

# Local Steward Recruitment

By ED EMMERT

## VA RLCA State Steward

One of the greatest needs in representation of rural carriers is more local stewards. The office that does not have such representation places themselves in a vulnerable position.

Where is the voice of the union in such offices?

What do you do when you need to file a grievance?

Who do you contact?

Who will represent your cause?

Who can know the local office situation best?

Who will be in sympathy for your cause more than a local steward?

If you face a removal action, is some rural steward from other parts of the state going to have to represent you?

All of these are factors of serious consideration when it comes to having an elected and certified local steward in all rural delivery offices.

Representation costs are a major factor when there is no local steward. Generally, an area steward will be sent to attend to carrier needs when they arise. Otherwise, no steward may be seen or heard of in an office . . . and often for extended periods of time.

It is not uncommon for an assistant state steward to have to go to an office to represent a carrier. When an area or assistant state steward is required to go to an assigned office to take care of a representation need, the VA RLCA bears the total expense for the day. That includes leave without pay (LWOP) incurred, travel mileage, and all expenses. This amount can easily be \$200-\$300 daily.

So we learn that having a local steward assists in cutting the costs of the steward system for the state. By simple reasoning, the fewer stewards we have, the more it costs. It follows that more costs can trigger more dues for members. One of the keys to fixing this possibility is to elect a local steward in every office.

The National Agreement and the NRLCA Constitution and Bylaws provides for a steward system. The NRLCA is the only and exclusive organization that can represent the rural carrier craft. The NRLCA is responsible for the steward program system within the state.

The state association, under the direction of the national executive committeeman, is responsible for the implementation and operation of the steward system within each state. The state steward supervises and administers the steward system within the state.

The selection of a local steward is conducted in July of every fourth year which means the term of office is four years. To become a steward, the carrier must be a member in good standing with the NRLCA. An elected local steward shall be certified through approved and provided applicable training.

The NRLCA requires certification training and does provide the material for such.

July is not very far away. Certification training will follow elections in that month. Every rural carrier should ask for an election in the office. Forms and information for that purpose may be obtained from any assistant state steward or VA RLCA board member. Don't delay! Contact them soon for the information.

Have you really ever given it any consideration that **YOU** could make a difference as a local steward?