

THE CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS OF THE VIRGINIA RURAL LETTER CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION

(As amended at Collinsville, VA June 2005)

PREAMBLE

This Association is predicated upon the long recognized need of those who work in our service industry for the establishment of a united force, free from divisive conflict, to accomplish the organization of all workers within its authority; to advance the economic and other interests of all members; to safeguard, enhance, and insure their job security; to enlarge upon their opportunities, and to provide in every respect their continuing full share of the reward in the growth and expansion of the United States Postal Service to which they contribute so substantially in the commitment of their working lives.

This Association shall seek, in unity and with all the resources at its command, to realize the highest aspirations of its members as workers and as citizens. It deems such realization to be their right, and it shall protect against all threats of impairment from any source.

This Association is dedicated to the discharge of its responsibilities and the achievement of its objectives in accordance with democratic principles, processes, and traditions which are embodied in this Constitution. As its basic charter, this Constitution establishes the Virginia Rural Letter Carriers' Association and the organic law governing its operation.

ARTICLE I

NAME and CHARTER

The name of this organization shall be the Virginia Rural Letter Carriers' Association (VARLCA). Chartered by the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association in 1904, Charter #24.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE

Section 1. The purpose of this Association shall be to improve the methods used by rural letter carriers, to cooperate with the U.S. Postal service and the public for the good of the service, to promote a fraternal spirit among its members, and to benefit their conditions of labor.

Section 2. The following standards of conduct are prescribed for this Association.

A. To maintain democratic procedures and practices, including provisions for periodic elections to be conducted subject to recognized safeguards and provisions defining and securing the right of the individual members to participation in the affairs of the organization, to fair and equal treatment under the governing rules of the organization, and to fair process in any disciplinary proceedings.

B. To prevent discrimination on the basis of race, color, age, gender, religion, creed, national origin, disability, or marital, economic, social, or political status;

C. To prohibit business or financial interests on the part of organization officers and agents which conflict with their duty to the organization and its members; and

D. To maintain fiscal integrity in the conduct of the affairs of the organization.

Section 3. As membership is the lifeblood of any organization, this association strongly supports the active recruitment of non-members by encouraging the development of membership campaigns within all levels of this association, including but not limited to, Rural Academies, new employee orientations, individual visitations, letters, etc.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The active membership of this association shall be composed of regular rural letter carriers; PTF rural letter carriers; rural letter carriers who are serving in the Armed Forces of our country, provided they were members of the Virginia Rural Letter Carriers' Association at the time of their entry into the Armed Forces; auxiliary rural letter carriers; substitute rural letter carriers; rural carrier relief employees; rural carrier associate employees; rural carriers who have been retired on an annuity; all former rural letter carriers who were in good Association standing when they left the service; former rural letter carriers now working in other postal related jobs and identified as Associate members; and Associate members who have retired on an annuity. No Associate member may be entitled to vote or to hold office in this Association.

Section 2. All rural carriers in good standing at the time of retirement and all carriers in active military service shall be honorary members of the Association, unless they elect to remain active members by the payment of local, state, and national dues. Honorary membership may be bestowed upon others by this Association at its regular meetings, but no honorary member may be entitled to vote or to hold office in this Association.

Section 3. Members who live outside the state of Virginia, but work in an office which emanates from within the state may be eligible for membership by payment of the local, state, and national dues.

Section 4. A retired member shall have the option of being a member of the State Association either in their state of residence, or in the state where previously employed.

Section 5. The Association membership and fiscal year shall begin July 1 and end on June 30.

Section 6. Persons paying membership dues including, Regular, PTF rural, substitute, rural carrier relief employees, rural carrier associate employees, auxiliary carriers, retired, shall receive each issue of *The Virginia Rural Letter Carrier*.

ARTICLE IV

Robert's Rules of Order

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Association in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution and Bylaws and any other special rules of order the Association may adopt.

ARTICLE V

OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers of this Association shall consist of President, Vice-President, and Secretary-Treasurer. They shall be elected annually from the active membership for a one year term by the delegates at the State Convention. No member shall hold two elected positions simultaneously.

Section 2. There shall be an Executive Board consisting of the President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and four (4) Committeemen. The Committeemen shall likewise be elected from the active membership for a four (4) year term by the delegates at the State Convention. One Committeeman shall be elected each year in order to maintain a rotating body. In the event other vacancies exist causing an unexpired term, an election shall be held to fill such vacancies for the remainder of the term at the next State Convention or the President shall have the authority to appoint a replacement if the vacancy occurs more than sixty (60) days prior to the State Convention. The Executive Board shall become certified Area Stewards to assist State Stewards in assigned areas of the State. Upon removal from the Executive Board by election or otherwise, those certified as Area Stewards will serve in that capacity for a continuing six (6) months period of time.

Section 3. The outgoing state President shall have the status of Delegate-at-Large at the next succeeding State Convention immediately following that term in office, but shall not be eligible to vote for officers of this Association.

Section 4. While serving as a member of the Executive Board, no board member shall serve as a State Steward or an Assistant State Steward.

Section 5. An officer of this association shall be further defined as any qualified member serving in an official capacity, under the authority of the State Board.

ARTICLE VI

IMPEACHMENT & REMOVAL

Section 1. In case of neglect of duty or violation of this Constitution on the part of any Officer of this Association or subordinate branch thereof, in the interim of the State Convention, the State Board shall have the power to suspend such Officer, without pay, after a fair hearing, subject to an appeal to the next State Convention.

Section 2. In case a State Officer shall prove unfaithful to the Association, such officer may be impeached and removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the delegates at the State Convention. The officer shall be duly notified and granted a fair hearing before a Committee comprised of three members ; one selected by the State Board; one selected by the accused Officer; and a chairman selected by the other two members of the Committee. The Committee shall report to the State Convention before a vote is taken.

ARTICLE VII

APPEALS

Section 1. Any member aggrieved by any action of the State Association, or Officer thereof, shall have the right to appeal to the State Board. Such appeal must be in writing and must be filed with the State President within thirty (30) days of the action complained of. Within the (10) days of receipt of such

appeal, the State President will notify all members of the State Board, and also, request that the charging party provide a letter outlining the specific charges and relief sought. This letter of specificity must be returned within twenty (20) days, and upon its receipt the State Board will forward a copy to the charged party for response. The charged party will have twenty (20) days to respond in writing to the State Board. The State Board will review the charging party's letter of specificity and relief sought and the response of the charged party. If the State Board chooses not to or is unable to effect the relief sought, it will then establish an Investigating Committee which will have full authority to conduct a full, fair, and impartial investigation. One member of the Investigating Committee will be chosen by the charging party, one member will be chosen by the charged party, and the two original members will then choose the third member. All members of this Investigating Committee must be members of the State Association, who do not hold an elected position on the State Board, and excludes Associate members. Within thirty (30) days of their appointment, the Investigating Committee will make a report, jointly, in writing, including the findings and recommendations to the State Board. The State Board is authorized, in consultation with the NRLCA assigned Executive Committee representative, to take the necessary action to resolve the issue within thirty (30) days, unless extensions of time limits are necessary and approved by the State Board with concurrence from the assigned Executive Committee representative. All parties must be notified in writing of such action.

Section 2. Any member not satisfied with this decision, or any action of the State Board on said appeal, shall have the right to appeal to the National Board. This appeal must be in writing and must be filed with the President of the National Association within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the State Board's decision.

ARTICLE VIII

TRUSTEESHIP

Section 1. The President, with the approval of the State Board may place in trusteeship any Local Association or subordinate body for any of the following reasons:

- A.** To uphold the principles and integrity of this Constitution;
- B.** To correct corruption or financial malpractice;
- C.** To assure performance of collective bargaining agreements or other duties of a bargaining representative;
- D.** To restore democratic procedures; and
- E.** To otherwise carry out the legitimate objectives of the State and National Associations.

Section 2. The trustee shall assume immediate control and authority of the Local Association, with full authority over the Officers and property thereof. The trustee shall continue to act in such a capacity for the duration of the trusteeship.

Section 3. Within 30 days of the imposition of the trusteeship, a hearing shall be held before an impartial member of the State Board, as a hearing officer, to determine facts on continuing the trusteeship. All interested persons shall have the right to present evidence at the hearing to the hearing officer who shall have the sole discretion on the conduct and procedures at the hearing.

Section 4. The hearing officer shall report as soon as practicable, after the close of the hearing, the findings and recommendations to the President. The President may accept or reject these findings and recommendations, and the trusteeship may be continued or terminated accordingly.

Section 5. Upon a petition filed with the President, no earlier than six months after the appointment of the trusteeship, and at six month intervals thereafter, any party may request termination of the trusteeship. The President acting on such petition, or at any time, may terminate the trusteeship, and restore government to the Local Association Officers.

Section 6. Any party not satisfied with the decision of the President may have the right to appeal as provided in Article VII of this document.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I

PRESIDENT

Section 1. The President shall preside at all meetings of the State Association and enforce all requirements of the Constitution and Bylaws subject to the approval of the Executive Board. He shall sign all papers and documents that require his approval. He shall employ a Certified Public Accountant to audit the Treasurer's books every year and prior to a new Treasurer receiving said books. In the event of death or other cases of incapacity of the Secretary-Treasurer so as to render him unable to perform his duties, the President will appoint the Vice-President to temporarily assume the duties of the Secretary-Treasurer.

Section 2. The President shall annually appoint a State Steward. In the event the State Steward would become permanently unable to complete his term of office, the President shall appoint a State Steward to complete the unexpired term. Beginning in the year 2001-2002 this appointment will be considered a full-time position. The President shall have the option to appoint six (6) Assistant State Stewards annually thereafter. Selection of Assistant State Stewards is made with the consensus of the President and the State Steward. All Steward appointments shall require the confirmation vote of the Executive Board by a simple majority. All Steward appointments are subject to approval by the National Association. If the President and the State Steward cannot agree on a candidate for Assistant State Steward, then the President shall make the appointment and the confirmation vote by the Executive Board shall be by simple majority. The President shall appoint from the membership an Insurance Representative, an Editor, a PAC Chairman, a State Chaplain, and a Parliamentarian or employ a professional Parliamentarian. These persons shall be appointed at his earliest convenience except that the State Steward must be appointed within five (5) days following the State Convention. All officers, executive committeemen, and appointed office holders shall discharge the duties of their respective offices until their successors are elected or appointed. If removed from office, their duties shall cease immediately.

Section 3. The President shall, at the close of each Annual State Convention, make such appointments of special committees as shall have been provided for and shall have authority to fill all vacancies occurring therein during recess. The President shall temporarily fill all vacancies in the State Board of the Association, subject to the approval of the State Board.

Section 4. The President shall make decisions upon all questions of law, which shall be subject to a vote of the State Board, during the recess of the Association. The President and the Board shall report all such decisions to the Association at its next Annual State Convention, for approval or rejection; such decisions, when approved, shall have the effect and force of the general laws of the Association.

Section 5. The President shall submit at each Annual State Convention a Written report of all official acts, and shall perform such other duties as the Constitution and Bylaws of this Association shall require.

Section 6. The President shall make a summary report available on the disposition of those resolutions adopted at the previous convention.

Section 7. The president shall have authority:

A. To grant charters and, in conjunction with the Secretary-Treasurer, issue them during the interim between meetings of the Association.

B. To countersign all checks issued in payment of obligations of the Association.

ARTICLE II

VICE-PRESIDENT

Section 1. The duties of the Vice-President shall be to preside in the absence of the President, and in case of death, resignation, disqualification, refusal or neglect of the President to discharge the duties of the office, the Vice-President shall become the President and serve until such time as a successor shall be duly elected and installed.

Section 2. The Vice-President shall be the membership chairman for the Association.

Section 3. The Vice-President shall have the authority to countersign all checks issued in payment of any obligations of the Association.

ARTICLE III

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Section 1. The duties of the Secretary-Treasurer shall be:

A. To keep a correct record of the proceedings of this Association, read, or cause to be read, all communications, reports, etc., and draw and attest all orders drawn on the Treasury; affix the stamp of the Association to all official documents;

B. Within two months after the close of each State Convention or special meeting, to prepare for publication in *The Virginia Rural Letter Carrier* a correct copy of the entire proceedings of the State Convention, or special meeting of the Association, giving a complete statement of the financial conditions of the Association and a statement of the membership;

C. To issue checks in payment of all properly itemized invoices and statements, for authorized payroll payments and for other obligations of the Association as directed by the State Board;

D. To conduct the correspondence of this Association, keep a record of and submit same when demanded by the State Board;

E. To keep a true and correct account between the State Association and the Local Associations and of all other financial transactions. Following the end of the Association year, June 30, the books and records for the fiscal and Association year's operation, July 1 to June 30, shall be immediately audited as prescribed

in Article I, Section 1. The report of the certified public accountant shall be submitted to the Finance Committee;

F. To submit to the Finance Committee on the first day of the State Convention a detailed report on all receipts, expenditures, and other financial transactions between the close of the books, May 31, and the opening of the State Convention. This committee shall examine the books, records, and financial statement of the Secretary-Treasurer for that period and report their findings to the Convention;

G. To receive all funds due the Association and make timely deposits of all receipts into the Association's Treasury, keeping on file a copy of each deposit slip;

H. To prepare a quarterly financial report, giving the receipts and expenditures of the Association in detail, as shown by the ledger accounts; such report to be published in *The Virginia Rural Letter Carrier*;

I. To meet with the Finance Committee and provide a detailed overview of the total revenues and expenditures of the Association; and

J. To perform such other duties as the laws and regulations of the office may require.

K. Following any changes in the State Constitution and Bylaws, the Secretary-Treasurer shall cause such revisions to be incorporated into a supplement of the changes, or a new printing of the Constitution and Bylaws, as directed by the Executive Board.

Section 2. The responsibilities of the Secretary-Treasurer are:

A. To have charge of the seal, books, papers, and documents belonging to this Association;

B. Subject to the approval of the State Board, to employ such office help as may be necessary to properly discharge the duties of the office;

C. To invest Association funds, in excess of that needed for current operation. Excess funds shall be invested in U.S. Government Securities, federally insured depositories, credit unions or in certificates of deposit issued by Federally insured banks in such manner as provided by the State Board. The payments of interest or dividends, or the withdrawal or transfer of funds from one depository to another, and issuing orders as may be drawn upon the Secretary-Treasurer, in accordance with the laws of the Association, shall be made as provided by the State Board.

ARTICLE IV

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. The Executive Committee, consisting of the four (4) duly elected committeemen, or a majority thereof, shall act as Trustees of the Association.

Section 2. Each member of the Executive Committee shall work as advocates for all interests of the membership, including, but not limited to, membership growth, PAC, GMAC Insurance, attendance, legislative representation, and the administration of the Steward Program.

Section 3. The Executive Committee shall meet regularly with the officers to administer whatever the entire Executive Board prescribes. They shall give a report of their activities at each Board meeting and a written report annually at the State Convention.

ARTICLE V

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. The Executive Board shall maintain the publication known as *The Virginia Rural Letter Carrier*, and be responsible for its distribution and content.

Section 2. At each State Convention or special meeting of the Association, a report in writing shall be rendered by each member of the Executive Board.

Section 3. The Executive Board is hereby empowered to make such interim amendments to the Constitution of the Association as may be necessary to conform to the requirements of Federal or State Law.

ARTICLE VI

SALARIES

Section 1. The annual salaries of the Officers of the Association shall be President \$4,000; Vice-President \$2,000; Secretary-Treasurer \$8,000 in addition to secretarial expenses and office rent of \$2,400; State Steward the amount of a 48K rural route at his or her attained Step; Assistant State Steward \$8,000; State Insurance Representative \$500; and the State Editor \$750.

A. In the event a retired carrier is appointed State Steward, the annual salary shall be the equivalent of a 48K at step 12.

Section 2. No person holding office in this Association shall be allowed compensation for services or expenses if such officer is receiving compensation from any other source for that service. Officers shall not hold any other paid position in the Association or in connection with the Association while receiving compensation as an Officer.

Section 3. No union member shall receive DOP (Day of Pay) from the Union while in a paid leave status from the U. S. Postal Service.

ARTICLE VII

EXPENSES AND BENEFITS

1. EXPENSES

A. The Association shall pay Officers of the Association, elected or appointed, actual travel and lodging expenses plus actual meal expenses not to exceed \$30 per day. All Officers elected or appointed shall be reimbursed for all other necessary expenses in the performance of their duties and shall be paid for loss of rural carrier salary when in a leave without pay status while in the performance of said duties. All necessary expenses shall be itemized and approved by the Executive Committee.

B. All Officers elected or appointed shall be paid mileage for the use of their vehicle at the same rate as paid by the U.S. Postal Service per mile, while in the performance of their duties.

C. Duly elected delegates to the State Convention shall be paid mileage at the rate of double that allowable by the U.S. Postal Service per mile one way. Mileage shall be computed at the most direct route

over federal and state highway by Mileage and Per Diem Committee as determined by use of the Rand McNally Road Atlas.

D. All union members in good standing, and not receiving any reimbursement from the State Association, shall receive compensation, one way, for their mileage to all state board and booster meetings, at the rate of mileage reimbursement currently outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws.

E. Duly elected delegates to the National Convention shall be paid mileage at the rate of double that allowable by the U.S. Postal Service per mile one way. Mileage shall be computed at the most direct route over federal and state highway by the President and Secretary-Treasurer, using the Rand McNally Road Atlas. Delegates shall be paid per diem for attending sessions of the National Convention at the rate equal to that paid by the National Association. All National paid delegates shall be excluded from this provision.

F. The State Steward and the State Insurance Representative shall receive mileage and per diem at the same rate as a National delegate to the National Convention when such person is not elected as a National Delegate.

G. The Secretary-Treasurer shall remit to the Virginia Retired Carriers Association the amount of \$1.00 for each retired member in good standing. The Secretary-Treasurer shall remit to the Virginia Rural Letter Carriers' Association Auxiliary the amount of \$1.00 for each active member in good standing.

H. The President may convene the Executive Board and/or Committees whenever, in his judgment, circumstances demand and assign duties to any of them. For this service, members of the Executive Board or Committees shall receive their actual travel, food, toll, lodging, or similar related essential expenses when itemized and approved by the Executive Board.

I. The State Secretary-Treasurer shall remit \$4.00 per annum to each Local for each member of that Local who is on dues withholding.

2. BENEFITS

A. State Steward

1. (Sick Leave) Sick leave will be earned each year at the rate of one half day per pay period, or a total of 13 days per year.

2. (Annual Leave) Annual leave will be earned at the appointee's attained rate, forwarded at the beginning of the Union Year, as per postal policy. In the event the appointee is a retired carrier, the rate of annual leave earned will be 1 day per pay period.

3. In the event of the death of the appointee, all accrued annual leave shall be paid to the appointee's estate.

B. All personnel serving in an Official Union Capacity are to be covered by Workman's Compensation/Insurance program in case of injury while on Official Business. The coverage is to be purchased and kept in force by the State Association.

C. All personnel serving in an Official Union Capacity shall be compensated for lost retirement benefits and matching funds equal to those which would have been earned in their capacity with USPS. Said funds to be deposited in their respective Retirement Plan.

D. If the appointed full-time State Steward is a designation 71, the state association will be responsible for reimbursement to the USPS for all postal contributions to the appointee's health and life insurance programs in which enrolled. If a retired carrier is appointed, no additional benefits will be paid.

ARTICLE VIII

REVENUE

Section 1. The annual State dues are as follows:

		Effective Date	Effective Date
		July 1, 2003	July 1, 2006
Regular	\$158.00	\$168.00	\$246.00
PTF	\$127.00	\$137.00	\$137.00
Rural Subs, RCRs, RCAs	\$81.00	\$81.00	\$81.00
Retired	\$37.00	\$42.00	\$42.00
Associate (Active)	\$158.00	\$168.00	\$246.00
Associate (Retired)	\$37.00	\$42.00	\$42.00

Section 2. Local, State, and National dues, or dues withholding forms 1187 or 1187-R, must accompany application for membership. The amount of National dues per capita shall be added to State dues. The amount of National dues shall be the amount as set forth by the National Rural Carriers' Association.

ARTICLE IX

LOCAL CHARTER

Section 1. The State shall be organized into Local Units which have been duly chartered by the State Association.

Section 2. A local with fifteen or more bona fide members may obtain a charter by remitting a charter fee of \$5.00 and the per capita tax for all members as of the time of application. In conjunction with the application for a charter, the local shall submit a copy of its proposed Constitution and Bylaws to the State Secretary-Treasurer for review.

ARTICLE X

LOCAL CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

Section 1. In compliance with Federal Labor Laws, all Locals must have an approved Constitution and Bylaws, or will be governed by the Uniform Constitution and Bylaws as printed in Appendix A of the National Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 2. All Local Constitutions and Bylaws shall be in harmony with the State and National Constitutions and Bylaws and in compliance with Federal Labor Laws. The Local Association is subordinate to the State Association, and the State Association is subordinate to the National Association.

Section 3. All local constitution and bylaws shall be submitted to the State for review, and subsequent amendments to them shall be submitted to the State for approval.

Section 4. No Local Association shall offer representation to rural carrier craft employees on matters relating to EEO, MSPB, OWCP, or other non-contractual labor-related issues without prior written consent of the National Board.

Section 5. The Local Associations shall maintain fiscal responsibility to ensure that all financial obligations are paid in a timely manner.

ARTICLE XI

CONFLICT WITH FEDERAL OR STATE LAWS

Any provision of this Constitution and Bylaws which conflicts with any Federal or State Law, regulation, or ordinance shall be inoperative as to those jurisdictions in which said Federal or State Law, regulation, or ordinance is in force.

ARTICLE XII

STEWARD SYSTEM

Section 1. The National Agreement provides for a Steward System. The purpose of the Steward System shall be to provide representation to employees in the rural carrier craft in all matters of Labor-Management relations with the U. S. Postal Service. Under the Agreement, the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, as the exclusive organization representing the rural carrier craft, is the only organization to represent rural carriers.

Section 2. A. The State Association, under the direction of the National Executive Board, shall be responsible for the implementation and operation of the Steward System within each State.

B. The State Association shall recommend to the National Association the name of a member of its Organization to serve as State Steward.

C. The State Association, in conjunction with the State Steward, shall recommend to the National Association the name(s) of a member(s) to serve as the Assistant State Steward(s).

D. The State Association, in conjunction with the State Steward, shall recommend to the National Association the name(s) of a member(s) to serve as the Area Steward(s).

Section 3. A. The State Steward shall supervise and administer the Steward System within the state.

B. The State Steward shall be responsible to the State and National Associations for the performance of all duties as defined in Article XII of the State Constitution. The term of office shall be determined by the State Association in accordance with Article XII, Section 8 of the State By-Laws or until termination by the National Association in accordance with Article XV, Section 9 of the National By-Laws.

C. The following duties shall be performed by the State Steward:

1. To certify, on the appropriate National Forms, the Area and Local Stewards, including the names, addresses and telephone numbers, with notification to all postmasters and the National Office;

2. To submit, on the appropriate National Office forms, the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the Assistant State Stewards to the National Office for certification.

3. To train all Assistant, Area, and Local Stewards prior to certification, utilizing training as designed by the National Office;
4. To provide, on an annual basis, enhancement (refresher) training to all stewards;
5. To appeal Step 2 and Step 3 grievances to the appropriate postal designee closely coordinating efforts with the Executive Committeeman of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, and
6. In the event an Area or Local Steward is unavailable, to represent the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, or name a qualified individual to serve temporarily as a Steward.

Section 4. A. The State Association shall select Assistant State Stewards as needed.

B. The Assistant State Stewards shall be responsible to the State Steward and to the State and National Association for the performance of all duties. It shall be the responsibility of the Assistant State Stewards to represent carriers in offices as assigned by the State Steward. The Assistant State Stewards, under the direction of the State Steward, shall serve with the same authority as the State Steward. The Assistant State Stewards may, in the absence of the State Steward and in conjunction with the Executive Committeeman, appeal grievances to the Step 2 and Step 3 levels.

Section 5. A. The State Association shall select Area Stewards as needed.

B. The Area Stewards shall be responsible to the State Steward. An Area Steward that has not been properly certified for an office will have no authority in that office nor will an Area Steward have any authority in any office that currently has a Local Steward. An Area Steward is equal to a Local Steward in authority. An Area Steward will be assigned a geographical area so that every office within said area can be reached in a reasonable time without the local carrier being unduly delayed in representation. Each office is encouraged to have a Local Steward. An Area Steward cannot serve as Area Steward in more than twenty (20) offices.

C. It shall be the responsibility of the Area Steward to write grievance appeals for carriers in Step 2 of the grievance procedure in those offices where no Local Steward has been selected. The Area Steward shall submit copies of grievances to the State Steward.

D. In the event of an adverse decision by the installation head, the Area Steward shall forward the complete file to the State Steward with recommendation for consideration of further appeal.

Section 6. A. The selection of the Local Steward should be in accordance with democratic procedures. To become a steward, a rural carrier must be a member of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association. Mandatory local steward elections will be conducted in the month of January of every fourth year beginning in 2004. The term will be four years and a local steward may be reelected to the position. Written notification to all NRLCA members shall be given at least 15 days before the date for an election. A majority vote of those NRLCA members voting is required for an election. When there is more than one (1) Local Steward at an installation, one (1) shall be selected by the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association members of said office as Chief Steward.

B. An election for Local Steward shall not be held sooner than the four-year mandatory election, unless the position becomes vacant, the incumbent Local Steward retires, or a petition requesting replacement of the Steward is signed by a two-thirds majority of NRLCA members of said office to the State Steward, and upon approval of the State Steward.

C. In the event of a tie vote for a Local Steward, the State Association, upon recommendation of the State Steward, shall select a steward to serve in that office until a new Local Steward has been elected and certified. The same procedure will be used to break a tie for Chief Steward.

D. The Local Steward shall be certified in accordance with policies established by the National Office.

E. At any local negotiations, the Local Steward shall serve as the representative of the rural carrier craft.

F. The Local Steward shall be responsible for representation of the rural carrier craft in the installation, including branches and stations.

G. The Local Steward shall assist any rural craft employee who feels aggrieved. If the employee desires, the Local Steward may accompany the grievant during any discussion with the immediate supervisor.

H. In the event that the grievance was not settled at Step 1, the Local Steward will meet with the installation head or designee as expeditiously as possible to jointly develop the facts in the grievance file and attempt to resolve the grievance.

I. The Local Steward shall write grievance appeals for rural craft employees in Step 2 of the grievance procedure and a copy shall be submitted to the State Steward.

Section 7. Primary responsibility for financing the Steward Program will rest with the State Association.

Section 8. A. Discipline, Removal and Penalties - The Virginia Rural Letter Carriers' Association shall be empowered through proper procedures to disqualify for eligibility to hold office for a specified period of time, suspend or expel a State Steward, Assistant State Steward, Area, or Local Steward for violation of the National Constitution and Bylaws or policies set forth by the State Association.

B. The following violations are considered grounds upon which charges may be filed:

1. Neglect of duty or breach of the National or State Constitution and Bylaws;
2. Engaging in any conduct detrimental to the welfare and interests of the membership of the National or Virginia Rural Letter Carriers' Association;
3. Engaging in acts which tend to hinder the due process of the grievance procedure in the protection of a rural carrier craft employee's rights; and
4. Instigating or engaging in any acts on the side of management that violates the principles of the National Agreement or the National or Virginia Rural Letter Carriers' Association Constitutions and Bylaws.

C. Charges against a State, Assistant State, Area, or Local Steward must be in writing and filed with the President of the VARLCA by a member within thirty (30) days of the time that knowledge of the alleged offense comes to such members. Within ten (10) days of receipt of such appeal, the State President will notify all members of the State Board, and also request that the charging party provide a letter outlining the specific charges and relief sought. This letter of specificity must be returned within twenty (20) days, and upon its receipt the State Board will forward a copy to the charged party for response. The charged party will have twenty (20) days to respond in writing to the State Board. The State Board will review the charging party's letter of specificity and relief sought and the response of the charged party. If the State Board chooses not to or is unable to effect the relief sought, it will then establish an Investigating

Committee which will have full authority to conduct a full, fair, and impartial investigation. One member of the Investigating Committee will be chosen by the charging party, one member will be chosen by the charged party, and the two original members will then choose the third member. All members of this Investigating Committee must be members of the State Association, who do not hold an elected position on the State Board, and excludes Associate members. Within thirty (30) days of their appointment, the Investigating Committee will make a report, jointly, in writing, including the findings and recommendations to the State Board. The State Board is authorized, in consultation with the NRLCA assigned Executive Committee representative, to take the necessary action to resolve the issue within thirty (30) days, unless extensions of time limits are necessary and approved by the State Board with concurrence from the assigned Executive Committee representative. All parties must be notified in writing of such action.

D. Any expense incurred by the investigation shall be born by the State Association.

Section 9. Anyone who regularly serves in a supervisory or management capacity shall not represent any craft employee, during such period of service, in the grievance/arbitration procedure nor for a period of 60 calendar days from the last date such person served in such supervisory or management capacity. Any such person serving in a supervisory or management capacity shall notify any craft employee desiring representation of the proper person to contact for such representation.

ARTICLE XIII

SECTION 1

REPRESENTATION

Subsection 1. Any Local Unit shall be entitled to representation in the State Association by one (1) delegate and one (1) alternate for each four (4) members or major fraction thereof. This representation shall be based on the membership of the previous Association year.

Subsection 2. Each Local Unit shall elect delegates by secret ballot by those present and entitled to vote.

Subsection 3. Each Local Unit shall elect the number of delegates and alternates in accordance with Subsection 1.

Subsection 3A. Alternates will be called on by the Local Unit Secretary due to the inability of one or more delegates to attend. Such alternate or alternates shall have all the rights and privileges accorded delegates.

Subsection 4. The Local Unit Secretary shall certify to the State Secretary a list of delegates and alternates twenty (20) days prior to the beginning of the State Convention.

Subsection 5. Each Chartered State Association shall be entitled to representation in the National Association by one Delegate-at-Large. Each Chartered State Association is also entitled to one delegate for each 100 or major fraction thereof of its own members, based on the current membership year. National delegates will be selected as follows:

A. 1. Nominations for National Delegates within each State Association shall be accomplished by submitting the nominations on a nominating ballot to be published in *The National Rural Letter Carrier* in the first issue of February, March, April and May. Such nominations may include self-nominations. The nominating ballot shall be signed, showing the name and address of the member making the nomination.

2. No member shall be nominated or be a National Delegate who from the time of nomination through the end of the convention holds a position in management (either permanent or temporary) in the Postal Service; in any other postal craft; or any other job which competes with the Postal Service and/or this Association. This policy is defined as follows:

a. When a rural carrier craft member is serving in a managerial or supervisory position such as an OIC or 204B, the member is prohibited from Union participation. The member may not be nominated or serve as a National Delegate.

b. However, there are many instances where a member may be utilized by Postal Management to assist in the rural craft that equally benefit the rural craft and Postal Management. In those instances, where the individual is not in a managerial/supervisory position, the individual will not be prohibited from any Union participation. (Such examples may include, but are not limited to, assisting with route adjustments, mail count, academy trainers, automation team member, safety teams).

c. If a Steward is utilized by the Postal Service in this type of position, the Steward must notify the affected carrier(s) whom to contact in the Steward system for representation in any dispute where the Steward is involved. By doing this, the Steward will avoid any appearance of conflict of interest and will be in compliance with Article XV of the National Bylaws.

3. A retired Associate member, a non-member or a craft member who has been separated involuntarily from the Postal Service cannot be nominated, elected, or seated as a National Delegate.

4. A delegate must be an active or retired carrier in good standing at the time of nomination, election and seating as a National Delegate.

B. Nominations for candidates for National Delegates shall be in the office of the State Secretary at least forty (40) days prior to the opening of the State Convention.

C. It shall be the duty of the State Secretary to prepare a ballot listing the nominees for the position of delegate to the National Convention. The Secretary shall place the names of all nominees in a hat to be drawn for position on the ballot for national delegate, and shall place them on the ballot in the order in which they are drawn, and mail said ballot to all members at least twenty (20) days prior to the opening of the State Convention. The Secretary/Designee shall arrange for the rental of two post office boxes: one post office box for receipt of the ballots and the other for return of undeliverable ballots.

D. An Election Committee shall be appointed by the State President. No member whose name appears on the ballot may serve on the Election Committee. Ballots shall be returned to a post office box accessible only to the Election Committee. At the end of the cut-off period, said ballots shall be collected and counted at the State Convention. Any candidate may observe the ballot tabulation.

E. An envelope marked "Ballot" shall be provided each member in which to seal the ballot for mailing.

F. To permit verification of membership enrollment and to maintain the integrity of the voting procedure, the sealed envelope containing the ballot shall be placed in another envelope by the member and mailed to the designated post office box. The other envelope, also marked "Ballot", shall clearly identify name and address of the member.

G. The number of candidates to be voted upon by each member shall not be more than the total number of delegate votes to which the State Association was entitled the previous year. Appropriate instructions shall be on each ballot stating the number of delegates to be elected and the mailing address of the designated post office box at which it must be received prior to the cut-off date. In reporting the results of

the vote tabulation, the candidates shall be placed on a roster in accordance with the number of votes received. The required number of delegates for the State Association, in accordance with Section 1, Subsection 1, of Article XVI, National Constitution and Bylaws, shall be declared regular delegates and remaining candidates shall be declared alternates.

H. From the elected National delegates, a Delegate-at-Large and other National-Paid Delegates of the State Association may be designated by the State Association.

1. Having been duly elected and placed on the roster of delegates, the President of the State Association shall be declared the Delegate-at-Large. In the event the President is unable to attend the National Convention, The President shall be replaced by the next succeeding State Officer or senior Executive Committee person whose name appears on the roster of regular delegates. The President shall also select from the roster of elected delegates those National paid delegates as authorized by the National Association.

2. The President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, in descending order, if elected as a National Delegate, shall be in charge of the delegation to the National Convention. In the event none of the above are elected as a National Delegate, the Virginia delegation shall select from the delegation a chairman.

I. A State Officer may not be automatically declared a National Delegate by virtue of the office, unless selected to the State Office by direct vote of the membership. If the State Officer is elected by the delegate system, to be a National Delegate, the officer must be a candidate and be elected in a state-wide election.

Subsection 6. Each State Board Member shall be entitled to a vote on every question coming before the State Convention, except election of President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Executive Committee.

Subsection 7. No delegate can be seated from any Local Association that has not paid Local, State and National dues, or given security for same, and only when holding properly signed credentials. The State Secretary-Treasurer will notify each Local Association, at least two weeks prior to the opening date of the State Convention, the status of the Local Association as it relates to the payment of Local, State and National dues for its members.

SECTION 2

QUORUM

Twenty five (25) members representing not less than one third of the Local Associations shall constitute a quorum for transacting business.

SECTION 3

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Subsection 1. The nomination and election of Officers shall take place at each Convention of the State Association. Nominations shall be in order at any time after 10:00 a.m. of the first day of the State Convention and until the time of election.

Subsection 2. The election of Officers shall be by ballot and, in no case, by acclamation, except by unanimous consent; and where there is more than one candidate for the same office, it shall require the majority of all votes cast to elect; and where there are more than two candidates for the same office, after the third ballot, the one receiving the least number of votes in each succeeding ballot shall be dropped until election is had. Write-in votes shall not be considered valid.

SECTION 4

REPORTS

The State Secretary, immediately after the State Convention, shall fill out credentials of Delegate-at-Large and regular delegates to the National Convention in duplicate, the original to be immediately sent to the National Secretary-Treasurer, the duplicate to be retained for identification by the delegate. The Secretary shall, immediately after the closing of the State Convention, prepare all resolutions adopted at said Convention which deal with matters that come within the jurisdiction of the National Convention by listing only one resolution on each sheet of paper, designating whether the resolution is binding or non-binding. The State Secretary shall also submit all Constitution and Bylaws changes considered and adopted by the delegates at the State Convention to the National Secretary-Treasurer.

SECTION 5

MEETINGS

Subsection 1. The State Association shall convene each year between June 1 and June 30. Beginning in year 2003, the delegates shall choose the dates for the Convention, a minimum of three years in advance. The length of the Convention shall be determined by the Executive Board.

Subsection 2. The annual meeting place for the State Convention shall be selected two (2) years in advance as follows: The Convention shall select the location after hearing the report of the Time and Place Committee. If, for any reason, the place so prescribed shall be unsuitable, the Executive Board shall have the authority to change such place by giving notice through the *Virginia Rural Letter Carrier* of the official notice of the annual meeting.

Subsection 3. The State Convention shall consist of its Officers and Delegates from the Local Units. Such Officers and Delegates shall consist of those members eligible as defined in Article III of the VARLCA Constitution, and meeting the requirements as set forth in Article XIII, Subsection 7, of VARLCA Bylaws.

SECTION 6

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The order of business of the annual State Convention shall be determined by the Executive Board, except the reports of the Constitution and Bylaws and the Resolutions shall be the first and second order of business of the State Convention, without interruption, beginning at the opening of the afternoon session of the first day.

SECTION 7

EFFECTIVE DATE

This Constitution and Bylaws shall take effect immediately upon its adoption, unless a later effective date is so stipulated. It may be amended at any State Convention by a two-thirds vote of the voting Delegates of that Convention.

SECTION 8

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Subsection 1. All Committees, unless otherwise provided for, shall be appointed by the President. Said Committees and appointees shall consist only of regular elected delegates.

Subsection 2. A. No less than two full weeks before the State Convention, the President shall appoint from the list of regularly elected delegates then in the hands of the Secretary-Treasurer, a committee of three (3) on Credentials, of three (3) on Finance, of three (3) on Resolutions, of three (3) on Constitution and Bylaws, of three (3) on Time and Place, three (3) on Mileage and Per Diem, three (3) on Outstanding Carrier.

B. The committees on Constitution and Bylaws and on Resolutions shall report to the site of the State Convention one day preceding the opening of the State Convention to discharge their duties at the direction of the State President.

C. Furthermore the President shall direct the Secretary-Treasurer to compensate these committee members for their actual expenses and any loss of pay for any extra days related to their service on the respective committee prior to the convention.

Subsection 3. The Finance Committee shall be a standing committee. They will be appointed for a one, two and three year term, with the chairperson rotating off each year.

A. The Finance Committee shall review the Association's total revenues and expenditures from the past year, and hear suggestions from members of the State Board and/or delegates. The Finance Committee shall evaluate and submit recommendations from said review, concerning but not limited to general expenditures, officers' salaries, benefits and expenses; propose the level of dues for the upcoming year. The Finance Committee shall submit a final report to the delegation with the recommendations to be voted upon. The Finance Committee, if necessary, will have access to the CPA firm employed by the State President, and to all records to effectively perform their duties.

Subsection 4. A. The Time and Place Committee shall be a standing committee. The Time and Place Committee shall be responsible to receive bids on future convention sites and consider bids submitted by a Local Association. The committee will then investigate the bid and inspect the sites to determine their suitability. The committee will, after thorough deliberation, make a report at the next State Convention on prospective convention sites.

Subsection 5. The Elections Committee shall be a standing committee. The Chairman and at least three (3) members shall be appointed for a term of no less than three (3) years. These members will be responsible for the retrieval and tabulation of National delegate ballots at each State Convention, and conforming with applicable Federal Labor Laws. A minimum of an additional seven (7) members will be appointed no less than two full weeks prior to the State Convention.

ARTICLE XIV

PROPERTY

Section 1. All Officers elected and appointed, at the expiration of their terms of office, if removed from office, or if their office is declared vacant, shall deliver to their successor and/or the State Board, all books, records, monies, and other property in their possession belonging to the State Association.

Section 2. If the charter of a Local Association is suspended or revoked, or in the event of the dissolution, disaffiliation or termination of operations of a Local Association, all property, assets, liabilities and funds of the Local Association shall become the property of the State Association. If the Local Association is rechartered and resumes operation, the balance of the aforementioned funds shall revert back to and become the property of the Local Association.

APPENDIX

LOCALS

Local 1 Albermarle, Greene, Nelson

Local 2 Amelia, Powhatan

Local 3 Amherst, Appomattox, Campbell, Lynchburg

Local 4 Augusta, Highland

Local 5 Bedford

Local 8 Fredericksburg

Local 9 Mt. Rogers

Local 10 Charlotte

Local 11 Clinch Valley

Local 12 Five County

Local 13 Dinwiddie, Prince George, Petersburg

Local 14 Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William

Local 15 Fairystone Park

Local 19 Halifax

Local 20 Richmond, Henrico, Chesterfield

Local 21 Colonial Area

Local 22 Mecklenburg

Local 23 New River Valley

Local 27 Piedmont

Local 28 Pittsylvania

Local 29 Roanoke, Craig, Botetourt

Local 30 Rockbridge

Local 31 Rockingham

Local 32 Shenandoah

Local 34 Southampton

Local 35 Southside

Local 36 Sussex, Surry

Local 37 Tazewell

Local 38 Tidewater

Local 39 Tri-County

Local 40 Washington, Scott

Local 41 Accomac, Northhampton

Local 42 Bristol