

BACKROADS JOURNAL



First time delegates Lance Koske, Keith Harkins and Jason Dole experienced first hand what it takes to attend the convention. They worked long days and voted on over 350+ binding and non-binding resolutions for the betterment of our craft. They did an awesome job!

Inside this issue:



VOLUME 18, ISSUE 3
FALL 2026

Upcoming Calendars	2
State President Bob Richardson	3
District Representative Art Courcy	4-5
Member Submissions	6-7
Statement of Financial Position	8
State Meeting Information	9
Nation Convention/Photos	10-13

October 2026

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

OCTOBER BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

- Oct. 1 National Coffee Day
- Oct. 2 World Smile Day
- Oct. 12 Columbus Day
- Oct. 31 Halloween

NOVEMBER LUNG CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

- Nov. 1 State Meeting
- Nov. 11 Veterans Day
- Nov. 13 World Kindness Day
- Nov. 26 Thanksgiving

DECEMBER HIV/AIDS AWARENESS MONTH

- Dec. 1 World Aids Day
- Dec 4. Hanukkah Begins
- Dec. 10 Human Rights Day
- Dec. 24 Christmas Eve
- Dec. 25 Christmas Day
- Dec. 26 Kwanzaa



800-327-4968

(800-EAP-4-YOU) TTY: 877-492-7341
www.EAP4YOU.com

MaRLCA EDITOR

Sue Carvalho

Backroads.marlca@gmail.com

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

				1	2	3 pp21
4	5	6	7	8	9 \$	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17 pp22
18	19	20	21	22	23 \$	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 pp23

November 2026

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

1	2	3	4	5	6 \$	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 pp24
15	16	17	18	19	20 \$	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 pp25
29	30					

December 2026

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

		1	2	3	4 \$	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 pp26
13	14	15	16	17	18 \$	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26 pp01
27	28	29	30	31		

*The Backroads Journal is a publication of the MARLCA. Opinions and views expressed in this newsletter are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect or represent those of the Editor or the State Officers of the MARLCA.



A message from state president Robert "Bob" Richardson



Well, hello my fellow Rural Letter Carriers! It is great to be writing to you once again, and this time I have good news to share with you. I would like to touch on two (2) topics in this issue. First, exciting changes that took place at the National Convention. And second, changes to the District Meeting format.

So, let's get started by talking about the 2026 National Convention that took place in Grapevine, Texas. The delegates once again debated many "binding" and "non-binding" resolutions like we do every convention. But, more importantly, we elected a NEW National Board. I am pleased to announce the Patrick Pitts is our newly elected National President. I was shocked and amazed on how he got the membership body energized during his acceptance speech, during his caucus with the Eastern States Association, and after being elected. It is my opinion that we are going to be in good shape moving forward.

Also, our brother from Connecticut, Mike Merola was elected to be the next Director of Steward Operations. If you don't know who Mike is, he has come a long way in a very short period of time. Best wishes Mike, you will be great! Please check the National Web site for further information and pictures from the convention.

The next issue that I would like to discuss can be summed up in one word, "CHANGE". Ladies and gentleman of the MaRLCA, it is now time to change the way we run our district meetings. After many discussions with your Executive Board, we have decided to move on in a different way.

As many of you may know, the turnout at our district meetings has continued to decline. I have asked for your input as to why you think this is happening, asked for your suggestions on improvement, and so on. I have listened to you and it is time we try something "NEW". We will no longer have meetings like you have been accustomed to in the past.

We will still have the State Officers in attendance give a short report and then we will have some type of "training". We believe this will: 1). Bring back our membership, 2). Give power in the form of knowledge to the members, and 3). Reduce the amount of mis-information that is being spread throughout the craft.

At the time of writing this article, nothing has been set in stone and we will be working with our District Representative Art Courcy on the development of the training. Some of the topics of training include DPM, LTM, RRECS, edit book maintenance, reports to request, grievance procedure, etc... These topics will not be covered in one night, but we will try to cover a topic or two. Please stay tuned for future development and updates. I look forward to seeing everyone at the Fall Booster Meeting in November. Until then, remember, "CHANGE" is coming!!

Sincerely,

Robert G. Richardson
State President MaRLCA

**NATIONAL
GENERAL**
an **Allstate** company

- * Open 7 days a week from 7am to 11pm
- * Must call 888-325-7727 to receive the "Rural Carrier preferred rates"
- * Active and retired carriers are welcome!!
- * Call and ask for a free, no obligation, no strings quote
- * If you call for a quote and give the agent your email address, you will receive a \$10.00 E-Gift card even if you don't sign up
- * After 6 months you can call and ask for a requote
- * Note: In MA National General is only quoting auto



Rural Route Optimization, Scanner Prompts and the 4003 Mapping Program: What Every Rural Carrier Needs to Know

New Technology, New Data Collection, and Why It Matters

The Postal Service continues to expand its use of technology to evaluate and manage rural routes. From the Rural Route Optimization (RRO) initiative, to the PS Form 4003 mapping system, to the increasing number of scanner prompts asking carriers to report when they have finished loading or completed end-of-shift duties, management is collecting more operational data than ever before.

As a rural carrier, it is important to understand that this information can directly impact route evaluations, staffing decisions, route adjustments, and the future of rural delivery.

Rural Route Optimization (RRO)

The Rural Route Optimization program is designed to analyze delivery routes using mapping software, GPS data, scanner information, and delivery characteristics. USPS has indicated that the program is intended to improve efficiency and create routes that better reflect current delivery patterns.

While technology can be a useful tool, computer-generated data should never replace the knowledge and experience of the carrier who performs the route every day.

The NRLCA continues to advocate that any optimization process must accurately reflect:

- ☐ Actual travel patterns
- ☐ Safe delivery practices
- ☐ Road conditions
- ☐ Seasonal changes
- ☐ Growth and new construction
- ☐ Daily operational realities

No software program can fully understand what carriers encounter on their routes. Do not just settle for the program's recommendations if you feel any of the issues just stated are not considered.

It is your responsibility as a rural carrier to point out potential safety hazards when your route is chosen for the Rural Route Optimization Initiative. Please keep in mind that we as carriers do not have to agree with any directive from management that compromises the safety of ourselves or other people.

As with all mapping, the carrier must be present with management to perform this initiative. Please contact your local steward, area steward, ADR or DR assigned to your office with any questions regarding this process.

The Latest PS Form 4003 Mapping Program

USPS has also recently implemented a new digital mapping system for PS Form 4003 (Official Rural Route Description).

This mapping program allows management to electronically view and edit:

- ☐ Line of travel
- ☐ Delivery sequence
- ☐ Mileage
- ☐ Turn-by-turn routing
- ☐ Delivery points
- ☐ Route boundaries

Because this information may be used during route adjustments and future optimization efforts, carriers should pay close attention whenever changes are made. Rural carriers know their routes better than anyone. If a line of travel, mileage, or delivery sequence is inaccurate, those errors should be identified and corrected before they become permanent records.

Remember:

The accuracy of the 4003 is critical. An inaccurate route description can adversely affect evaluations, mileage, future adjustments, and operational decisions. And again, as with any mapping, the carrier must be present with management to perform any mapping functions .

Scanner Prompts: Why Are They Asking These Questions?

As I know you are all aware of the most recently implemented MDD scanner prompts asking questions

such as:

- ☐ “Are you done loading your truck?”
- ☐ “Have you completed Return to Delivery Unit duties?”
- ☐ “Are you finished with End-of-Shift duties?”

These prompts are designed to collect operational data regarding how long various work functions take throughout the day. While these questions may seem routine, the information entered becomes another data point that USPS can analyze.

Do not let these prompts intimidate you into thinking you need to be done, and you need to hurry or you need to end the function. This is your route and your evaluation, the time it takes to perform all duties is your compensation ... it takes what it takes and it is what it is.

The Postal Service is attempting to gain a better understanding of:

- ☐ Loading time
- ☐ Return-to-office activities
- ☐ Accountability procedures
- ☐ End-of-shift work
- ☐ Overall workflow

The information collected today could influence future operational studies, staffing decisions, and route evaluations.

Accuracy Matters

The NRLCA encourages every carrier to answer scanner prompts truthfully and accurately. Do not rush through your duties simply to respond to a scanner prompt.

Complete your work properly before indicating that a task has been completed.

If you are still doing required work, including handling accountables, mail handling, markups, edit book work, or other assigned duties, you should not indicate that you have finished them until those duties are complete.

Please do not ignore the prompts, the time it takes for you to retrieve your scanner once the prompt goes off, answer the question and continue loading or end of shift duties is included in the time value.

This prompt is actually adding time to the function you were performing by delaying you to continuously respond on the MDD.

Accurate data protects both carriers and the integrity of the route evaluation system.

Stay Informed

The rural craft continues to evolve as USPS introduces new technology and data collection methods.

The NRLCA is actively monitoring these developments and advocating to ensure that technology is used fairly, accurately, and in accordance with our National Agreement.

As always:

- ☐ Know your contractual rights.
- ☐ Ask questions if something doesn't seem right.
- ☐ Report discrepancies in route mapping.
- ☐ Notify your local steward or office assigned steward if you believe inaccurate data is being collected or used.

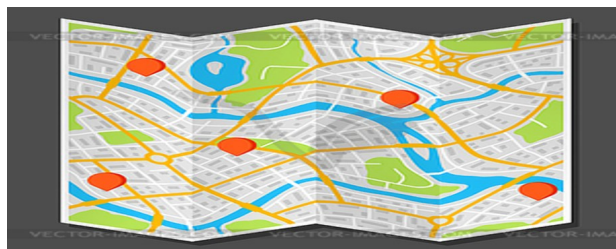
Technology should support rural delivery—not replace the experience and professionalism of the rural carrier.

Your route is more than a line of travel on a map or in a program, it represents the work you perform every day. Accuracy today protects your route tomorrow.

Art Courcy

NRLCA District Representative

MA-RI District





Having just returned from the national convention in Grapevine, Texas, I'd like to thank our delegates for their time and commitment to our state association. Our delegates spent time away from their families to represent all the carriers in our state and voting on issues affecting rural carriers when they could have easily carried their route and worked less hours.

Something that changed this convention is the date to determine final delegate strength. It will no longer be June 30th. Our delegate strength will now be determined on December 31st. Sue and I plan on mailing another recruitment letter in November.

Bob and I will be attending joint training in the next few weeks. This training is required annually and consists of many topics including Elections, DOL, IRS filings, Roberts Rules, and team building.

I can honestly say that one of the reasons our state board works well together is because we listen to each other and address any issue that arises immediately. We look at our state finances together and do not make decisions without discussing them first.

PSHB open season will be held November 9th to December 14th this year. Now is the time to think about what coverage you may need next year. If you don't have the Rural Carrier Health Benefit Plan, you might want to look at what it has to offer.

Our Fall Booster meeting will be held at the Best Western Royal Trade Plaza in Marlborough, MA on Sunday November 1st . Meeting notices will be going out in October. The meeting should end no later than noon. Come join us and bring your questions.

Sincerely,

Lorraine Pacheco

MARLCA Secretary/Treasurer



Good day fellow members, by the time you get this report I will already have seen you at your District meeting. Let me begin in the month of April, Bob and I where invited to speak with Congressional Congress women Lorrie Trahan at her office in Lowell.

This was an opportunity in which we visited her office during Legislative week. We talked to an aide in which she gave us an opportunity to speak with the congresswoman to face. This was very rewarding. The fact that she asked questions and we were able to give the answers, as well as ask her questions too.

Then it was off to the National Convention in Grapevine TX. We had 3 new comers (Lance, Jason and Keith). They were able to see first hand the things that go on at this level. From appeals/ ton Constitutional changes/ to the voting on resolutions. I cannot say enough how important it is of being a member and able to make a difference, for the members of this union. Now to September, see you at the district meetings.

Respectfully,

Cliff Morris

MARLCA Vice President

National Convention 2026

Thank you for allowing me to represent you and our fellow union members from Massachusetts. As a first time delegate I quickly comprehend the significance of attending and my participating at the convention. It reaffirmed my trust in the path our Union is on its commitment to working sedulously to ensure every rural carrier is treated with respect, dignity and guaranteed a fair wage for their arduous work.



The convention is the culmination of many hours of work from the rank and file membership, State Officers, District Representatives and the National Officers. Without this preparation an effective convention would not be achieved. Our convention is a working meeting it sets the course for how the Union will progress forward.

All participants took our responsibilities judiciously listened and made decisions to protect and improve our union.

I really enjoyed my participation at the national convention. Everyone was very welcoming and helpful. I enjoyed my conversations with fellow members from across the country learning a lot of things about what they do on a daily basis versus what I do. I was impressed by everyone that I spoke with and how common our jobs are but so vastly different. I spoke with a carrier out of Louisiana whose route was 176 miles. Just think about how much time they just spend driving each day not delivering just driving. Another carrier out of Arizona told me that the hottest day doing their route was 124°. A carrier in Minnesota said that the coldest day that they went out to the route was -24.

I had the opportunity to speak briefly with Don Matson and Patrick Pitts our past and our new president. Both men are thoughtful, trustworthy and want the best for carriers.

The Union is well positioned to take on the coming challenges of the next few years. We have competent leadership in all levels of our organization from local stewards to district representatives, president and vice president. The commitment of our executive members is astonishing to me considering that they all started as RCAS somewhere out there in this country and have dedicated themselves to positioning this union to protect and enhance all members lives. You should be proud to be a member of this union.



"Greetings union family,



As I was not an attendee of August's National Convention in Texas, I will keep this relatively brief:

Thank you sincerely to everyone who joined us at the District 1 fall meeting on September 1st. With it being my first meeting as president and a venue that was new to us, I'm happy to say that it went smoothly and our operating costs were low.

Attendance was improved compared to recent meetings, and I would love to see that trend continue. To that end, I'm excited to be on board for changes to the district meeting format beginning next spring! Keep your eyes peeled for details on that moving forward (some of which may be elsewhere in this newsletter). Cheers to you all and stay safe!

Travis Roy

District 1 President



From the desk of State Secretary Treasurer Lorraine Pacheco

11:05 AM
08/28/26
Cash Basis

MaRLCA Statement of Financial Position As of August 28, 2026

	Aug 28, 26	Aug 28, 25	\$ Change
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Checking/Savings			
1100000 · APCU Savings Account	111,944.16	135,769.14	-23,824.98
1100500 · APCU Checking Account	4,510.56	16,476.73	-11,966.17
1200000 · APCU CD's			
1200080 · CD #80	13,674.99	13,136.45	538.54
1200070 · CD #70	33,756.14	32,523.02	1,233.12
1200075 · CD #75	27,649.25	26,628.62	1,020.63
1200077 · CD #77	27,439.05	26,418.14	1,020.91
1200079 · CD #79	35,166.51	33,857.81	1,308.70
Total 1200000 · APCU CD's	137,685.94	132,564.04	5,121.90
Total Checking/Savings	254,140.66	284,809.91	-30,669.25
Total Current Assets	254,140.66	284,809.91	-30,669.25
TOTAL ASSETS	254,140.66	284,809.91	-30,669.25
LIABILITIES & EQUITY			
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Other Current Liabilities	397.42	816.11	-418.69
Total Current Liabilities	397.42	816.11	-418.69
Total Liabilities	397.42	816.11	-418.69
Equity			
3900 · Net Assets	286,345.18	303,298.23	-16,953.05
Net Income	-32,601.94	-19,304.43	-13,297.51
Total Equity	253,743.24	283,993.80	-30,250.56
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	254,140.66	284,809.91	-30,669.25

**Our Fall Booster meeting will be held at
The Best Western Royal Trade Plaza
in Marlborough, MA on Sunday November 1st .**



Please join us. Continental breakfast served at 8:30am, Meeting starts at 9am. This is an opportunity to be heard and become more informed.

BRING YOUR QUESTIONS! District Representative Art Courcy will be speaking and taking questions. The meeting shouldn't run past noon.

National Rural Letter Carriers' Association 120th National Convention August 18-21, 2026 Grapevine, TX.







National Convention

FDTQSBNH OHCE OFUHHARCACUAZPUUUE
 AIKMNJNAXKZF IHVJAPNDARSPPEGLAX
 FBOVAOYOPQCGIGBIZPEKYSIYCUXEJH
 HZVZWQUGNPYOTCJQYEPPAWAIGAVWQT
 LTMBUKUZE BRWNPKIWAHKJBHWLBURAS
 ENSXNTFQPTIOSSPCKLAHUSAOGDECMZ
 TBOZOSJBARPNVYTJWSKAAXPQMCEGUC
 TXWKYJMPHGGODEDIAMEDQHNGPDFSCS
 EGNAYWEZWDZQWITWTBNTBCLJFFCEXD
 RZRLYIMSHGJFOUNYVUALMFTTJDMMI B
 CUCFKDBOREPNJBSGHTTLKOAXIHKIPI
 AAGQWKEPUFYNCCNHR IQILZCJFQFNB
 RNZFYSRICUQJOMSVAEQGOOSYJ CXAZD
 RYGYCNSSSZUQXIMOZOUSNUNTPWOYRMI
 ILFLOAHTIRWHJKIROTNQZQPSXNMUSN
 EKPZLR IAZODNCZLNEOEZLNHGQTM OFG
 RUYWOMPTEYCYJDBNFEHZZAUWAJRNBVR
 SHQWREJEICSRFCACERJ VZTMOAAJAE
 JYLVGDEOELSUAYAYMTTSRXBUI SCUENS
 DLNRUFFFOYPRDBIKOIXDMHNZOTZCSO
 QVTZAOCTRHKATKXHGMOCIPTCNPTXL
 PTLPRRQHNJXLDF TJFUGNVTRXNXYGXU
 YQUSDCNETXQGZECBJAAA ITTSAUZAT
 XWRUKE LUUUMPWULVONJCVLNYXZGCM I
 EZLFNSPNW IQCKHUEREJCPTBQBBLWPO
 PEULRIYIOSCBNLQCGXYGFAOORADLXN
 FSZWKCOODAHHSTKBDATLEONMATGBNL
 XEJOSIKNLEQFDBXUARTACRYGMRZSHL
 WUNRLCAMPWYSEDVIPNGERNFJXBDFRW
 YBSAGNCWYMIUYOLRBDNLKRDNLVCFGJ

NON BINDING RESOLUTION

BINDING RESOLUTION

LETTER CARRIERS NATIONAL BOARD CONSTITUTION YAY

STATE OF THE UNION ARMED FORCES NAY

MEMBERSHIP COLOR GUARD DELEGATE

DITTY BAG CONTRACT NOMINEES

BALLOTS APPEALS SEMINAR

APPROVE OBJECT NRLCA

CAUCUS UNION VOTE

RURAL

SUICIDE AWARENESS & PREVENTION

Know the *Signs* of Suicide

When someone is considering suicide, there are often noticeable changes in behavior—sometimes subtle, sometimes dramatic. These changes can become more concerning when they are tied to a recent loss, traumatic event, or major life change.

Recognizing the warning signs can help you support someone in need. Most people who die by suicide show one or more of these signs, either in what they say or do:

Common Warning Signs of Suicide

- Talking about death, dying, or suicide—directly or indirectly
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness
- Giving away personal or meaningful belongings
- Engaging in reckless or self-destructive behaviors
- Increasing use of alcohol or drugs
- Major changes in sleep patterns—too much or too little
- Changes in appetite or significant weight loss/gain
- Neglecting personal hygiene or basic self-care
- Disregarding medical advice or treatment
- Isolating from friends, family, and coworkers
- Intense mood swings, irritability, or increased anger
- Increased agitation or anxiety
- A history of previous suicide attempts
- Expressions of feeling trapped or unbearable emotional pain
- Difficulty concentrating, making decisions, or thinking clearly
- Sudden calmness or improvement in mood after distress

If you're concerned, don't wait—take action. If someone is in immediate crisis, confidential support is available 24/7 through the **Suicide & Crisis Lifeline - 988**. You can also reach out to the EAP anytime for guidance.



EAP4YOU.com
800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU)
TTY: 711

Your Employee Assistance Program is here for you around the clock. Reach out to us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our website offers a wealth of information, tools and resources that you can access any time and feel free to give us a call at 800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU) or TTY: 877-492-7341.

WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

State Executive Officers:

President: Robert Richardson (978) 314-4449
robert.richardson@nrlca.org

Vice-President: Clifford Morris (978) 877-0157
cliffordatcheers@gmail.com

Sec-Treasurer: Lorraine Pacheco (774) 244-0837
Lorraine.Pacheco@nrlca.org

District Presidents:

D1: Travis Roy

D2: Dianne Daley

D3: Debra Freitas

Appointed Positions:

Assistant Sec-Treasurer:

Sue Carvalho

Susan.Carvalho@nrlca.org

PAC Chair:

Brian Miskell

miskellbrian3@gmail.com

Editor:

Sue Carvalho

backroads.marlca@gmail.com

District Representative, MA-RI (Full Time DR)

Art Courcy

Arthur.Courcy@nrlca.org

508-761-6870

Part-Time District Representatives:

Dan Cote (Massachusetts)

Daniel.Cote@nrlca.org

978-237-2625

Matthew Barrett (Massachusetts)

Matthew.Barrett@nrlca.org

508-443-7383



Area Stewards:

Ed Knight

Edward.Knight@nrlca.org

413-896-2662

Thomas Gorman

Thomas.Gorman@nrlca.org

774-319-0788



Backroads Journal

Address Service Requested

Susan Carvalho
234 Chestnut Street
New Bedford, MA 02740

Address Change:
Log on to liteblue.usps.gov



BRJ WINTER/SPRING ELECTION EDITION DEADLINE
January 09, 2027

