaster.
- b. Compensation:
 - (1) Designations 71, 72, 74, and 79 receive a full day's compensation and no EMA.
 - (2) Designations 70, 73, 75, 77, and 78 are not entitled to compensation.
- c. Preparation of PS Form 1314 for Designations 71, 72, and 74:
 - (1) Record an O (Other Leave) on the appropriate day.
 - (2) Annotate the back of PS Form 1314 with the reason for other leave (act of God).
 - (3) Use a replacement Social Security Number of 999-99-9999 to crossfoot PS Form 1314 (see exhibit 582.231).
- d. Preparation of PS Form 1314-A for Designation 79:
 - (1) Record an N (No service) on the appropriate day.
 - (2) Enter the number of evaluated hours in the Other leave block to the nearest hour.

582.232 Situation 2

If a rural carrier is scheduled to work and is contacted by the postmaster not to report to work because of an act of God, follow the entitlement and procedures in 582.231b and c.

582.233 Situation 3

If a rural carrier scheduled to work reports to the office, but no mail is available and none is expected because of an act of God, and the carrier scheduled to work is sent home, the following rules apply:

- a. Compensation.
 - (1) Designations 71, 72, 74 and 79 are paid a full day's compensation and EMA.
 - (2) Designations 70, 73, 75, 77, and 78 are entitled to 2 hours' guaranteed time. No EMA is due.
- b. Preparation of PS Form 1314 for Designations 71, 72, and 74. Leave blank the appropriate daily block on PS Form 1314. The work hours and/or hundredths must be added to other service for the week and recorded in the Actual Wkly Hrs block.
- c. Preparation of PS Form 1314-A for Designation 79. Leave the DACA field blank on PS Form 1314-A. If the employee is not entitled to EMA, put 1 trip in the government vehicle block.
- d. Preparation of PS Form 1314-A for Designations 70, 73, 75, 77, and 78. Complete a manually prepared or preprinted PS Form 1314-A using route number A999. Enter 2 hours in the Actual Weekly Work Hours block.

582.234 Situation 4

If the rural carriers scheduled for duty report to the Postal Service installation but are unable to complete full service through no fault of their own, they receive compensation according to their designation.

- a. Designations 71, 72, 74 and 79 receive a full day's compensation and EMA.
- b. Designations 70, 73, 75, and 78, when performing service on a regular rural route, receive a full day's compensation plus EMA.
- c. Designations 70, 75, 77, and 78, when performing service on an auxiliary rural route, receive compensation for actual hours and hundredths worked (minimum 2 hours). EMA is only for route hours, trips, and miles traveled.

If you have any questions on storms or deviations please let me, assistant state steward Dorene, or any of the area stewards know as soon as possible. We want to make sure the carriers of our state are getting what they are entitled to. Because of the frequency of our newsletter, please go to the state web site and get more current info. I update the steward corner page when issues needing attention arise. I am planning to post updates on specific time dated issues as they come up. Thank you all and I hope this helps.

Happy 80th Birthday to John Schafer—North Dakota's 1st State Steward!
His birthday was celebrated on September 27th at the Doublewood Inn, Bismarck with friends, family and his rural letter carrier family.

District I Committeeman Jerry Fossum

Greetings from the District where the wind is howling, leaves are falling, the kids are back in school, harvest in various stages and where we had as much summer in September as July and August combined.

Do we ever hear any good news about the USPS? I can't remember anything except how slow we are (snail mail). How much the USPS is losing and PMG Potter stating that to secure the fiscal stability of the postal service that it must gain flexibility within the law to move towards 5 day delivery, adjust its network as needed, to develop new products the market demands and work with its unions to meet the challenges ahead. He also supports Senate Bill S1507 in restructuring the retiree Health Benefits Fund payment schedule. Fine and Dandy- but he also supports the portion of the bill that requires an arbitrator to consider the agency's financial health in a binding arbitration agreement!! This alone takes the "neutral" out of the neutral arbitrator. Does this sound like he is willing to work with the unions? I think not!

Until the PS can reorganize from the top down, we as the RLC union have to stand fast for our members. A recent (9-20-09) letter was published in The Forum of Fargo & Moorehead about the problems at the PO start at the top. Karl Pollock, a retired letter carrier from West Fargo, pointed out how this is evident in Fargo. Look up this letter on the internet.

I was fortunate to be a delegate to the National Convention in Grapevine, Texas in July, where we were addressed by PMG Potter. He stressed the low volume of mail and all the \$\$ we're losing, so have to go to a 5 day delivery. Same old speech! Much to his credit, he did take questions from the delegation. He could not give a direct answer to any of them. It was as if he had no clue as to how areas and districts function. Myself- I was not impressed.

I'd like to take these following observations from our NRLCA Pres. Don Cantrell published in the Sept. newsletter for those who didn't take the time to read it. Other than the low mail count, he notes 3 looming issues that might well determine the fate of the rural craft as we know it today. The first was the unilateral changes by the PS made in the PO-603 dealing with the review process for DPS letters and what else they may try to change if it is allowed to stand. Secondly the DPS flat standard the PS proposes is totally unacceptable. Third- what if a 5 day delivery comes about? Our reliefs would be greatly affected. The delegates voted overwhelmingly against a 5 day delivery, so the PMG would know we were united in our opposition.

2010 is a contract year. The PS wants more control to manage, besides lowering our wages and benefits. The union wants its members to be more involved in the decisions of the job as well as increase their earnings and have a better standard of living for themselves and their families. The NRLCA legal council Michael Gann made a statement we should all give a lot of thought to: "The ultimate measure of a person's character is not where they stand in times of comfort, but where they stand in times of controversy."

I have mentioned this before in a different way, but I believe we live in a very passive society. Nobody wants to get involved. It might interfere with something else. We know this as carriers at unit meetings, conventions etc. The country as a whole appears to be the same - Let the government do it. Fellow carriers - this is not how we as board members want to govern our state association. We need all of you to be involved to be the most effective. This is a critical year for us and even though we're a relatively small union, we've worked closely with the PS for years, but we cannot let ourselves be bullied. Stay informed, get yourself and other carriers involved, and we will see you at our Booster Meeting.

GMAC Insurance

Just about anything Rural Letter Carriers drive can be covered under the RLC Vehicle Insurance Plan, including cars, minivans, light trucks, RV's and especially Route Vehicles.

Members will never be denied the right to renew their current coverage because of age. Most minor claims are handled right over the phone. Members will also appreciate extras such as locksmith services, an emergency expense allowance and a vehicle theft reward at no additional charge.

GMAC Insurance aggressively strives to be competitive in all states, even filing rate reductions specifically for RLC members in many states. It's always best for a member to request a quote to determine possible premium savings.

Call 1-888-325-7727 for a free quote.



Gary Thompson, Dan Heins & Ronnie Stutts

District II Committeeman Jerry Axtman

Greetings from then Central Plains

The North Dakota State Convention in Mandan (June 5 - 7 ,2009) was a great success, thank you to all involved in it's planning. It was good to see familiar faces and a few new first timers at the convention.

Congratulations to Ida Volesky on receiving the Outstanding Member of the Year for the association. She has given countless hours of dedication to the association and I also found out she has given countless hours of dedication to her community. I'd like to go back and talk about first times at the convention. I asked them "how they felt" or "what they learned" they replied "they had no idea how much information and steward training affects my job". One carrier wasn't even aware of what an 8127 was.

We know that a lot of pressures are coming from above for Postmasters to cut into our evaluated time anyway possible. We have to be aware in our offices with the trend toward cutting and saving hours. With clerk hours being cut, some postmasters expect carriers to fill the void. Just reply "as soon as you put it on my 8127". Everyone in your home office should encourage each other to take an active role in being informed of proposed changes. It will make a big impact on the future of our careers and strength of our union. One of the first steps is keeping your PS form 4003 and Route Listing Report up to date.

Also your PS form 4240 - remarks column any change for that day, deviations, day off, any type of injury, box is down or needs attention, blocked crossing or washed roads. Discuss any planned operational change at the pre-count conference. New procedures are not to be introduced during mail count. Address them right away, document them and if necessary, file a grievance.

We also have some other things to pay attention to as we are driving our routes. Remember it is important to stay in our safety mode even in good fall weather conditions. Continue to slow down at intersections, especially where there is corn and sunflowers or farmers getting their grain and hay home. But most of all those out of state hunters that like to stop in the middle of the road or at the bottom of the hill. Those of you who have a lot of CRP on your route, take your radiator and transmission cowl cover off and look in between. Your radiator probably wasn't as clean as you thought you'll get a lot more miles out of your vehicle by checking this during late summer.

District III Committeeman Mary Wertz

Greetings from Central North Dakota

I hope all of you are doing well. Summer is over and Fall is here. My family and I have been very busy running all over the state for football games. It seems like I live in my car.

I wasn't able to attend the National Convention in Texas this past August I plan on going next year. I'm sure our delegates represented our state very well. It is important to attend as many meetings as you can. Every time I go to a meeting or convention I learn something new that makes my job easier.

The Nation Rural Letter Carrier Magazine and the 603 are useful tools. If you are unsure of your duties and responsibilities look it up in the 603 knowledge is power. The more you know the more efficient you will be.

New Members, Retirements & Deaths

New Members	Post Office	Retired	Post Office	
Cheryl L Linardon	Anamoose	Debra K Helvik	Hazen	Henry M Magelky
Wesley A Lunde	Cando	Bill M Brown	Sterling	1266 Signal Butte
Daryl D McLeod	Rocklake	James Heilman	New Salem	Dickinson ND 58601-3768
Jody L Jacobson	Valley City			Delmer M Scheck
Ambour G Peters	Hazen			708 Oak Ave
David A Wollin	Grand Forks	Deaths		New Salem ND 58563-9301
Debra J Powell	Jamestown	Rosanne E Albrecht		Vivian Blackmore
		715 3 rd Ave SE		23442 Villena
		Jamestown ND 58401-4751		Mission Viejo CA 92692-1874

RCA Training Gary Thompson

Almost every carrier that trains a new relief says the same thing to me. Two weeks of training and they haven't learned anything. What a waste of time. Time could had been better used being trained on MY route.

First, the Post Office has to provide certain training requirements set down by law, postal regulations, and/or the contract. This includes drivers training that a new hire has to complete successfully.

Second, while it is two different weeks it is not a full two weeks. Week one is spent on 2 days of Post Office regulations and rules. This is followed by two days of driver's training. A third day if a LLV route. I know you have to have a drivers license to get the job. But that doesn't mean you drive the way the Post Office wants you.

If the RCA/TRC pass the first week (yes they can be failed) they come back for three days of rural carrier orientation. That's what it really is: Orientation.

While it is called training it is mostly classroom instruction. One morning we do go to a mock route to practice driving and delivering from that persons vehicle. All of five mailboxes. But it does give the person a ideal on how compatible the vehicle is for the route.

The other two and a half days are spent on given "general" information to the new RCA. And I mean general. Each segment has so much time assigned to it. Scanner, pull down mail, accountable mail, drivers safety (again), duties on Saturdays, types of mail, etc.

Most new hire reactions are, "There is a lot more to this job than I thought." Remember a lot of people believe all we do is show up at the post office, grab the mail, and go out and deliver. Since it looks like the District is getting rid of the shadow day the new RCA wouldn't even have the barest of ideals what is required from them. Which was what the shadow day was for.

Remember all we can teach is the basic duties of the Rural Carrier. So when you are training your new replacement remember that they will know just the basic parts of their new job. It's up to you to show them the right way to do their job in your office.

I used to wonder why my new relief kept saying, "Oh, that's what she (instructor) meant." Not until we where going over the real thing did what he learned at class click. We teach general information, enough hopefully to help the new RCA adjust to the real world. And also to make your job training them into your route easier.

Appreciation Is Shown For Long Membership Ida Volesky

This past year I became aware of how many of our long time retirees were passing away. The generation that helped build the Rural Letter Carriers to the strong union it is today, is aging. So I asked, how can we say thank you to these individuals? I found out the National Office recognizes carriers with 50, 60, & 70 years of membership. I then checked with our state secretary to find out if we have recognized our carriers from North Dakota. Unfortunately, we have no records of when the carriers joined the union, so we could not complete this process. So this spring I began a mission to get the information we need to recognize our members, starting with the retirees. I sent out 220 inquires and at present have received over 120 back. It will take some time for me to process the information, but I would like to honor as many as I can. At the state convention a few of the members were present and I presented a certificate to show our appreciation of their dedication. This project should be complete by the Booster Meeting. Thank you to all of you who continue to support this association.



Jerry Chicos, Christian Lind, Mrs. Albert Kershaw, Duane Rieger, Darlan Fatland, Melvin Gertz, John Schafer, Alan Kadermas

Winter Booster Meeting Sunday, January 17, 2010

8:00am Registration

9:00am Meeting

1:00pm Count Training

Seven Seas Hotel

And Water Park

Mandan, ND

For Reservations Call 1-800-597-7327

Paystub Explanation

A		B		C				D		E		F	
J01		53-1234		R C CARRIER				00000001		15 09		00000099	
PAYLOC		FINANCE NO.		EMPLOYEE NAME				EMPLOYEE ID		PAY PERIOD		SERIAL NO.	
G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	H				J	
DETAIL EARNINGS							GROSS TO NET				LEAVE STATUS		
WK	RSC/LEV	RATE	CODE	TYP	HOURS	PAY	THIS PERIOD		YTD	ANNUAL LEAVE			
2K	001	60,570	710	X	24.00		GROSS PAY	2463.65	15830.53	FROM PREV.	3.32		
2K	001	60,570	710	W	38.40	931.84	FED TAX MO	323.59	2158.94	EARNED	THIS YR	6.08	
1K	001	60,570	710	Z	22	4.85	ST TAX MO	131.88	890.01		BAL	9.12	
1K	001	60,570	710	F	9.60	117.11	RETIRE	18.64	125.65	USED THIS	YR	2.37	
1K	001	60,570	710	W	43.00	1169.66	MEDICARE	34.54	327.50		PP		
				L	8.00	232.96	UN R	15.32	107.24	BALANCE	6.75		
G9						1.35	HT 382	78.33	541.92	SICK LEAVE			
G10						10.73	A LOT	15.00	105.00	FROM PREV YR	31.32		
G11	INSURANCE INCOME					7.31		A LOT	300.00	2100.00	EARNED THIS YR 3.00		
G12	X DAY BALANCE					3		TSP 35	349.44	7738.25	USED THIS	YR 3.00	
							FED	0.99	ADJUST		PP	1.00	
							STATE	0.41	ADJUST	BALANCE	31.37		
							MEDICARE	0.16	ADJUST	LEAVE WITHOUT PAY			
G13	2K	001	2200	E48	T	3.00	66.00	SOSEC	0.67	ADJUST	THIS PP		
	1K	001	2200	E48	T	6.00	132.97	SOSEC	147.00	947.89	CUMMULATIVE 1.00		
							NET	1047.00		K BOND DATA			
							EM-E	198.97	1295.63	BOND UNAPPL BAL M ISSUED			
										EE			
M	CONTRACTUAL INCREASE										USPS RETIREMENT		
							NET PAY	1245.97	INT BK	L	3834.38		

2010 RCBP Premiums NRLCA Magazine, October 2009 page 439

	Total Premium	Postal Premium—Rural Carrier—Biweekly USPS Contribution	Carrier Pays	Change from 2009
Self (381)	\$248.25	\$190.89	\$57.36	-\$1.68
Family (382)	\$507.07	\$428.27	\$78.80	-\$0.01

Leave replacement carriers (RCA, RCR, Aux and Subs) who qualify to enroll in a Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan pay the total biweekly premium during 2010 if they enroll in the RCBP. The new premium rates will take effect with the pay period that starts on Jan 2, 2010 and will show up in the paycheck dated Jan 22, 2010.

	Total Premium	Non-Postal Premium—Retired Carrier/Surviving Spouse—Monthly Gov't Contribution	Retiree Pays	Change from 2009
Self (381)	\$537.88	\$363.16	\$174.72	-\$4.75
Family (382)	\$1,098.65	\$814.75	\$283.90	-\$3.55

Former spouses with health insurance coverage through the RCBP through the Spouse Equity law will pay the total monthly premium during 2010.

Individuals covered by the RCBP through Temporary Continuation of Coverage (TCC) will pay the total monthly premium plus a 2% administrative fee. The new monthly premium rates take effect on Jan 1, 2010 for retired carriers and surviving spouses and will show up in the retirement check dated Feb 1, 2010. Please note that the Open Season period to make changes in your health insurance plan begins on Monday, Nov 9 and ends on Monday, Dec 14.

Additional premium information is available online at www.ndrlca.org.

Paystub Explanation Continued

A	PAYLOC--Pay location w/last two digits of route	B	FINANCE NO.--Finance no. of office
C	EMPLOYEE NAME--Initials and last name	D	EMPLOYEE ID--Identification number
E	PAY PERIOD--Pay period and year of payment	F	SERIAL NUMBER--Check number
G	DETAIL EARNINGS	G1	WK--Week 1 or 2 of pay period for salary & EMA. Blank for adjustments
G2	RSC--Route type, i.e. H, J, K, A, M	G3	LEV--Route number
G4	RATE--Base rate of pay (annual-regular, hourly-leave		
G5	CODE--Employee Designation Code	G6	TYP--Type of work/pay
710	Regular	C	Christmas work
760	PTF	F	DACA Code 3
780	RCA	H	Holiday work
740	RCA on regular route absent the regular	L	Leave
790	RCA on auxiliary route	O	Overtime
750	RCR	W	Paid work hours
700	TRC	X	X day taken
701	TRC on annuitant	2	Second trip
730	Substitute Carrier	T	EMA trip
720	Substitute Carrier on regular route without reg	H	EMA hours
770	Person hired prior to 1981 for auxiliary route	M	EMA mileage
G7	HOURS--Based on TYO code or EMA	G8	PAY--Gross amt based on the TYP code
C	Evaluated hours for route	C	150% of the daily evaluated pay
F	Evaluated hours for route	F	50% of the daily evaluated pay
H	8 hrs for each holiday worked	H	One day's evaluated pay
L	8 hrs for each day of leave	L	One day's evaluated pay for each day
O	OT hours worked	O	Gross amount for OT
W	Total evaluated hrs for week or actual work hours	W	One day's evaluated pay for each day of leave
X	8 hrs for each X day taken	X	X day shows no gross, dollars inc. in Code W for the week
2	Second trip time in hrs and hundredths (minutes from PS 1314 converted)	2	Dollars for second trip, dollars are included in TYP W
		T	Dollars for EMA trip, dollars include any miles deviation
		H	Dollars for EMA Hrs for auxiliary route
		M	Dollars for EMA miles for auxiliary route
G9	LPA--Lock pouch adjustment	G10	ADJUSTMENTS--for grievance settlements, 8127 compensation, etc
G11	INSURANCE INCOME--Taxable income on employer		
G12	X DAY BALANCE--Number of X days to be used	G13	EMA COMPENSATION
H	GROSS TO NET--Demonstrates how your gross salary is reduced to net. Includes federal taxes, state taxes, retirement, medicare, other deductions (Union dues, allotments, TSP, etc.)	H	MISC. Appears when the gross pay deductions are more than the allotted spaces on the pay stub. Detail explanation can be found on payroll journal.
J	LEAVE STATUS--Used to identify your use of annual leave, sick leave, and LWOP for the year and previous year's carryover	K	BOND DATA--Identifies your current bond(s) unapplied bond balance or issuance of a bond
L	USPS RETIREMENT--Total amount contributed to retirement fund as of the close of the prior calendar year	M	This space is reserved for earnings statement messages such as contractual increase, grievance settlement, step increases, etc.

www.ndrlca.org
Your year-round source of up to date information!

North Dakota
Rural Letter Carrier Association
1100 Summit Blvd
Bismarck, ND 58504
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Editor/Webmaster Dustin Allen

I have been fortunate in my three years with the Post Office to have some really great regular carriers. In turn, I try to make sure that on their relief day that I take as much mail as I can and case everything that I leave so that they don't have anything unnecessarily left out to do themselves.

This has granted me the opportunity to be able to make changes to the cases of the routes I sub for and makes me feel more like part of the process rather than just waiting in line. Not all RCAs think this way and that is unfortunate because there are a lot of people that could be doing a lot more good just by putting in a little more effort.

Part of my willingness comes from the open arms of the regular when I first get to the route and I simply try to return the favor in the only way I can. When I become a regular, I will certainly do my best to include my sub whenever and wherever possible.

Right now, when they call I say "yes." If I don't answer, I will return that call as soon as I can. I want to work, so any chance I can I need to take. If this attitude would be taken by more RCAs, maybe my Post Office wouldn't need me to learn so many new routes.

I suppose I'd rather stand out in a good way instead of not at all.

Editor/Webmaster:
Dustin Allen
1100 Summit Blvd
Bismarck, ND 58504
701-527-1685
tricia.allen@bis.midco.net

ND State Officers

State Steward:
Bob Defoe
15332 106th St NE
Pembina, ND 58271
701-201-0718
NDstatesteward@gmail.com

Assistant State Steward:
Dorene Haugen
1707 Bonn Blvd
Bismarck, ND 58504
701-258-2058
dbhaugen@bis.midco.net

President:
Ida Volesky
418 4th St
Wyndmere, ND 58081
701-439-2554
jivolesky22@hotmail.com

Vice President:
Gary Thompson
403 W 6th St
Grafton, ND 58237
701-520-1396
glteepolllys@yahoo.com

Secretary/Treasurer:
Dorene Haugen
1707 Bonn Blvd
Bismarck, ND 58504
701-258-2058
dbhaugen@bis.midco.net

District I Committeeman:
Jerry Fossum
104 S 8th St
Oakes, ND 58474
701-742-3338
pfossum@hotmail.com

District II Committeeman:
Jerry Axtman
3142 34th Ave NE
Harvey, ND 58341
701-324-2948
axtmanjdj@gondtc.com

District III Committeeman:
Mary Wertz
PO Box 64
Coleharbor, ND 58531
701-442-3270
tnn@westriv.com

Chaplain:
Gerald Franklin
2421 32nd St NE
Martin, ND 58758
701-693-2357
rubyandgerald@hotmail.com