

1. Mail Count

I have had a few emails from Rural Carriers that say they never received any paperwork or information on their new evaluations after the 2008 Mail count, and they are not being paid correctly.

First, let me say, or rather ask...

Why have you not contacted the union? The mail count ended on March 7th, and the new evaluations were supposed to take effect on April 26th. If you do not know anything by June, you should contact your Steward. I cannot help you. The only person that can help you is a steward in your area. If you do not have a local steward, call your [Assistant State Steward](#) or your [State Steward](#). They are there to help you.

Here is some news from John Amstfield on the Mail Count and FSS Committee and some statistics from before and after the mail count.

[Mail count issues and the NRLCA Mail Count and FSS task forces](#)

[Step 4 Updates and other NRLCA News](#)

2. EMA

I am paying \$3.83 a gallon and the new is saying gas will be making a big jump soon. I ran a gas price poll on this site throughout May, and out of 517 people, 67% are paying between \$3.90 and \$4.00 a gallon for gas.

In case no one has noticed "IT IS KILLING US" out here!

Along with pay cuts we had to take after this fiasco of a count, we now are having to pay \$4.00 a gallon for gas.

On that note, here is an excellent article by John Amstfield on EMA

[An Abomination and a Shameful Scandal:
The EMA Nightmare and the Burden of
Requirements to Furnish a Vehicle](#)

The CPI is due to come out next week on June 13th.

Any raise in EMA should be effective on the 2nd full Pay Period after that. And I certainly hope it will be a raise, or there will be some severely ticked off rural carriers.

And, we should be getting a 2 cent increase on the EMA

base route in August 2008.

On the subject of gas prices, it just irks me to no end to hear the USPS spouting off how much the increase in gas prices hurts them.. DUH..... How much do they think it hurts us?? Give me a break!

3. COLA (Cost of Living)

Our next chance for a COLA is the July 2008 CPI index release which will be on August 14th. Any raise in COLA will be effective the 2nd full pay period after August 14th, 2008. Hopefully there will be some type of cost of living help for us then.

[CLICK HERE](#)

4. Tort Claims

There is a lot of confusion out in the rural world concerning the Tort Claims act and what it exactly covers. I do not feel qualified to go into the particulars of it, so I hope one of the National Officers reading this will oblige us and maybe include an article on this in the next National Magazine.

There are a lot of rural carriers who have had accidents and their insurance has had to pay for all of the damages to the other party's personal property. The way I understand it, your insurance policy must have specific language in it for the USPS to be liable for damages.

One thing I do know is that the Tort Claims Act does not cover damages to a rural carrier's route vehicle. It only covers damages to the other party involved.

It would be great to have a detailed article on this. One that answers

questions with some example scenarios.

Hopefully someone will oblige us and straighten this out in an article.

5. DHL-USPS Agreement

I am sure some of you have heard about this agreement between the USPS and DHL. This is going to dump approx. 40,000 new packages a day into the USPS network.

This will most certainly add more packages to rural carriers daily mail volume. While, it is good business for the USPS, and helps the bottom line, this is the type of thing that the evaluated system leaves no room for.

This agreement, along with Carrier Pickups where no time credits were received during mail count, Rural Reach, Election mail, etc. will add to the problems of completing our routes in the evaluated time.

Should we just be thankful we get to do all of this stuff for free? That is what I have heard from various state officers and in some newsletters.

Are we just supposed to look the other way and do all of this for free in the name of the Postal Service?

Oh, you mean the same Postal Service that cheated us in the 2002 mail count, and seems to have done the same in the 2008 mail count.

Do you mean the same Postal Service that refuses to pay us a fair EMA rate.

Do you mean the same Postal Service that threatens and harasses us for using the sick leave that we earn?

Do you mean the same Postal Service that would rather have our routes carried by the lowest bidder?

Do you mean the same Postal Service that threatens and harasses rural carriers daily?

I could go on and on, but I suppose you get the drift.

If you haven't had the pleasure to read about the agreement, here are a couple of links to bring you up to date.

[Postal Service Exclusive Carrier of Packages to the Last-Mile for DHL](#)

[USPS to make DHL deliveries in more ZIP codes](#)

6. CDS Update

CDS routes of still of the utmost importance to rural carriers.

We need to continue to contact our legislators to support both House Res. 282 and Bill S. 1457.

You can find info on these on my [contracting page](#).

7. New features on ruralinfo.net

Ruralinfo is having a Tshirt contest. Submit a rural related phrase to be printed on a tshirt. Only one submission per person. So make it good. Visitors to this website will vote on the best phrase. The winner will win a tshirt with their winning phrase printed on it. Put your thinking caps on and try to come up with the best one.. You can find the link to the contest on the [HOME](#) page.

Also, there is a new section on ruralinfo. It is rural route vehicle reviews. You can go there and rate your route vehicle so other carriers can come and look at the ratings. Check it out. [Rural Route Vehicle Reviews](#)

8. National Delegates

It is probably time to vote for National Delegates in your state. We do have some that have dared to become involved on the net, and have put their views out there for all to see. Please do not vote by name recognition alone. Please do all you can to find out some information on the people you are voting for. This is one of our most important rights in this

Association and we have ignored it for much too long.

[Click here](#)

9. PRC holding hearings on Universal Service and Postal Monopoly

The Postal Regulatory Commission is holding hearings on the USPS Universal Service Obligation and the USPS Monopoly. I have been keeping a close watch on their

activities. They are taking public comment on it and people have come out of the woodwork to supply comments

Of course, the big mailer's Associations are always the first ones to show up. Then add in someone the Greeting card and Newspaper business along with and some Non profit associations. Every one has something to say when they hold these things.

Some don't realize how much of an impact on our jobs these kind of organizations have. They were all heavily involved in the PAEA, the new postal law. All of these along with Fed-EX and UPS never miss a chance to tell Congress how overpaid postal workers are. See, they view postal worker's salaries as the road block to cheaper mailing costs for their Organizations and they use every chance they get to put the blame on us.

In any event, we should all pay special attention to these hearings. The PRC will report their finding to Congress which will probably include their recommendations. They are looking at things like the number of delivery days, the monopoly we have on access to customer's mailboxes, etc.

You can read some of the testimony at the link below:

[USO Field Hearing Statements and Transcripts](#)

10. **Editorial**

[Who Exactly do Union Representatives Represent?](#)

by John Amtsfeld

You can find more editorials by John and others on my [Editorial Page](#)

And, I welcome Jay to my Editorial page. I will be featuring some of his articles in the future.

Seeing both sides of an issue can foster discussion and ideas.

All opinions on all sides of the issues should be freely distributed and discussed.

I encourage you to feel free to join the discussion!

If you would like to respond to any of the editorials on my page, please [contact me](#).