



Copper State Carrier

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE ARIZONA RURAL LETTER CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION

FALL 2025



2025 NRLCA NATIONAL CONVENTION ORLANDO, FLORIDA RALLY AGAINST PRIVATIZATION



At our national convention this year, we had another successful rally supporting the protection of our mail carriers as well as standing in unity against the privatization of the post office. It was held in front of city hall in Orlando, Florida. It was quite well attended. We had Florida Congressman Darren Soto and Maxwell Frost speak to the body and encouraged our fight. Our own union president Don Maston as well as Mark Dimondstein (president of the APWU) rallied with us and spoke to the body. We also had several carriers speak up and tell their stories. We had members from our rural craft as well as city carriers, mail handlers and clerks. A representation included the entire postal service and was a sign of unity to stand in the way of privatization of the post office. I would like to encourage everybody to call your own congressman to let them know we stand against privatization and we want to see our letter carriers protected. This is a time when we all need to be loud and clear about our stance. The NRLCA website has links to all our representatives and sample letters to send them to show our unity.

-Debi Schwamberger (pictured above at rally)

Photos courtesy of ProPhotography

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Photo highlights from the NRLCA Convention



Above: Your 17 delegates, member of the year Debi Schwamberger, voting session, Deputy Postmaster General Doug Tulino
Below: New NRLCA Board, APWU President Mark Dimondstein, a seminar in one of the halls.



Labor Day..."an annual celebration of the social and economic achievements of American workers" (<http://www.dol.gov>). Labor Day was born out of the Industrial Revolution, where people and children were working excruciating hours and under degrading conditions. A railroad union went on strike, and more than a dozen workers died defending their desire to be heard. President Cleveland in 1894 made Labor Day a legal holiday in an effort to repair the relationship with American workers. That's where unions were born!

This past National Convention in Orlando was my second, I cannot stress enough the information we get from these and how I wish more of you would nominate yourselves to go, then get your office to vote! We work the entire time, but some fun is had, like voting shenanigans for a candidate based on if they can keep your lips hydrated (John Adams handed out vanilla chapstick) :0. Tommy Turner, the national Secretary/Treasurer's thick packet of financial standings, details where your dues go- that can be found on the NRLCA website too. The largest parts are the national steward system, and salaries. Your steward system is essentially your legal representative at the office and national level doing what they can to help fix your pay, reverse or decrease discipline, get your job back, make working conditions better, keep management following policy, and protecting your rights during an injury and more. Stewards are so important right now with the ongoing flaws of RRECS.

Salaries are national officers, committee assignments, district/area/ national stewards, national newsletter, labor relations.... So, when you ask where do our dues go? Head to the NRLCA website- and Turner says our financial state is healthy.

I've written about how you can CREATE CHANGE through the union in past newsletters. Again the only way I have found this is getting involved, reading the newsletters, going to the state and national conventions. The physical way we can influence policy is through submitting "Binding Resolutions" first through our state process, then it heads to national to be on the list for the room of over 1600 delegates at the convention to vote on. If voted in, it is "Binding" that our National Officers negotiate them with the USPS towards our contract or policy. The forms can be found on our local website azrlca.com and national nrlca.org. Ask one of us for help! So, if you want change, be part of the process!

-Marlene Sweeney



**A new postal vehicle seen at convention. One of our attendees got the measurements to see if they'll fit in Surprise's new parking spots..9 inches wider and 5 feet longer than an LLV...*

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**CONTACT D.R FAYE DUNBAR
IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN
BECOMING A STEWARD.**

Words from your District Representative:

There still seems to be confusion about what to do if your informed that you are having an investigative interview and how to file a grievance. So, I am going to cover some of the basics to remember.

Investigative Interview: When management approaches you stating that they want to have an investigative interview or fact finding, you should be asking, “could this lead to discipline?”. If they answer “yes”, that is when you ask for your Union steward to be present. Management does not have to ask you if you want representation. Then it is your responsibility to contact your Union steward and collectively they will schedule a meeting date and time. Your steward is there to document exactly what is said, stop the interview if certain issues arise, and make sure your rights are not violated.

Grievance: A grievance is not filed until you have brought up your issue with your direct supervisor and attempt to come to a resolution. This is an important step that is often overlooked. It is only when you have not resolved that issue that you inform your direct supervisor that you would like to file a grievance. Your grievance Form 8191 should be printed out by management and lines 1 thru 4 are then filled out. Your direct supervisor that you had the discussion with will initial and date on line 3b indicating that you had a discussion. The original copy of your grievance form is then given to your local steward or mailed to your assigned steward. Make sure to keep a copy for yourself and if mailed, let your steward know it is on its way.

There are A LOT of offices that do not have a local steward. That doesn't mean you are not represented. We have Area Stewards, Assistant District Representative's, and myself that cover any office that does not have a local steward assigned. If you would like to explore what it would take to be a local steward in your office, please contact me. Being a local steward doesn't mean you are always processing grievances. You are the eyes and ears in the office and if an issue arises, it can usually be resolved with the right documentation and through discussion. If you have an office with 50 rural employees or more, there can be 2 local stewards. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have if this may be of interest to you.

If there is any topic you would like to know more about as a Rural Carrier you can email me or notify your State President of what you would like to see in the next publication. Have a safe and happy holiday season!

Faye Dunbar

AZ-NM District Representative

**Delegates Marlene and Debi speaking up during caucus night at the nrlca convention, and Vice President Patrick Pitts's family and crew.*



****Passages from NRLCA Delegates about the NRLCA Convention****

There are Heroes Among Us

Taking time to recognize Rural Carriers for their heroic actions was one of the many highlights of this National Convention. Carriers from across the country were selected as the Heroes of the Year recipients for their Area and one was awarded Overall Hero of the Year. These heroes went above and beyond and in some cases risked their own lives to help others.

-Keri VanEtta not only assisted a woman out of a burning vehicle, but rescued the just purchased children's Christmas gifts from the burning vehicle as well. Keri saved Christmas!

-Alex Tomasello spotted someone struggling to stay afloat in a fast moving icy river. He quickly took action and with the help of another bystander was able to rescue the victim.

-Lisa Ann Wagner noticed it was unusual when a particular customer hadn't picked up her mail in several days. She went to the customer's house on her day off and called the police when she heard faint sounds. Her customer had been lying there for days severely dehydrated with a broken hip in serious need of medical attention. She now has a new lease on life.

-David Hamilton took action when he saw an elderly woman and her small dog being viciously attacked by a large dog. He was able to fight the large dog off and get the woman to safety.

Thank you to these heroes and all the unrecognized heroes out there on their routes watching out for their customers, their pets and each other every day. I know you're out there and look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

-Mary Kosta, Glendale, AZ

As a first-timer to the National Convention, getting to finally experience what the Union process is all about, was a great time in Orlando, Florida. Being surrounded by old friends, and also so many new friends I was able to make along the way, it cemented me into wanting to come back for more.

Having so many helpful delegates from our state of Arizona definitely helped in guiding me through it all for the first time, I'm thankful for that as well.

The wealth of information being shared about our career, and the changes we are able to make about our career while being there, it is such an important aspect of what we do, I hope to see many other new rural carrier faces in the future.

-Ramon Alvarez, Sedona, Convention First-timer

The National Rural Carriers Convention held in Orlando Florida from 2025 was an incredible opportunity for rural mail carriers from across the country to come together, share experiences, and stay informed about the latest trends, technologies, and policies impacting our field. This was my first time attending and was able to connect with fellow carriers, deepen my understanding of industry challenges, and discover new ways to improve my work. It's a great experience!

-Aracely Meece, Yuma, Convention First-timer

Hi my name is Adrianna Contreras and I have been a carrier since 2006 in the Yuma district, 12 of those years an RCA. This year's convention in Orlando, Florida was truly an eye opening experience to a better understanding of what this union is about. I had the opportunity to participate in electing a new board, passing resolutions and much more. That's why I encourage all carriers to stand as one to show leadership and unity together. Overall, it was a tremendous experience to be able to be elected as delegate two years in a row. I would like to give special thanks to our wonderful crew of delegates for all the support and commitment to our union!

-Adrianna Contreras

****Continued****

Hello All,

My name is Arcy Montes and I am your newly elected Secretary/Treasurer. I have been a member of the NRLCA since I first began my career at the Post Office in 2005. I became an active member 2 years ago. I am excited and eager to contribute my organizational skills to our Union and it's members. Although I am still learning my new role as secretary, I will do my best to assist you all in any way I can. I look forward to meeting our members!

*Thank you,
Arcy J. Montes*

This was my first time attending a national conference of this scale. To say that I learned a lot would be an understatement. While we all share the same occupation, it was eye-opening to see the many hardships we face in our routes and offices on a daily basis.

Many carriers shared the same concerns I had, while others offered different perspectives. Through respectful and amicable debate, I was able to understand their points of view.

One of the key takeaways from this experience is that we, as Arizonans, should be more involved in our union responsibilities. With so many differing opinions and ideas, I urge you to share yours and take part in the process.

-Jesus Gonzalez Leon , Yuma, Convention First-timer

Hello everyone,

I had the pleasure to attend National Convention for the second time. I attended the PAC seminar and the retirement seminar. In the PAC seminar, I learned that it is very important to contribute to PAC. They represent our values and concerns as carriers. They go to capital hill to educate politicians on bill that concern rural carriers like HR 70 which ensures that the United States Postal Service remains independent. There are several ways to contribute, electronically, donations and automatically withdraw. I encourage you to become a sustaining donor.

In the retirement seminar, I learned that you need to be financial ready to retire. We have retirement consultants that can help you through the retirement process. The NRLCA website has a site regarding retirement and the consultants that are ready to help you and answer questions about retirement.

In conclusion, National convention was really exciting; we had four new delegates. It was very exciting to see the new delegates get pumped and excited about our union.

-Adelina Linda Lopez

This year's National Convention was in Orlando Florida, and Arizona had 17 delegates that were voted to go. We had four first timers that were able to be there.

I wanted to remind everyone about the insurance benefits that are available to NRLCA Regular, PTF, and RCA members. Through Symetra there is Term Life Insurance, Short-term Disability, and Long-term Disability. Hartford offers Accident, Critical Illness, and Hospital Indemnity Insurance. Ameritas offers Dental Insurance, and VSP offers Vision. All these options are available through Greater Insurance service Corp.

As a member of the NRLCA, you can also enroll in the Rural Carrier Benefit Program for health insurance, which is provided through Aetna. Some of the Benefits that they provide is Wellness incentives, they also cover a percentage of qualifying massages through out the year. The big benefit is 100% coverage for cancer coverage.

When open enrollment happens later this year, you may want to compare the RCBP to your current insurance coverage.

-Susan Naugle

****Continued...****

I had the privilege to attend as a delegate to the 2025 National Rural Letter Carriers Convention in Orlando, Florida. If you have not attended one of these conventions, I highly recommend that you do. There is a lot to learn. There are several seminars that are provided at the convention. One of the seminars I attended was the Academy Facilitator Seminar. One of the biggest concerns is employee retention rate. New employee training is one of the many ways we have to control this. A lot of Academy Instructors attended convention and this seminar. Over the years I have thought about becoming an instructor several times and have been an OJI.

One thing that stood out to me was a presentation from our National Vice President, Patrick Pitts. He has been working on a project for the last year or so to get names and contact information for all Academy Facilitators involved in the NRLCA. Through this he has selected a few to lead a "Training Task Force" (unsure if this is the official name). By gathering this information these individuals will be able to easily communicate with all the Academy Facilitators active in the NRLCA. The Academy Facilitators will also be able to communicate to the "Task Force." Through this we will be able to more efficiently update training standards, develop new ideas for training and get instructors everything they need to effectively train new hires.

I was fortunate to talk with Patrick Pitts after the seminar. I spoke to him on the great idea and how we needed to get some support to our OJI's that train RCA's after academy. As OJI's we don't have many resources to assist us, especially when it comes to new training standards. He thinks it would be great idea to get new training packets for OJI's as well. I look forward to what this new program will provide, not only to the instructors, but the new hires we train.

-Nick Penkoff, Fiesta Gilbert, Convention First-timer

From the Desk of Darrell Livengood

My Dear Friends...after attending the NRLCA National Convention, I'm pleased with our future representation. In Arizona, my faith in character, in good decisions and conscience has been reaffirmed. We have some first time convention members who deserve distinction:

Ramon Alvarez, Aracely Meece, Nick Penkoff, Jesus Gonzalez

These members' voted with their conscience and their hearts. In reality they voted for you. What wonderful Union members. I hope to see you all at the next national convention. These folks took personal responsibility. If you know them, shake their hand. They watch out for you. And- quite frankly, they're funny and personable.

Stay in touch with them...

Your Union Brother,

-Darrell Livengood

A Note from your Chaplain:

At the National Convention this year in Orlando, Florida, I was inspired by our National Chaplain, Gary Wilder. Gary started each morning session with words of encouragement and lifting up in prayer any needs that the body had asked him to. One of the things he encouraged us to remember is how we treat other people. Everybody is going through something. My sister has always said, everything is more fun with a friend, even the yucky stuff. The fruits of the spirit, our love, joy, peace, patience, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control. As we go through our days, help us to remember to apply these qualities in our relationships with other people. It seems like everybody is going through something and needs a little encouragement. With that being said one of the things I was encouraged to do at national convention is to reach out with cards of get well or sympathy when needed. I would really be honored to send out a card to anybody that any of you feel could use one. I have included my email address as well as my phone number. Please reach out to me if there's somebody that I can send a note of encouragement to.

Thank you, Debi Schwamberger

thedebinator79@gmail.com / #520-405-6206

2026 WESTERN STATES CONFERENCE

APRIL 15-17, 2026



SUNSET STATION RESORT

**1301 WEST SUNSET ROAD
HENDERSON NV 89014**

Room Reservations: 702-867-4397

\$126.00 per night

(Booking Code: NVRLCA)

Rates good APRIL 13, 2026—17, 2026

The registration fee is \$85.00/person, add \$10.00/person after March 1, 2026

Includes breaks, Lunch on Thursday and Seminars

Number of people _____ Total enclosed \$ _____

Please Print:

Name(s) _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Please enclose your check payable to NVRLCA for the total.

Mail to Attn: NVRLCA c/o Jamie Martinez, at 4307 Stardust Moon Ave, North Las Vegas, NV 89084

Questions: Contact Ginny Simer at ginnysimer@yahoo.com or call 775-910-4318 and leave a message.

HOTEL AMMENITIES

ACCESSIBILITY

- Wheelchair Accessible—may have limitations

BREAKFAST SERVICES

- Breakfast Services – Extra Charge

BUSINESS, CONFERENCE & MEETINGS

- Meeting Room Facilities; Banquet hall on site; Ballroom on site; Meeting Rooms on site; Wedding & banquet services

ENTERTAINMENT & ACTIVITIES

- Sportsbook; Concerts live performances; Pool table or billiards

FITNESS SERVICES

- 24/7 fitness facility

GAMES & SPORTS

- Bingo; Arcade—Game Room

GENERAL AMENITIES

- Dry Cleaning & laundry Service;

Fron Entrance ramp; Braille or raised signage; Assistive listening devices available. Visual alarms in hallways; Electric vehicle charging Station; Bowling alley on site; Elevator & lift on property; Vending machine available; Wheelchair-accessible path to entrance; Pool host on suite; Well lit path to entrance; Elevator door width 36 inches; Hiking/biking trails nearby

- No accessible shuttle
 - **ATM & banking on site**
- #### **INTERNET**

- Free internet

KIDS & CHILDCARE SERVICES

- Babysitting or childcare—Extra charge; Supervised childcare & activities—Extra chg

LOBBY LEVEL SERVICES

- Luggage storage facilities; Express check out; Bellhop & Porter Service

- 24/7 front desk; Safe Deposit box at front desk

OUTDOOR

- TV in common areas

PARKING SERVICES

- RV, bus & truck parking—Free; Covered parking; Uncovered parking; Self Parking—Free; Valet Parking—Free

POOL FACILITIES

- Pool Umbrellas; Outdoor swimming pool; Pool Cabanas—Extra Charge; Pool sun chase loungers

PROPERTY FEATURES

- VIP ROOMS; Assigned smoking areas; Multilingual staff

RESTAURANT & BARS

- Bars & lounges; Pool bars; Coffee shops and cafes; Hotel restaurant; Snack Bars & deli

Photos from the NRLCA Convention in Orlando, Florida



Teller's Committee- Delegates from states given the assignment on the committee that collects and tallies votes for the National Officers.



Our President, flag and sign.



The body- in unity against privatization. For those who have never attended a convention, there is one great room where all the delegates from the states gather to conduct the business, voting, introductions and announcements. In the evenings, we break up to attend seminars of our choice, or of our individual responsibilities, in other rooms.

Photos by ProPhotography



Trudy Ewing accepting her award for her many years as Secretary/Treasurer.



PAC Results!

Photos by M. Sweeney

More of the convention experience



The main session, and a gorgeous view from the plane.



Poor Nick, new guy at the event, and pretty sure he was the only one without a matching shirt :) (they ran out).



*How 'bout them apples?
Other state's creative
signs, and President
Don Maston presented
his video interview with
Bernie Sanders.*

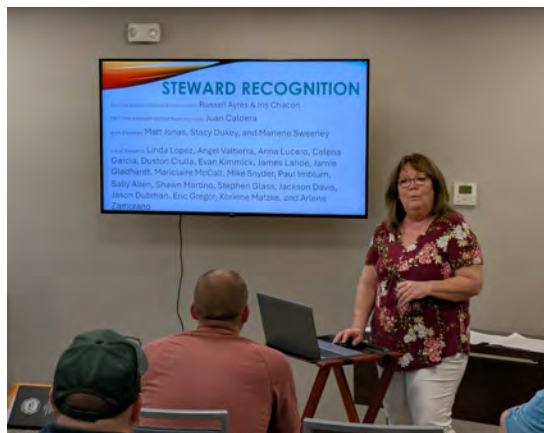


Photos by M. Sweeney

AZRLCA State Convention June 15, 2025



First Timers at the State Convention were: Mary Kosta-Glendale, Rachel Navas-Mesa Desert, Ramon Varelas-Buckeye, Juan Caldera-Rio Rico, Aracely Meece-Yuma.



D.R. Faye Dunbar with her presentation on RRECS, steward representation, and route information across the district.

Debi Schwamberger with her union member of the year award, presenting National Executive Committeeman Kirby Ricketts with his Arizona gift, and Susan introducing Kirby.



Photos by M. Sweeney

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****CALENDAR 2025-2026****

OCT 2ND: AZRLCA Board Meeting.....Maricopa Library, Maricopa, AZ

FEB 1ST -or- FEB 22ND: Spring Booster Meeting ****TENTATIVE****

APRIL 15TH-17TH 2026: WESTERN STATES CONFERENCE.....Henderson, Nevada

ONLINE UNION RESOURCES

NRLCA - <https://www.nrlca.org>

(Download the phone application from Google Play or Apple Store)

AZRLCA - azrlca.com

