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North Dakota

Rural Letter Carriers' Association

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Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive



Every May, the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) holds its national food drive in more than 10,000 cities and towns across America. Rural carriers have always been firm supporters of the event, working side by side with city carriers to collect food and directly contributing to the event's success.

This year, the NRLCA will assume a new national role in the drive as a full national partner in the event alongside co-sponsors such as the U.S. Postal Service, Campbell Soup Company, Valpak, the AFL-CIO, United Way Worldwide and its local United Ways, and Feeding America, the nation's food bank network.

In its new national role, the NRLCA will assist NALC and the drive's other co-sponsors in promoting the volunteer collection of non-perishable food on the second Saturday in May, encourage increased participation by rural carriers in the effort, and help deliver donations to local food banks, pantries and shelters. In connection with our new partnership the NRLCA logo will appear on all national publications and other promotional materials of the drive.

With millions of Americans out of work and facing hunger, it is more important than ever to do our part to help out. We look forward to becoming a more active partner in the whole event and working closely with our brothers and sisters of the NALC for a very worthy cause.

As always, participation in the drive is strictly voluntary. All rural carriers have a right not to participate unless given a direct order. If required to participate involuntarily, management must compensate the carrier in some way. I encourage each of you to consider the good that occurs through this endeavor and participate if possible.

NRLCA Vice President will serve as contact for the NRLCA. Jeanette can be reached at the NRLCA office at 703-684-5545.



Dustin Allen, Bismarck RCA with 3rd carload. He and his wife collected 1480 lbs of food in 2010.

President Ida Volesky

On March 25th, the Postal Service announced their plan for Organizational Redesign. The long term effects are yet to be determined. The short term is the Dakota District and the Big Sky District became one District, which makes it the largest land mass district in the nation. There will be no layoffs of Rural Carriers as we are protected by our contract. The one area we can have some influence is through Congress. Pay attention to the bills that are being introduced and how they will affect the Postal Service and your job. Since the new congress took over in January, there have been many forms of legislation being drafted. Some of the bills are to our benefit and some are not. Like the bill Sens. Tom Coburn, R-OK, and Richard Burr, R-NC., introduced that would end the FERS pension benefit for new employees beginning in 2013. This kind of legislation will not help the USPS become financially sound; it is representative of the misinformation that is available to Congress. The legislation that is really needed is the restructure of the prepaid health benefits for retirees. This \$5.6 billion payment is causing all the problems. We need to fix this with a bill in each House. When Gary & I go to Washington in May, this is the legislation we will be working for. This will be the 3rd year we have asked for this fix and hopefully we will be successful this time. That is why contributions to PAC are so important. The PAC money gives our Governmental Affairs committee the means to make contacts and work with the leaders on Capitol Hill. All of you received a letter from our PAC Chairman, Gary Thompson, if you have not done so; please send it back with a donation. Gary also has raffle tickets for PAC, get them before they are gone. Thank you!

PRC: Good news on the Postal Regulatory Commission opinion released this past month on the 5-day delivery study. Their study found that there would not be as much savings as the USPS proposed and that going to 5-day delivery could hurt the First-Class and Priority Mail delivery times. Senator Tom Carper, D-Del., plans to reintroduce his bill, the Postal Operations Sustainment and Transformation (POST) Act. If passed, it would bring in additional revenue to the USPS and we can continue giving service 6-days a week.

Meetings: Are you attending your unit, area meeting? With so much change and information coming out it would be to your advantage to get as much information as you can. This will be helpful as I am sure many of you get asked questions by the public. We need to reassure our public that their mail is still going to be delivered by their carrier, and you need to be informed with what is happening with your employer. The attendance at the State Convention is half of what it could be. The more members that attend, the more fun we all have. I enjoy meeting all of you and getting to know what is going on in your part of the state. So don't sit home and wonder what happened, come and find out for yourself. June 4 & 5 at the Ramada in Dickinson, ND.

Delegates: When you receive the ballot for the National Delegates, please return it with your selection. The delegates work very hard at the National Convention and represent you, the membership, while there.

Mid-states Conference: Anyone interested in attending the conference in Iowa let me know. We will be driving down and would welcome any member interested. This is a good way to see what is happening on the National level. The information you gather is invaluable and the people are great too. See the March issue of the Carrier for registration information.

We have lots of great links and information on our North Dakota website. Give it a visit: www.ndrlca.org.

Since Mr. Winter is having a hard time letting go & Miss Spring is fashionably late, be careful on the soft roads and wash outs. Check with Bob DeFoe if you are having trouble with detours.

NDRLCA Officers:

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 glteepollys@yahoo.com	State Steward: Bob Defoe 15332 106th St NE Pembina, ND 58271 701-201-0718 NDstatesteward@gmail.com	Secretary/Treasurer & Assistant State Steward Dorene Haugen 1707 Bonn Blvd Bismarck, ND 58504 701-220-5278 dbhaugen@bis.midco.net
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Vice President Gary Thompson

"It's an interesting time to be a Rural Carrier."

In the third year that I have been privileged to service as vice-president, I am astonished how the Post Office is changed. Not always for the better. I always hear "we're going broke" when management does something a little off the cuff. The last was being told we shouldn't be adding so many deliveries. Guess Sioux Falls missed the memo that North Dakota is still growing.

Sioux Falls! I think most problems start there. Anyway, I'll stop venting on management. I'm sure we will have sad tales to talk about at State Convention.

Contract: No Contract. No talks. APWU and Post Office have tentative contract. April 5th they have to go to Congress to explain why they got "so much." Information at State Convention.

Unit Meetings: If you can't make state convention at least go to the unit meeting. Even if you just listen information you need might come out. In this age of OIC's, PMR's, and micromanagement a lot of misinformation is out there. If your gut says something not right, it probably isn't right. Call the steward, a board member, or ask at a meeting. If you are informed you can't be used.

Legislative: In May President Ida and I will be in Washington meeting with our Congress members. We will be able to report to you the positions of our newest congressional members in June. Hopefully they will be supportive of rural delivery in North Dakota.

PAC: All I can say is "THANK YOU." Your support will help get rural issues presented to Congress. We have to correct the misinformation.

In Doubt: Remember if you're not sure about something, call someone. It doesn't hurt to ask.

FOOD DRIVE: We are in our second year of the food drive partnership. This year it is May 14th. While smaller towns might not be as involved, please help out if your town is having one. Last year in Grand Forks we had eight full car loads. Thank you Chad Moses, his two daughters, and Darrin Williams for helping last year. Thanks to all of you that helped. Remember this is off the clock.

Thanks again for allowing me to serve you. I can say it is different and interesting each year.

Statement of Activities July 1, 2010-April 9, 2011

Income

APCU Checking Interest \$17.65
APCU Savings Interest \$259.71
GMAC \$2136.95
Membership Dues \$60493.52
Steward Training Dues \$1 per \$927.00
NRLCA \$4 per route \$1236.00

Total Income \$65070.83

Expenses

Accountant \$2500.00
WSI \$251.25
Newsletter \$575.58
Local Steward Training \$627.82
Miscellaneous Expenses \$43.18
National Convention \$7975.00
Office Expenses Officers \$1819.91
Office Expenses Stewards \$1914.79
Payroll Taxes \$1920.51
Per Capita Dues \$1752.00
Postage \$1036.46
Printing \$48.82
Rent-Steward, Officers \$3600.00

Expenses continued

State Meetings \$48.00
Travel Expenses Officers \$3262.94
Travel Expenses Stewards \$3368.92
Wages Officers \$10687.10
Wages Stewards \$11041.43

Total Expense \$52473.71

Net Income \$12597.12

District I Committeeman:
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Martin, ND 58758
701-693-2357
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NDRLCA State Convention June 3-5, 2011

**Ramada Grand Dakota Lodge
& Conference Center**
532 15th Street West
Off I94 on Hwy 22 N & West at first stop light
Phone: (701) 483-5600
www.granddakotalodge.com

The group name is ND Rural Letter Carriers for room rate of \$77 plus tax. Don't delay getting your room reservation, the hotel will fill up fast.

Tentative Schedule

Friday, June 3rd

Steward Training 1:00 pm
Mixer 6:30 pm

Saturday, June 4th

Meeting 8:00 am—5:00 pm
Keynote Speaker: Steve Traylor, National Executive Committeeman
Banquet & Entertainment 6:00 pm

Sunday, June 5th

Meeting8:00 am—12:00 pm

Steven L. Traylor, Executive Committeeman



Steve Traylor was elected to a four-year term as NRLCA Executive Committeeman at the 2007 National Convention in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Steve started his carrier as a Designation 73 Substitute in 1977. He was appointed Regular Carrier on Rural Route 1 in Hillsboro, Illinois in 1980, a route that he grew up on as a child, and where his parents still reside on the family farm.

Steve has served the Rural Letter Carriers Association in numerous capacities, county President, Local Steward, Area Steward, Assistant State Steward, State Steward, and Executive Committeeman for the Illinois Rural Letter Carriers' Association and previously served a one-year term as NRLCA Executive Committeeman in 1996.

Since his election to the National Board in 2007, Steve has served as Executive Committeeman to the Pacific, Southwest, Western, and Great Lakes Areas. Steve is presently assigned to both the Great Lakes and Western Areas.

Steve is the father of two children a son Sean who is 28, and a daughter Randi who is 19. When not traveling, Steve resides with his wife Nancy in their home town of Hillsboro Illinois.

103 answers to the question "What has the union done for me?"

- 2: No layoff clause
- 3. RCA's earn leave while serving on auxiliary route or on vacant regular route over 90 days
 - 17. casing option for DPS
 - 18: ability to put names on case labels for CLASS labels
- 21. salary and work guarantee for regular and relief carriers for evaluated time on assigned route
- 33. virtual elimination of conversions of rural routes to city routes

*For the complete list check out www.ndrlca.org
(found in Ohio Rural Letter Carrier Newsletter, Feb/Mar 11)*

Candidate Information Dustin Allen

From Bismarck, I have served in 3 post offices (Beulah, Halliday, and Bismarck) as an RCA and have been working as the Bismarck office steward since April 2010. I've got experience in large and small offices (for ND) with a working knowledge of 12 rural routes from the aforementioned offices. I have also been the NDRLCA editor for the newsletter and website since June 2009. I am very grateful to have a job with the postal service, due to the union, and I wish to continue helping in the union in a greater capacity to ensure that others can continue their own careers. With the departure of Ida Volesky as President of the NDRLCA, I am seeking the Vice Presidency in order to learn how things work on the union board and eventually pursue a greater role in the future (as I have a long career ahead of me).

State Steward Bob Defoe

Grievance Form (PS 8191) can be found on the website www.ndrlca.org on the Steward's Corner page.

Hello from the valley region. I am sure everyone shares my feelings of relief that winter will soon be over. It was a tough one. More for some areas than others but we all felt the brunt of it. And now we are going to have to deal with water, ready or not. Probably those of us in the bottom of the valley will be affected the most, I'm sure everyone will have some sort of water delays or detours, as well as muddy and sloppy roads. Some questions that I hear a lot in the late winter and spring is 'the PM says they were told we don't get paid for detours or they are not to pay us for detours, is this right?' 'Can the PM tell the customer they can't get their mail because I have to detour to serve them?' or 'The road is washed out or blocked and I have to detour to get around, so is it right for the PM to stop the customers mail, move their box, or put it in another customers box because I have to detour to serve them?' This is undoubtedly the most difficult question to answer. Why? There are several items in question here. The manuals are specific and can be conflicting if upper management interprets it with cost being the deciding factor. I say upper because most local management can't make a decision. They are given what is interpreted and calls it district policy. Confused yet? Yeah, me too.

Let me try to explain it another way. Those of you that have had some issues with this in the past have heard the following, especially with PM's that have to call up to see if they can blow their nose on PO time or if they have to wait until their noon hour when they are closed and off the clock. 1. If over 3 days curtail, 2. If the detour is over 15 miles, curtail, put in another box, or pick up at the Post office. 3. my favorite, you can't exceed your evaluated miles for the day and have to stop delivering and return to the post office so you don't go over. Where do they get this stuff? This is all district policy. Well the PO 603, and the F21 in art 572, sect. 572.1 and 572.2 says on temporary deviations over your evaluated miles will be paid at the current mileage rate and deviations over 30 days will be added to the 4003 and removed after it resumes to the original line of travel.

I have discussed this issue with district several times and depending on who I talked with have come up with a different answer from each. My stance on this issue is we need a determination of the difference between a 'short term' temporary deviation and a 'long term' temporary deviation. District is using the wording for a long term temporary or 'extensive detours' from the M-38 section 226.2 and using them for short term, ie; under 30 days, and that is where the conflict lies. If 226.2 was meant to refer to all detours, then why are the instructions in 572.2, over 30 days, in the manual? Our district isn't even allowing the detours to go this long before they 'request' customers to choose one of the three options. I had an understanding with the last DM and MOPS that each case would be looked at on its own merits and decided according to the language pertaining to the situation, thereby satisfying all involved and providing delivery service to the customer, which is our job. The last time I discussed it with the district manager and manager of operations they were going to get me a copy of the policy that we can all refer to. That was Feb 16th and I reminded the DM on Tuesday Mar 15th and have yet to receive anything. My final conclusion at this time then is 'if it is going to cost a few miles of detours for a few days it is OK to inconvenience the customer and cast a bad light on the service if it saves money'. I guess there is a cost for service from a service company, US POSTAL SERVICE. So much for the 'every piece, every day' mantra. Only if it is cost effective I guess.

State Steward Bob Defoe (continued)

Grievance Form (PS 8191) can be found on the website www.ndrlca.org on the Steward's Corner page.

So after all this, what do I do when I have a detour? Answer: If you are getting paid for the number of detour miles over your evaluated miles, then you are being credited correctly. If you have any questions or the PM tells you something that does not fit in the categories outlined above from the manuals, call the state steward and discuss the situation. Every situation is different.

I have been getting inquiries from several carriers regarding, consolidations, closings, adjustments etc. Well let me start with this first. Yes there could be consolidations in the works in the future. At the leadership meeting in Sioux Falls on Feb 16 they had a presentation on DUO, delivery unit optimization. What this means to us is that district has been mandated by headquarters to look at every office and route, especially if there is a vacancy. If the situation qualifies under the guidelines and will show a cost savings then several options may play out. If the office is vacant, retirement or transfer, then the route, if it meets the criteria, can be moved to a neighboring town and absorbed into that office and the original office can be downgraded or closed. Another scenario is an office is closed and has no route the deliveries could be put on an existing neighboring route or if there isn't one then a HCR could be created. Short answer is every office and route, big and small, is to be looked at. I ask every carrier that if you hear any rumblings out there about a route or office let the state steward office know immediately. I am supposed to be informed of these proposals and changes from district but that doesn't always happen in a timely manner, if at all. I usually get informed after the change is made making it difficult to offer any input or get something changed if there is need. Route adjustments must follow the criteria set forth in the contract. If you are in doubt of what is right or have trouble navigating the contract, please call. It is easier to fix something before the change than after.

Another common call these days has to do with rca's, and leave requests. The rca issue is becoming increasingly serious. According to district and HR there have been a number of applicants in some areas that do not qualify or cannot make it through the first 'test' or evaluation. I have had so many of these issues and brought it to district attention and they have had complaints also that at the leadership meeting we were told by the manager of human resources that any perspective applicants for an rca position can go the office and have the PM, clerk, or supervisor walk them through the application process on the office computer. We also have a problem in some areas of no one applying for the position, due to various reasons, mainly no one available because of other good jobs in the area. If you do not have a relief and will be needing time off in the future especially for Dr appointments or vacations put in your leave request, form 3971, early to give them time to find or borrow a sub or get one trained. Keep on top of the request. Ask how it is going, especially if you have to make future flight arrangements in advance or have to schedule a Dr. appointment months in advance, to keep from getting into a situation where you only have days left. While I am on the issue of leave, there are some problems surfacing with carriers in regards to sick leave. If you use a sick day or are using sick days for recurring visits or follow ups with a Dr and get a request from the PM for verification provide it and call me or Dorene. If you do have follow up visits I suggest you get the paperwork for FMLA. It is to your benefit and is easy to do now days, thanks to district staff handling the paperwork.

Finally I have had questions on what I thought the future of the post office is. Well we all have read or heard about 5-day delivery, reduction in employees RIF, and VERA voluntary early retirement. PMG Donahoe just issued the RIF and VERA on Thursday the 24th. As far as the 5 day issue and the postal service's deficit, those are issues to be addressed by our president and vice president in the upcoming legislative seminar in DC in May. They will be providing you with information in their articles and updates on legislative issues. My opinion is that we are in for some changes in the future and we all have to be aware and make sure that these changes follow the contract and existing manuals. All should be aware by now, that the APWU have reached an agreement with the postal service and have sent the proposal to their rank and file for ratification. As of last night we are still at impasse. And I do not know if this will change anything with our negotiations or not. We are such a different craft, mainly because of the evaluated system, that it is hard to compare us.

With that I will bid everyone a happy spring and hope to see you at the state convention in Dickinson in June. Til then stay alert and be safe.

New Members, Retirements & Deaths

New Members

Sharon Bjerke
Michael Halvorson
Mildred Berryhill
Sharon Boe
Robert Fetch
Kelly Fulton
Steve Halone
Heather Kaylor
Terran Mohl
Tyrel Reiner
Tamara Studaker
Russel Walcker
Blake Wanner
Sherry Watkins
Cassandra Deery
Chris Lunde
Arnold Nelson
David Thomas
Elizabeth Davis
Ronald Wulf

Post Office

Portland
Westhope
Parshall
Golden Valley
Bismarck
Portland
Bottineau
Richardton
Beulah
New Salem
Minot
Finley
Fargo
Glenburn
Jamestown
Leeds
Williston
Belcourt
Jamestown
Kulm

Retired

Barbara Opdahl
Carol Anderson
Gary Brovold
Darrel Gotvaslee
Doug Beckman
James Stensos
Gary Satterthwaite

Post Office

Westhope
Alexander
Kulm
Minot
Jamestown
Williston
New Town

Deaths

Delores K Donegan Noecker, Jamestown
Cleo F Gould, Fargo
Dennis L Rystedt, Publowest CO
Willard W Lasher, Bottineau
Carl J Haberman, Mooreton
James H Hatlestad, Devils Lake
Maurice Robinson, Michigan
Frederick A Mau, Minot
James O Johnson, Maxbass
Paul E Campbell, Grafton
Elmer L Diede, Jamestown
Kenneth S Devillers,
Don Nagel, Strasburg

PAC Gary Thompson

Thank you all that have given to PAC this year. The response from the membership to the NDPAC letter was out of this world. The members concern and care for our association is moving. Guess that's why I think we have the best organization in the country.

Thank you to the many retirees who helped in the PAC drive. Your continued concern for the Association is why we have such a great Association. Also thanks to the Auxiliary for their donations. I had a side note from the PAC manager, Elliot, "keep it coming." Our state placed third in per capita in the nation. Not bad for a little state. Give yourselves a hand. "THANK YOU" from me and the board.

This money will be used to support members from both parties. As long as they support rural issues we support them. With all the new members in Congress (we have two) PAC money will allow us access to them and their staffs to present rural concerns. From the comments put out by some members they need an education.

The main problem still is overpayments to retirement fund and continued pre-funding of retiree health benefits. We get this fixed we all can breath a little easier.

Thanks again all that have donated. It pays to insure your future.

103 answers to the question "What has the union done for me?"

- 23. separate entitlement for pay, for training and training presentations
- 30. creating primary, secondary and tertiary entitlement for relief work

*For the complete list check out www.ndrlca.org
(found in Ohio Rural Letter Carrier Newsletter, Feb/Mar 11)*

Secretary/Treasurer Doreen Haugen

As we have been blasted storm after storm you'd think it was the first snow storm postmasters have ever encountered. They are out their calling carriers not to come in, and some say don't come in until afternoon and so on. First of all they are not to call you at home and tell you not to come in. If they do call you, to tell you not to come in the first question you need to ask them is, "Is this an Act of God day?" If they say no, then you do what you can to get to work. Regular carriers will be paid their route evaluations and EMA. Substitutes will be paid actual time with a minimum of 2 hrs, if you are able to deliver any part of your route even if it is 10 boxes you will receive the EMA for the day also. If you are unable to leave the office to deliver any portion of your route no EMA.

What have you heard about our Contract has to be one of the questions I get asked about regularly I will cap what has happened thus far.....

The parties met in September, off and on through November, when our contract expired. Impasse was declared on November 20, 2010, the parties re-opened talks in January. The following are issues raised during discussion and the NRLCA position on points; The National board is adamant that COLAs must be part of any new agreement. The NRLCA has taken the position that if there are any changes to the pay or benefit structure, it must not affect current regular carriers or RCAs. Over a billion in time standards have been placed on the table by both parties; to this, the NRLCA holds the position that getting in to a standards war would not be beneficial to either party.

The NRLCA has enlisted the assistance of several professionals for the purpose of presenting our position to the USPS; additionally if the need arises, a neutral arbitrator, and economist specializing in health care costs, an industrial engineer and a statistician will be called upon for assistance.

In addition, USPS wants to change time standards and choose mail count dates; we want to keep the 2 or 4 week count during the same time periods we used before. The USPS wants a pay cut, reduction in EMA & do away with COLA; we want a modest pay increase, increase in EMA and keep COLA.

The USPS wants us to move to a USPS health care plan, we prefer no change in health care.

Goodbye "USPS Delivery Confirmation" - Hello "USPS Tracking #" We are now seeing the text banners above the barcode on PC Postage style mail labels has change. For instance, where the "ZIP-USPS Delivery Confirmation" text appears, you are seeing "USPS Tracking#." Even "ZIP - USPS Signature Confirmation" will change to "ZIP- USPS Tracking #." The rewording is part of the USPS's continuing commitment to provide better package visibility during the delivery cycle. When Delivery Confirmation started around 2000, you got just that - a single scan indicating the delivery event. Now, you will typically see 5 to 7 events for a given package. On many mail pieces with computer-generated PC Postage, it will be difficult to tell a Signature Confirmation label from a Delivery Confirmation label, so be aware of that. However, you will always know what to do when you scan the barcode: the scanner will tell you exactly what actions are needed.

Membership for ND is currently at 686 consisting of 273 regulars, 203 relief carriers, 210 retired and 2 others. Non-membership for ND is as follows 10 regulars and 54 relief carriers. I have a hard time working beside that non member, and if they really want to get my goat is, me seeing them going to the steward for information or they ask the steward to go to the supervisor for them on a certain issue. Why would they go to a steward? You are saying by not being a member you do not need the information, you don't need help, so WHY would you be talking to a steward? Without the union negotiating for a contract, fighting the battle and enforcing the contract with management, etc. through the grievance process, not only would the battle be lost - We would lose the war. This is not the time to be jumping ship and abandoning the union. Every carrier needs to be involved, read the contract, magazines, newsletters, etc. and make management follow the contract. Attend your unit and state meetings. Become informed and stick up for yourself. The State Steward, Assistant Steward, and your own local steward CANNOT do it all for you. The passive attitude of so many carriers and refusal to stand up for your rights does nothing but undermine the efforts of those fighting for your rights. If you have heard the wake-up call yet, it is getting late and you need to do something. Do your job properly and make management do theirs.

This is my last year as your state secretary/treasurer it has been 10 years. I would say my favorite part

of my job was the interaction with you the members, some of you couldn't have been nicer and appreciative for what this office stands for. The responsibilities are more than I realized the day I first accepted this office. This position has given me some great opportunities, from being involved at the national level by being selected on the Training Compliance and Developing Committee this was a great benefit for me since I was one that helped develop what the state secretary/treasurer will be using, also being appointed for the media committee at the National Convention. Helped me learn computer skilled I would have never had to learn. This has saved our state thousands of dollars. I have made friends all over the USA and would consider them friends for a life time. It doesn't matter if you're from Texas, Georgia, California, we all have a common thread and that is the Association and what is best for all rural carriers.

Effective April 9, 2011 (Pay Period 9-11), the Equipment Maintenance Allowance (EMA) will increase from 64.5 cents per mile to 67 cents per mile, or a minimum of \$26.80 per day, whichever is greater. Employees providing auxiliary assistance or serving auxiliary routes under the provisions of Article 9, Section 2.J.5, will receive EMA of 67 cents per mile or \$7.30 per hour, whichever is greater.

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 Form 4003 to the evaluation, and the salary shall be adjusted accordingly. Discontinue reporting the route deviation on 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 detour and at the beginning of the first pay period after the deviation is terminated.

226.2 If extensive detours are necessary to effect delivery of mail, customers should, when practical, be requested to:

- a. Relocate their mailboxes temporarily,
- b. Receive their mail through other customer boxes, or
- c. Make some other arrangements for receiving their mail until regular service can be resumed.

The deadline for submitting articles for the Fall newsletter is 10/2/2011.

Anyone interested in sending articles is free to do so. Send to **NDRLCAeditor@gmail.com** in a Microsoft Word format (.doc). Revision requests will be returned with a 3 day deadline. Initial articles not received by October 2 will not be included in the Fall newsletter.

District I Committeeman Jerry Fossum

Greetings from beautiful, sunny southeast North Dakota! (Well, it was today, anyway!) What an April Fool's joke Mother Nature is playing as yet another winter storm bears down on us. ENOUGH ALREADY! I'm hoping you all survived the winter with minimal frostbite.

For now, I'm sure everyone is watching all the headlines about the postal system and wondering how things will be a year from now. We know changes are coming and I'm not sure that when we do get a contract we'll still have all the answers, but there are a couple of things to consider. There are a large number of carriers at retirement age in North Dakota. At this point, it doesn't appear there will be any VER incentives for bargaining employees, but that's not the only deciding factor for many. Do you know the status of your insurances, both health and life? Plans and premiums change and as of now, the Rural Carrier Health Insurance plan looks awfully good. As we get older, our medical needs can change, also. A regular checkup may call for special procedures. Will your insurance have adequate coverage? How about for you younger families? One of the benefits we have is receiving sick leave. You may think you've banked a lot of days, but they can disappear fast. Don't abuse your sick leave time, as you never know when you'll really need it. Be prepared for the next open season to make possible changes. With all of the options available, yet seemingly continual changes, one has to stay on top of all of the information as it becomes available. Your state board has set up a website to help keep you informed, so please use it. Information is at the tip of your fingers, and many times may only be minutes old.

My retirement plans see September as THE month. I have enjoyed serving on our state board and meeting so many of you at unit meetings and conventions. With one year left on my term as District 1 Committeeman, I will resign my position and allow the convention to elect my successor. This should give everyone a chance to give thought as to who you would like to see represent District 1. DON'T be afraid to get involved! I'll be looking forward to seeing you in Dickinson. For now, drive safe and have a blessed

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Union participation is something that helps the union grow and gain strength in our negotiations with the USPS. However important this may be, I am personally not seeing the support of the "casual member" at any level beyond the payment of union dues. If you're paying a group to watch out for your benefits and career, why wouldn't you want to be more involved?

Every year, the NDRLCA holds a state convention that (for most) is easy to attend. If you're a regular carrier, you actually have a relief carrier that can cover you while you attend this state convention. I certainly understand that those in Fargo or Grand Forks may not be excited to attend the convention in Dickinson or Williston, but there is still a need for you to show your support. Relief carriers (RCAs, TCRs) may not have that same luxury, but should make an effort when the convention is close enough to come to after the Saturday work day or on the Sunday following. This is a small problem which is the end result of a much larger problem.

At least twice a year (normally), every unit (local union group) meets in the Spring and the Fall to elect delegates to go to the State Convention as well as deal with any problems that need to be solved on a more local level. The attendance at these meetings, in my experience, leaves a lot to be desired. Unlike the State Convention, these local unit meetings aren't going to happen in places where long distances need to be travelled, they happen locally.

What I'd like to ask of the union members who DO attend these local meetings is that you talk to the other carriers in your office who do not regularly attend these meetings. If attending two meetings is too much, at least attendance at one of those would be great to be involved in the process as a whole. What about the relief carriers in the office who don't attend? They are the future of the union and should endeavor to get involved now rather than trying to catch up or rely on others (who may have the same philosophy of waiting until later). Be involved because you can make a difference, and bring one of your co-workers because the truth is that it really is "the more, the merrier."

Legislative Report Gary Thompson

As a state we have a new Senator, John Hoeven and a new congressman, Rick Berg. Senator Kent Conrad, who has supported the Post Office, remains only until January 2013.

It will be the goal of the 2011 Legislative visit by President Ida and me to present our Associations concerns and views to our congress members. Also to gauge their feeling toward the Post Office and rural delivery in North Dakota. Hopefully as a growing rural state we will be able to get their support for a viable functioning post office to serve the needs of North Dakota and the country.

It seems we are under assault from some members in Congress. Congress has called foul on the proposed APWU and Post Office contract. Hearings are scheduled April 5th before the Government Reform Committee. Rep. Issa (Ca-R) and Rep. Ross (FI-R) believe that too much was given to the union by the Post Office. Rep Issa wants to, quote, "establish an important baseline for Congress's upcoming work on the Postal Service's structure, fiscal health,, and self-governance." unquote.

Senator McCain has an amendment to require higher percentage employee payments for health care and one hundred percent of life insurance. Another Senator introduced a bill to end FERS retirement for new employees after 2013.

But we do have friends in Washington. President budget has 6-day delivery and continued mail delivery to all Americans. Rep. Graves (Mo-R) has a bill to continue 6-day delivery. Representatives from both parties support this bill. Senators Collins (Me-R), Carper (DE-D), and our own Senator Conrad supports us.

As can be seen we have a lot of support. The major problem for the Post Office is mandatory payments to pre-fund the Retiree Health Care. No other organization in the country is required to do so. Another quick fix wouldn't help the Post Office this time. This has to be amended.

Also the Post office overpaid into retirement billions. If repaid would cover most of the pre-funding requirement. Three of last five years Post Office in black if no payments made.

You can help. Drop a line to our representatives. Just say Hi. Bring up you are concerned about Post Office and delivery in North Dakota. Bring up overpayments and pre-funding. Ask for help to get Post Office back on track. Be Nice.

103 answers to the question "What has the union done for me?"

- 49. right to notice if schedule changes are to be made
- 52. prohibition from assigning regular carriers to work on other routes
- 57. specified procedures for offering vacant route assignments to relief carriers
- 70. RHD vehicle purchase incentive
- 72. right to safe work environment, correction of unsafe conditions, and changes in safety reporting and monitoring of safety hazards
- 87. eliminated the right of city carriers, clerks, and managers to bid on rural route vacancies
- 91. when rural carriers are finished they are finished and do not have to complete their full work day or they finish before their scheduled time
- 97. an organization that is answerable and accountable to the membership every year as opposed to the other crafts which hold conventions every other year
- 98. a work system and compensation system which minimizes supervision and the daily hassles that other crafts go through
- 101. doubling of rural routes over the last 15 years when rural routes had been relatively stable for decades before
- 103. right to back pay plus interest when an arbitrator orders back pay

Give this to those non members who are always saying "What has the union done for me?"

*For the complete list check out www.ndrlca.org
(found in Ohio Rural Letter Carrier Newsletter, Feb/Mar 11)*

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

up to date information can always be found at
www.ndrlca.org

2010-2011 State Officers



Dorene Haugen, Jerry Axtman, Bob Defoe, Ida Volesky, Gary Thompson, Mary Wertz & Jerry Fossum.