



The Rock Solid News

LITTLE ROCK FARM *Trucking*

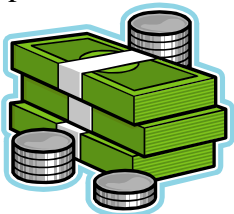


Taxes 'N' Trucking

Legible logs come handy at tax time for truckers. The logs act as personal driver diaries of the year. For those drivers who are driving long haul, they qualify for meal deductions at tax time.

They are allowed to claim \$17.00 / Meal up to 3 times per day. The most you can deduct is \$10.20 (\$17 x 60%) for each meal.

The same goes for Lodging. If you got lodging without authorization from Little Rock, you can personally claim your lodging on your taxes. Save those receipts.



For Canadian meals, you will also receive the GST back. For those traveling in the USA, you will get the money exchange back.

Showers are also deductible, save those receipts and claim those too. It's all about proof and receipts.

March 2008 – The Dreaded Tax Season

Mark's Message - "You Get What You Pay For!"

Tax season...what can I say about taxes that sounds positive and demonstrates a good attitude? Hmm... that's a tough one!

Well let's start with this. Do you like good food from a restaurant with the "ambiance" you enjoy? Do you like a nice dependable vehicle? Do you prefer good quality clothing? What about your hobby?

Every one of these things mentioned cost's money. We spend that money because it gives us what we want. It's not so different with our taxes. We are fortunate to be living in a great province and country. That costs money. We have choices, we can choose to live elsewhere.

Remember that there are lawful methods and provisions to minimize ones' taxes. We all should be making use of those provisions. Make sure whoever completes your annual tax document is fully accredited and trained allowing you to retain as much of your earnings as possible.

When we pay our taxes, what do we get for our money?

- above average health system
- above average government structure
- above average freedom
- above average provincial and federal financial stability
- above average law enforcement
- world renowned education system

Just like shopping we ensure that we receive the most for our hard earned dollars, we must also hold the government accountable as to how they spend our money. That's what elections are for; getting rid of those who aren't spending our money the way we believe they should, and replacing them with those who we believe can do better. But in the end it's still going to cost some money, and as a rule you get what you pay for.
- Mark -

Special Thanks

Theresa, as always, was on the ball to get all of our T4's done in the 2nd week of January. She personally hand wrote each meal form for us. The amount of work is tremendous and she did an excellent job again this year.

Satellite Communications



Our newest trucks have brand new satellite communications keyboards. This keyboard actually talks to you instead of being distracted to read and drive. For some it's taken getting used to, but this new feature will help us to stay safe on the road.

"Little Rock must have a really good accountant in order to itemize the yearly payouts and handwrite all the meal allowance form!" Recently said by Jim Gateman of H&R Block in Hanover.



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The Chicken Coop

In January we began releasing information to better equip our poultry live haul team with data that matters. DOA's (dead on arrivals) are recorded and tracked on each and every load of poultry. Minimizing DOA's promotes our objective in the humane treatment of animals while ensuring profitability. More often than not, poultry drivers drop their trailers at the processing plants, and DOA's aren't known until the day after. We believe providing this important data to drivers will create a more knowledgeable driver assisting us in reaching our goal - **the best live haul transporter in Canada!**



Mark and Michael wrote a spreadsheet to calculate and chart out the DOA statistics for Little Rock and for each Live Haul Driver. Drivers can compare their own DOA averages to Little Rock as a company. Look for **Chicken Statistics** in your mail box on the 1st week of each month.

March is finally here and old man winter is winding down. For our local chicken haulers, this is a great thing, no more hand loading crates in snow storms or sub-zero temperatures. ☺

Stall Graffiti: Full Or Fingers?



Only A Trucker Can Appreciate This Picture!

Ann McGowan – New Live Haul Dispatcher

Little Rock has been growing steadily over the past few years. In the Poultry Live Haul area the demands of scheduling and attention to detail has become too large of a task for one person. Maple Lodge and Sargent Farms are important customers to maintain. It was decided to divide off the work load into two. Ann will now be heading up Sargent Farms dispatching and Teri will handle Maple Lodge. This is a strategic move because both customers are worthy of personalized attention from Little Rock. It is very difficult for one person to handle all the problems from both processing plants at the same time; however, Teri did a super job in keeping it together. There will be challenges ahead for Little Rock to share drivers, information and equipment within two separate dispatching areas. With any changes, problems and ideas will come to the table. Ann is working from the Truckfix location in Milton. While at Truckfix, please be sure to greet and welcome Ann to Little Rock. ☺

Announcements

Isaak Guenther became a father to a baby boy on Feb 17. Baby Joey popped out at 7 lbs, 2oz. Congratulations.

Welcome Back *Tom Uitvlugt*, Tom has returned after an extended illness. We are glad you are back.

Thank you for great comments and questions regarding the Monthly Newsletter. If you have something to share, we would love to hear your thoughts. ☺



Meal Allowances



The Canadian government switched gears in 2007 and finally raising the meal allowance percentage. By 2011, your allowable meal allowances will be 80%. Figuring out meal allowances required us to be a little more careful this year when calculating this year's total.

We have been receiving 50% of all meal allowance directly back on our taxes, but that changed in mid 2007 year for us. Any meals and trips done between Jan 1, 2007 to March 18, 2007 will be 50%. The government raised the allowable percentage to 60% effective March 19th to December 31st 2007.

It went from \$17.00 / Meal x 50% = \$8.50 Tax Free to \$17.00 / Meal x 60% = \$10.20 Tax Free. \$1.70 per meal more tax free with the new change. Doesn't sound like much, but if you calculate that over the remainder 9 months of the year, the savings is substantial.

The change requires us to report how many meals were made prior to March 18th and how many were done after it. We have to watch our dates and calculations.

Your tax preparer should know for Canadian Meals that your final total of meals also has the GST Refund calculated on it too. For the USA Meals, your meals are still calculated at \$17.00 / meal but you get the exchange rate back. Theresa calculated the average rate for 2007 to be 1.075 which equals \$18.28 / meal. Make sure you know what you are entitled to when your tax preparer is working on your claim. You worked hard for this allowance and be sure that you get back all that you are entitled to. Some truckers don't bother to file for the meal allowance but for most of us, there is at least over \$1000 in refunds waiting with our name on it. ☺



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Trucker Tax Incentive - Form T2200

Little Rock provides calling cards to call customers and dispatch. Did you know that if you use your cell phone for company business, you can qualify for a tax expense even as a company driver?

We've all done it where we have picked up our cell phones to call customers for directions and called dispatch to find out what's going on. **Form T2200** is called **Declaration of Conditions of Employment**.



Using your cell phone isn't a tax incentive by Little Rock, but is one for your own personal income tax. Realistically, we all use our cell phones for both private and business phone calls. Simply calculate your yearly expense of your cell phone. Take a look at your calling record and determine the percentage that the phone was used for company business.

For Example say you paid \$1000 for your cell phone over the year. Looking at your records you determine that 50% of your bill was company related. They would take \$1000 x 50% giving you \$500 tax incentive.

It's a tax incentive to be careful of, if you claim 100% of your cell phone to be company business... you better make sure your bills can prove that fact. It's a nice little incentive and it's best to be honest. **Talk to your accountant or income tax preparer when filing your tax.**

Driver Profile

Arnie Crigger is one of the few drivers that have seen Little Rock being built up from an idea to what it has become today. He recalls doubling up in 1980 with Mark on truck trips. Even before his twenty-five years of marriage was ever started with his wife Melita.

Arnie's family life is equally as important as his career. His son, TJ, is home schooled and sometimes tag along on occasional truck trips in order to gain family bonding time. Little Rock is a second family to Arnie because of the years of service and internal friendships he has developed over the years.



Arnie Crigger

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Arnie is the type of person to adapt to changes easily. He has done many types of jobs for Little Rock over the years. Due to economic changes, he has bounced from Local, to Long Haul, to Automotive in order to keep truck'n along. He enjoys the challenges of new places and the adventures of long haul. As long as he has a schedule to work with, his family life can function and he plan for his home time. Over the years paperwork and log book expectations have increased dramatically, **"The paperwork can stress me out!"**

Arnie recalls his scariest moment. **"Once on the way back home from the west in Saskatchewan, another trucker was in front of me a little ways. On the CB cried out, I THINK I JUST RAN OVER SOMEONE! Split seconds later a body lay on the highway directly in front of my path. I swerved and missed them. I had to stop the truck right after because the fear of the very moment was overwhelming. My legs were shaking so badly I couldn't even push the throttle!"**

Thanks for your hard work Arnie!

Arnie's 3 Wishes

1. Arnie would love to see Log Books Banished from being a trucking requirement.
 2. Would love to see a dedicated Left Lane Strictly For Truckers. I could see that being beneficial for all those nasty four wheelers that merge prematurely.
 3. Would love to own his a truck so he can control the usage and cleanliness of his home away from home.
- Nominations Are Open For April's Driver of The Month!**



Ray Pennington's Yuk Yuks



Waitress: "I need a couple days off__ I'm not looking my best."

Manager: "Why do you say that?"

Waitress: "The men are starting to count their change!"

Wifey: "That horrible man is annoying me."

Hubby: "But he's not even looking at you."

Wifey: That's what annoys me!"

Ray has volunteered to be our jokester for the Newsletter. Ray used to write the monthly bulletins for the Legion. Thanks Ray ☺



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Pop Quiz

What is the name of the new form used to look up codes if you need to record vehicle problems on your driving logs?

What is the maximum vehicle weight with a trailer for our reefer and dry van combinations?

What is the smallest tread depth allowed for a trailer wheel?

What is the highest truck number currently in operation with Little Rock? Starts with 11##.

John said drivers are "not popping and checking something" during a pre-trip at the Safety Meeting. What was he talking about?

If Steve McEntee could bust one piece of office equipment, what would it be?

Why does Theresa wear RED on Fridays?

Brian went to college for what medical profession?



John Reuber
"On Call"

Next Month 1% Fuel Challenge



We Are Worth Every Penny

Trucking is a job that I enjoy, but at tax time I appreciated the extra incentives we get from our government. In trying to recruit new truckers, I always boast about the meal allowance as a perk. Receiving 60% of \$17.00 per meal is a fair and a well deserved bonus. After taxes and calculations it works out to \$25.50 tax free per day. *That's almost the equivalent of 100 KM of driving.*

Having legible logs is proof when it comes to meal allowance for income tax. At the end of the year, it's hard to remember where we had been if your writing looks like chicken scratches.

I had someone tell me that I didn't deserve to claim my meals to the amounts that I am allowed. I explained it this way...

"I drive 11 to 13 hours per day. I put up with slow loading times and border harassment. When tired I fight to look for spots to pull over, more often than not, I end up in a grungy truck stop. I have lizards banging on our doors at nights. I am constantly cut off by four wheelers all day long. I am the person between the shipper and receiver, because of that... if there is a disagreement, I am in the middle. My food stops are loaded with more garbage foods of snacking treats than a good selection of affordable - healthy foods. I may not eat the entire daily meal allowance each day, but I know I am worth every penny because of what I go through... and if you don't believe me... just come along for a drive and see my world!"

Yes... I was cranky with this person, but I know what I go through and get upset when someone decides for me that an incentive I am receiving isn't worth it.



Newsletter Ideas Please Share With Michael ☺

Sandy's Safety - Safety Committee

Little Rock recently formed a Safety Committee. The members on the safety committee are **Sandy MacInnis** - Safety, **Ken McDonald** - Driver, **Rich Smith** - Parts Manager and **Steve McEntee** - Highway Dispatcher.

A Safety Committee, or as it is sometimes referred to a "Joint Health and Safety Committee", is a group of employer and employee representatives who work together to identify and recommend solutions to health and safety problems in the workplace.

The purpose of a Safety Committee is to:

1. **Define The Problem.**
2. **Assemble All Necessary Information.**
3. **Consider Possible Solutions.**
4. **Reach An Agreement.**
5. **Present The Recommendation.**
6. **Persons of Authority To Implement Change.**

Little Rock has grown substantially over the past few years. Representatives were chosen from every department. Problems can be addressed from all points of view and can cross departmental boundaries that normally form in medium size companies. With the cooperation of teamwork and objectivity, Little Rock can grow and function as a team. ☺



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Shop Talk

by John Reuber

We should all look after the equipment that feeds our families.

How many times does the truck get blamed when the truck is not at fault?

The engine light is on:	Dumb truck!
The truck is stuck:	Dumb truck!
The truck won't turn over:	Dumb truck!
The truck has a flat:	Dumb truck!
The truck vibrates:	Dumb truck!
The air system is frozen:	Dumb truck!
The brakes are frozen:	Dumb truck!
The reefer won't start:	Dumb truck!
The glad hand hoses are broke:	Dumb truck!

Many of these issues can not be avoided but there are lots of ways for the equipment operator to help avoid them. In the news letters to follow, I plan to address some of these issues and give us the opportunity to cut down on the lost of revenue for both the operator and LRFT.

When these issues occur it is imperative to have input from the operator to help get things up and rolling as quickly as possible. Drivers say *"I'm not a mechanic!"* We have never expected drivers to be mechanics but these same drivers spend more down time then those who are willing to help get things back on the road. Some operators believe that they shouldn't have to carry some simple tools, those people are also the drivers that spend more time than others on the side of the road waiting for someone to rescue them.

Trucks are a mechanical tool that assists us in providing income for our families. If we abuse those tools, they will let us down and create frustrations that are not needed with all of the other things that we have to deal with on the road. The goal is to treat those tools in the best way possible to keep them doing what we need them to do to provide for us.

Mechanical equipment break! They don't heal by themselves! They need to be treated with respect!

Stay tuned to following newsletter for tips on helping equipment help us. If you have questions and we have answers that will be helpful to others please feel free to let me know.

- John -