

# THE ROCK SOLID NEWS

LITTLE ROCK FARM *Trucking*

## APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY FLOWERS



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## Marks Message - Spring Fever

I was raised on a family farm. Often when spring rolled around we would get the "itch" to be outside more, clean out the barn, spread manure, get the fields worked and planted. It was referred to as "Spring Fever".

When I took up trucking those things were replaced with cleaning up whatever truck I was driving at the time. Winter doesn't just effect all the shiny metal on the truck exterior. Often truck floors and carpets and interiors take a real beating over winter.

There's nothing as enjoyable and rewarding as spending some time on a sunny spring day cleaning up your home on wheels. A good interior cleaning includes:

- Strip the truck of any

and all contents, **A B S O L U T E L Y EVERYTHING!** That includes all those little pockets and storage areas. Why? It allows you to clean without obstruction and makes you filter out all the crap you forgot was in there! Only put the stuff you **REALLY NEED** back in after cleaning

- Thoroughly washing the interior (walls, ceilings and pocket areas) with a general cleaning solution
- Shampoo and vacuum the floor, seats and any cloth areas
- Air out the mattress
- Thoroughly clean inside windows
- Spray all leather interior with a protective solution and

wipe it down

- Cleaning dash area (I find Pledge works and smells great for this!)
- Clean and wipe door sills and ledges
- Clean seat bases and areas
- Put cleaned bedding back in truck
- Only put the stuff you **REALLY NEED** back in after cleaning

AND, if you're really ambitious, making your wheels shiny will give you that extra "Pride in your Ride".

You will be so proud of yourself on the next trip out! I guarantee you will have a fresh new outlook on yourself and your job!

**Just try it**

## Straps and Clips

All drivers... this is a reminder to check your straps and clips when hooking onto empty chicken trailers. Several trailers have been found where drivers have not secured these items prior to leaving their location. Don't assume the driver or crew before you has done it already. The fine for this type of error is \$700.00.



## Loose Wheel Found

The mechanic has found one loose wheel on a trailer that was brought back from the customer.

Some lug nuts were very obviously spinning off the bolts.

This is part of the safety circle check, please ensure all wheels are checked more thoroughly.



## Tarp Performance Bonus

April 1st, 2009 is the seasonal end of the tarp performance bonus that is from October 1st to April 1st each year.

This is based on weather temperatures increasing.

It will be reactivated again in October 2009.

## MS WALK A THON

As you know from last year's newsletter, Shelley's daughter has been diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. It has been over a year now and with the help of medication, Melissa is holding her own in this fight. It is an unpredictable disease that can strike any part of the body at any time.

Shelley and her family have picked up the cause by doing a walk for MS every year to help raise much needed research funds. This year the walk is in Toronto on Sunday, April 19th and will be a 10 KM walk. Shelley has a fund-raising form on the front counter here at Little Rock for anybody that would like to support her & the fight to end MS. I know she would really appreciate any help no matter how small.



## CN Tower Climb

**Arnie Crigger** (Automotive Driver) tackled The CN Tower Climb Last April with a time of 18 Minutes and 44 Seconds. Total of 1776 Stairs.

The climb is in support of the 19th Annual WWF-Canada Organization.



Arnie has left his pledge form on the glass counter for those who wish to sponsor his effort.

## PASSPORTS REQUIRED

**June 1st, 2009 is the first day that passports are required in order to cross into the United States.**

**Less than 2 months from now. It is strongly advised not to wait so they can process your application and you have your passport ready for this date.**

## MACROS REQUIRED

Just a reminder that MACROS are required to be sent into the office through each Truck Satellite System when departing a customer.

Just refer to March 2009's newsletter on where to find the macros and which ones to use for your loads.

Some drivers are cutting corners when submitting their macros by leaving information blank. This includes PARS Numbers for border crossings. It's to a driver's benefit to submit the pars number because any office worker can see that number and follow it up to get a border entry number.

## Booking Holidays?

For most employees, summer is the time for holidays. Like any other year, holidays are assigned on a first come first serve basis. For those who wait too long, decisions of holiday schedules are based on driver availability.



## After Hours Service

Effectively immediately the Office Door will be locked during all after hours shifts. From 5pm–7am and weekends.

The after hours team which include Mike, Mike or Mike may be on site during the course of their shifts but have been instructed to keep the door locked and with authorized access to management or dispatchers only.



### For drivers:

- Drivers are to communicate with their regular dispatchers about their load information.
- After hour services are for emergencies and urgent matters that affect the after hours running of Little Rock.

### After Hours Is Not For:

Discussing or Booking Holiday Schedules – Calling in to see what other drivers are scheduled to do – Ignoring regular dispatcher phone calls for dispatching instructions.

If a driver is experiencing problems with their working schedule, job expectations or customer concerns that do not affect the after hours running of Little Rock, please call during the weekday to seek solutions.

## Know Your Load

It's important for a driver's success to know what is attached to their fifth wheel.

Our trailers are labeled with numbers that identify which trailer it is. Our chicken trailers are labeled with crate counts.

When a dispatcher assigns/gives a driver loading instructions, those instructions are to be followed. Not following them creates counting errors and weight issues.

Michael created a sheet with licence plate, and number of crates.

Please follow the assigned directions given.

## THE ROCK SHOP

By: Theresa Cameron

We'd like to send out a big THANK YOU to the guys in our ROCK SHOP, our unsung heroes, our *Wrenches In The Trenches*.

While most departments are experiencing a work slow down with reduced hours, our guys in the shop have been going 200%. They have been down 2 mechanics, with Jeff Widdes away at school studying to be a top notch mechanic and the departure of Dennis, the guys left behind have to do double duty often putting in a 12 hour day.

When business is slow, the guys in the shop have more time with the equipment to take care of the really big stuff that busy times doesn't always allow enough time for. Our guys are getting things ready for us all so that when business gets back to normal, we can all safely and confidently "keep on trucking".

So **THANK YOU** from all of us.

Andrew Widdes, Trevor Mc Alister, Jordan Reuber, Dave Duncan, all the washers and helpers and last but never least Steve Cover

And

**WELCOME**

**BACK**

from

**School**

**Jeff Widdes**

We missed you.



## THE ROCK IS ONLINE

www.lrft.net

Mark has been working extensively on Little Rock's Website. You can find us online at www.lrft.net. It appears to be a simple website but it's far from that.

Mark's concept is seeing how GOOGLE's home page is so simplistic and yet so effective. From that idea, Little Rock's homepage just has our Logo with all the features over top of our logo.

Little Rock has had this website for a number of years but since Mike Showers (Night Administration and Tech Support) has come on board, we have been able to revamp the website to make it more of a useful tool for customers but also drivers.

Little Rock's website tells potential drivers about us and has an online application for them to send us their resumes. It also has sections for customers to learn about Little Rock.

Eventually, there will be a driver login and customer login section that will be extremely helpful for drivers to get information they need.



Little Rock is now on YouTube under the user name of LittleRockFarmTruck. If you enter "Little Rock Farm Trucking" in the search on YouTube, you will see our videos pop up. There are many ideas on the table for video presentations that are available for the world to see.

All this is being done to strengthen our marketing strategies for longevity.

Little Rock has invested in powerful technology over the years which gives us an advantage in customer service. We want to ensure people can find and know who we are and the Internet is the road to future ways of doing business.

## Ray Pennington's Thoughts

- You are not unhappily married unless you think so...
- Seems like good luck happens most often to hard workers...
- It's probably better to be insane with the rest of the world than to be sane alone....



- Say this for death and taxes, when you're done with one you're done with the other...
- When there's no danger in fighting, there's no glory in winning...
- Every family tree has some sap.
- Should a doctor who prescribes a placebo be paid in fake money?
- Don't let your ability to acquire exceed your ability to enjoy...
- Children are a comfort in old age, and they even help you reach it.

## Consequences of Incomplete Paperwork

Incomplete paperwork is a common issue that we can never seem to get on top of.

I worked at a job in an important role and I had messed up the order and improperly shipped the wrong product. The girls in the office were having a common problem with this same issue repeating time and time again. That is until one day the girls decided to stop defending my work practices and blind transferred a call to me from an irate customer who was going to be without his machinery usage for a few days

due to my mistake.

The customer decided that his daily chew down would be me and explain to me with his own voice tone and language on what my error was costing him.

***How do you tell someone that you made an error when the error seems so obviously wrong in hindsight?***

This error cost our company money to rectify and could have cost us the customer. Luckily for me, the business was so specific that we were the only company in Canada who were making a specific kind

of product that the customer needed.

In trucking, there sometimes are no second chances and certainly a lot of companies willing to fight for customers. We cannot afford to cut any corners.

Take for example the required paperwork drivers must take care of on the road. A missing signature can be disputed as saying a company never received a shipment. Missing dates or times can be disputed on work that is based on hourly invoicing.

We are a team who

have specific tasks in front of each of us. Once paperwork is handed into the office, we cannot just ask the receiver to sign for a driver's load. The driver was there and has to ensure they are doing their part of the process.

We realize paperwork is a pain, but it's the same paperwork that keeps us all employed. Please do your part.

Michael

## New Live Haul Shipping Paperwork & Procedures

Little Rock has started a new type of trailer pulling. They are dolly load trailers.

It's a live haul load that is not shipped on a regular basis, it's not a full time job for anyone here at Little Rock.

It requires different paperwork procedures than the typical live haul shipping we have been doing.

More importantly, it requires drivers to be on top of their paperwork with no tolerance for missing signatures or

times. Missing information can directly impact Little Rock's billing procedures and a driver's pay out.

If a driver has been assigned this load, please be sure they understand the importance and critical details that

need to be followed. A procedural guideline document has been published to assist drivers on how to fill out paperwork.

## ACE Set Up Times

While writing this page today, I have received four calls from drivers asking about the ACE set up times. ***There's a simple reason why they would call.***

The Border Crossing on the Itinerary appears to be the set up time for the crossing. Our dispatch program doesn't align that border detail with a driver's ACE. We have to input that information into another section of our dispatching program. All four drivers had proper ACE times because the dispatchers have submitted to ACE information with more realistic times.

There are still some issues. The dispatcher has to guess when the driver will be crossing. Some drivers

like to leave early and sleep at the location prior to loading. Other drivers like to leave at the last possible minute or even late which can cause ACES to be invalid. It's a guessing game in some aspects because it causes problems for drivers who leave later than they should.

To avoid this, talk to your dispatcher about your ACE set up times. We have a 9 hour window before and after our submitted time.



## Foreseeing The Dangers Ahead

Roger Dunning, Live Haul Driver for Little Rock, was at a farm in February 2009. Like any farm, he pulled up to the side of the barn as close as he could to help the chicken catchers load procedure.

It had been snowing for days and it was obvious to Roger that the snow on the roof was starting to slide off before he got there. Instinctively he could foresee the danger



a head when loading the truck as it was very possible the snow and ice would on the roof slide off without warning.

He grabbed his camera to take pictures of the situation just in case it were to slide.

The crew started to load the chickens and he was pulling the tarps over the loaded chicken crates. He felt that if it were to slide, the loaded chicken in exposed crates

would be harmed by the weight of the snow. Live haulers know that snow in crates is a deadly combination.

The snow shifted on the roof causing large chunks to break off and fall directly onto the load. Roger's tarp manipulation paid off and his load was protected. However, the weight of the snow caused some damages to the tractor.

One catcher was directly underneath the hanging snow drift when it broke



off. The weight of it knocked the catcher off his feet and flat onto the top of the crates. He was not injured.

Unfortunately, some damages were incurred during this accident but luckily Roger's had the foresight to take pictures of what the situation was like prior to the accident.

He prevented chicken fatalities by taking steps before the snow fell instead of after.

A job well done Roger!



## Trucker Pride

Spring is in the air, time we naturally want to clean our homes, pick up the garbage in the yard and give our vehicles some special attention.

Take this opportunity to clean out garbage and things out of your truck that you know won't be used or are broken.



Driving a truck is like your home away from home. For many of us, it's our bedrooms, work place and office space. Just like home, we let the dishes pile up and the dust build in corners. It feels so good to take some extra time in a customers dock or while waiting to take care of the small things.

It's embarrassing when other truckers come to sit in our trucks knowing we have garbage piling up on the passenger seat, floor or old



useless paper-work gathering in the crevices and working

spaces of our trucks.

Darlene, Don, and John R were talking about having **TRUCKER PRIDE...** Trucker pride can also exist inside the truck too.

Be mindful that when your truck is serviced that our mechanics and washers get into the trucks to move them around. In some aspects, the mechanics need access to



compartments that require your stuff to be moved around. Keep your Little Rock Truck clean and show your **TRUCKER PRIDE!**

## Odd's & Ends — Michael's Blog

The weekend is just winding down, in less than one hour my shift will be completed. It's been a busy day here at Little Rock, even for a Sunday. The spring time changes went by with only one driver who forgot. I think that's pretty awesome otherwise. Fortunately, the driver communicated his situation and we were able to relay that information to the pick up location. He's still late but no one has been left out of the loop.

### LOST DRIVERS

Working with lost drivers is not something I enjoy doing. I get my lefts and rights mixed up when trying to relay proper directions. Of course, helping out the drivers is top priority but sometimes the communication falls apart. Answers take time to solve as I have to put my regular office administrative duties aside and put on my HELP DESK HAT.

When a driver is lost... the waiting time can feel endless. Drivers could be thinking that I am sitting here scarf'n down some donuts and laughing about their misfortune. Truth be told, I've been lost several times myself while driving truck, it's not fun.



Knowing that I work diligently behind the scenes to help drivers and when I get back to them, they indicate that they have found the farm already. In one driver's situation, I had worked for a 45 minutes getting a hold of the customer, waiting phone calls, and calling dispatchers at home. I satellite the driver and say I am still working on them to "stand by"... I started calling other drivers and accidentally found out that the driver who was lost has been at the proper location for 20 minutes already. That lost driver never once called or satellite'd in to say they were fine. I scrambled longer than I had to and I think that is seriously unfair.

### WE THE PAYROLL TEAM

Communication can sometimes have gaps. Looking after the payroll, there are times when information has not been provided.

It's really not the drivers fault completely. What drivers don't realize is that the payroll processing of envelopes all happens after hours while the rest of the company is at home. Dispatcher conversations about special arrangements or something unusual happening during a trip isn't known to the after hours administrators.

We call it **RED FLAGS**. If we don't see a note to tell us there is something unusual happening or arrangements that were made, *how do we know to look for it to ensure it's handled?*

We never add anything to a pay unless we clarify it first and get a final authorization from the Dispatcher and Operations Manager.

One example is a driver who has taken a cash advance without purchasing fuel. They had to do that in order to pay for a repair. No where did they provide to us that this has happened. We could have waived the fee for this one time situation because the reason is legit. We find ourselves continually saying, they

should have written a note for us to find so we could have checked on it to avoid the error. To us, it's really not our error because there was no red flags to find that indicated there was a special circumstance behind a decision.

Be sure to write down things that are unusual on a piece of paper and leave it in your envelope for the payroll to find.

### WORD OF MOUTH ADVERTISING

Mark has been leading the way for strengthening our business by gaining new contacts and ideas in order to get the word out about Little Rock's services.

Word of mouth advertising is the best form of advertising. Everyone needs to be doing their part whether it be exceptional customer service on behalf of a driver, or even answering the phones internally. Always using professional language and mannerisms. Showing willingness to adapt to new possibilities.

If you have any ideas or even contacts for us to explore, please come forward.

Drivers... keep your ears open for new possibilities whether it be a company who is looking for new carriers or companies that are not very happy with whom they have now. We are always looking for opportunities.

**Did you miss any newsletters? Check out Little Rock's website at [www.lrft.net](http://www.lrft.net) Look under the "Close Up" section and click Newsletters. Archived newsletters are now available for you access anytime via web.**

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