

# THE ROCK SOLID NEWS

LITTLE ROCK FARM *Trucking*

JULY 2009

## Marks Message—When will it end?



### Did You Know?

**We are having a driver's meeting coming up. Date and Time to be announced.**

**This is your opportunity to find out how the company is doing. Updates to procedures, policies and other stuff.**

**This is your chance to hear from the team itself on the direction of Little Rock. This is your company and your opportunity to hear what is happening here at Little Rock for yourself.**

Yes, I'm talking about the economy...I'm talking about what brings clients, suppliers, numerous service providers, drivers, mechanics and office personnel into a relationship with Little Rock Farm Trucking.

#### Business!

It's unprecedented certainly in my lifetime. Within my speech at our annual Christmas Banquet I mentioned it would get worse before it got better, but I really didn't expect it to go this far.

Just to give you some perspective, here is a snapshot of the entire fleet miles for the month of May going back 3 years:

Period	Miles
May 2007	547,865
May 2008	415,401
May 2009	277,494

As you can see we put on about 50% less miles in May of 2009 than we did in May of 2007!

So, what are we doing wrong? Surprisingly ... really nothing. In fact, it's what we're doing right that has kept us alive to date! Not to deny it's a challenge each day, because it is. But we will make it through and in a good position to capitalize on the surge that will happen when the economy comes back...and it will!

I feel particularly bad for our drivers and office staff who have had their income reduced from our lack of work. How I wish it was different.

I am very thankful for the live poultry transportation we have been fortunate enough to secure and maintain over the years. Live haul poultry drivers are as busy as ever and

continue to make above average income compared to general freight drivers. It pays to do the unusual.

What can you do to help? Be patient. Be our "eyes and ears" watching for new business we can explore. Be the best you can be at your job...neat, tidy, polite, courteous. Customers have a choice of who they trust with their valued goods. Are they going to pick the carrier who's drivers smell like its been a month since the last shower and act like their God's gift to the world? I don't think so.

The best shippers with the best loads will use the best carriers who employ the best people!

#### IS THAT US?

# YES WE ARE...

It's been the question on most people's minds this year. Will Little Rock be doing a family picnic this year?

This year will be slightly different including a different month.

Join Us In August For An Evening Of Snacks, Bonfire, and Fellowship.

The date and time are yet to be announced in July.

In the meantime, enjoy your July long weekend.

# LRFT Bonfire

## What Are You?

Why do you work here? What motivates you? Are you a "Me" person or a "We" person?

Are you a "Myself, My Hours, and My Paycheck" kind of person or are you a "We, Us, or Team" person?

Do you see this company as just yourself moving around products or do you realize there is a network of team members which may be office and drivers.

Do you see the company as a group of people who are working together because they respect their co-workers or enjoy the job as a whole?

For those who think it's all about them and only them. Our satellite shows it best with a spider web like network of our drivers moving around North America. It's forever changing... just like this industry.

There's a reason why our ancestors formed tribes and alliances. It's simple, we are a social creature who rely on each other for our successes. When is the last time you were successful on your own?

Remember LRFT is a team of people that make it what it is.

## Safety Policies

LRFT has policies and procedures in place for the protection of the employees. ALL EMPLOYEES.

As stated at the Christmas Banquet by Mark, this year we are getting tougher on the safety protocols. More details to follow about that at the next Driver's meeting.

It's unrealistic to think that bad things happen when we plan it. WRONG... accidents creep up when we least expect it.

We have placed a footwear policy in effect and even stated it in the newsletter not to wear sandals, open heeled shoes or shoes without treads. It's remarkable that some employees are still wearing sandals even though it's against company policy. This is just a small example of a policy that is important for the employee's personal safety.

We have spent a great deal of time considering the safety of our employees. Cross comparing them to what other companies have in place and to what is right. We continue to modified safety procedures for the well being of our staff.

## Customs Docs By Steve M

Daily I receive paperwork from drivers for either me to send to their customs broker or that they have sent their customs broker that is filled out incorrectly or information is missing. Some information is such a mess that no one can decipher what the driver is trying to communicate.

**FIRST OFF, DO NOT write anything on government documents which include Customs Invoice, USDA Certificates, CFIA Certificates, Notice of Intent to Import, Certificate to Export, Certificate of Origin.**

Writing on any Government document will void that document. Always use a fax cover. The fax cover should have all your information that needs to be relayed to the broker.

If you are doing it yourself, we can provide you blank fax covers. Include the Broker Name, Port Of Entry, ETA to the Port, Shippers Name, Receivers Name, Bill Of Lading Number, Truck Information, Trailer Information and Your Contact Phone Number which can include your cell or our office.

When sending PARS to the broker for import into Canada, put the PARS sticker on the customs invoice in BOX 8 ONLY. There is where it says "Transportation Mode and Place". Do not write anything on the invoice.

Send your paperwork as soon as possible. Dispatch needs the proper information to activate an ace. If there are any discrepancies between the ACE and the paperwork by faulty information being relayed, it can cause a driver a lot of grief.

Send ALL paperwork to the broker. The amount of time wasted is usually due to a driver not thinking the broker needs some information that they have chosen not to send. Call the broker after an hour to confirm they have your paperwork and that it is legible.

Some brokers require them to use their own cover sheets. Talk to me about this if you need more information. *Steve McEntee*

## Ray Pennington's Mind Control

- If you wonder there the younger generation is going, don't forget on where it came from.
- It's harder to conceal the feelings you have than to pretend ones you don't.
- One way to be popular is to remember a nice thing somebody said about someone.
- Don't be afraid to go out on a limb; that's often where the fruit is.
- If young women often do marry men like their fathers, no wonder their mothers cry at their weddings.
- Remember that half of conversation is actually listening.
- You only get one chance to make a first impression.
- Someone who keeps repeating a promise probably intends to break it.
- Girls sometimes use old flames to fire up new boyfriends.

## The All New LRFT!

It's now been a month since Mark has been in the bottom office back in Dispatch Central. Mark is directly involved one on one with dispatchers. Many of you have seen Mark before and after your truck runs.

For some of us, Mark working in this office is nothing new, we've seen him there before. With this comes changes in the way we operate. It's no shock that when the owner is working so closely, people change their habits and are more conscientious that the owner could be looking over their shoulders. Why bother to deny it. Drivers too are paying closer attention to this change as well.

With this change comes a new revival. It's a fresh restart. Policies that were overlooked in the past can't be denied when the owner is within ear shot. Some of us have experienced a "Chin Wag" with Mark about our work practices and what is expected. In fact, the entire office received a performance review in June 2009. There is always room for improvements with each of us.

Many of us know where we slack or try to bend the rules. If we are spoken to, it's usually not a surprise but more of a blow to the ego that we have been called on it. Many say, "I've been doing it that way for a long time and no one has said anything until now."

That's the whole point of a revival and rebuilding the spark of LRFT. It's about getting back on track and the redirecting ourselves towards the vision of success.

## Seeking Leads & New Business

Drivers are our front line business. They are the ones who personally meet customers face to face. Our customer's impression of Little Rock is based on the interactions with our drivers. Sound like a new concept? It shouldn't be.

We need our drivers to be "Our Eyes and Ears" according to Mark. We need them to pay attention to who (meaning transport companies) is at the customer's doorstep with them.

A long term contract is just a conversation away, it all starts with initial contact which is then followed through by the office which can provide quotes and terms of service.

Many customers use Load Brokers... these are the people who don't own any trucks but have contacts with many different carriers. They have a specific task of assuring customers have a transport truck ready for them when they ask. It doesn't matter which company is there to pick up the load, it will be picked up... OFF THE DOCK AND OUT OF MIND and on it's way to be delivered.

## Confidentiality & Privacy

Due to the confidential nature of information requests and the Privacy Policies in place, we will **NOT** verify any details over the phone without previous notification from the employee. This includes but is not limited to information concerning whether or not they even work here, for how long, or how much they make.

Employees should know that if they do not tell us in advance from whom we may receive a call, their application/approval may be delayed by the lender.

We will **NOT** call the employee to ask if it is OK to give the information. It is the employees responsibility to communicate their intentions in advance.

We will simply state we are not at liberty to discuss such matters over the phone.

If you are trying to arrange financing and need information from payroll, you should ask the lender/dealer for a business card and fax it to us with **your** signature and date, authorizing payroll to disclose information to that lender/dealer.

**Do NOT expect this to happen in 5 minutes. Please plan ahead accordingly.**

Theresa Cameron

The disadvantage with Load Brokers is that the Load Brokers have to pay themselves and their staff with the shipping rates they achieve. For example, they may tell the customer it will cost \$2000 to ship the load and they may arrange with the carrier to ship it for \$1500. Leaving a \$500 profit dollar behind for their pockets. The money the customer is spending could be more because they are not dealing with a transport carrier directly.

The advantage of LRFT is that we ship and handle the product from start to end. The customer is paying for the shipping without worry of money leakage into the hands of people who don't physically deal with the products first hand. We talk to our drivers and can follow through with our drivers at any given moment. There's not a few phone calls and a phone chain of people in the way between the problem and the solution.

Our services not only get the product to where it needs to be, but also in a direct manner customer service wise.

## We Are Not Mindless Robots by Michael Sellick

I'm a huge supporter of changes that positively reflect on people. The best movies for me are the ones where someone realizes a huge life lesson... trips up over it... then figures out a way to overcome and be even better.

I have recently come across a marketing specialist motivational speaker that is changing the world as I see it. His name is "**Seth Godin**". He's written many books but is also available to watch videos free on [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com) and [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).

Seth has many messages that will blow your mind. He believes it's the people who are unorthodox in their thinking that are the future of the company. It's the people who stand up and think of something totally out of left field. It's those left field ideas which usually causes positive changes to occur.

Schools were changed around the 1930's and it was better to teach children to conform to do as they were told. Society needed this as the industrial age was beginning to materialize. You needed people who were willing to stand on assembly lines for years doing the same task. People not to question or have a voice to speak up to what could be done differently. If they speak up, they could have been fired or disciplined for trying to change what is working.

Times have changed from the boss having to ask a secretary to type out of memo, and wait days for a response even within the same company. The door leading to the office would have signs on it saying no factory workers allowed. A clear division to prevent employees from making their way to the top.

The electronic age is now here and ideas are just click of a mouse. Very unconventional ideas are available to be seen. Suddenly the average person can have the lime light in a very particular market on the internet. You can now be a super star to a select few instead of the mass audience members like it used to be.

Newspaper advertising and mailing advertising doesn't work any more. WHY? Simply, we are over whelmed with information already. It's what everyone else is doing. We had some nice people arrive asking us to put inserts of local phone numbers into our phone books. My immediate response to these people was that we use the internet to look up phone numbers (as I looked over to our dust filled phone books on the shelf).

One quote I love is "**No one forces you to go to a job that you hate, it's a personal choice you make!**" Times have changed where it's more work to try to blend in to be unnoticed than it is to stand up with ideas. It's easier now that times have changed to see the people who are keeping their heads low and out of the line of fire.

Brainstorming is underestimated in the power it gives. The best discussions are when the management and workers combined thoughts. Brainstorming gives people the opportunities to speak up when they have a brilliant idea. It gives a forum where other people can hear it as well and give their feedback instantly. I've seen many conversations where the entire dispatch has felt better about something when Mark has sat in the spare desk to have a round room discussion. Ideas have come to life as a result of these discussions.

Being an unorthodox thinker, you can't always wait for a forum to be opened up. Sometimes you have to set up a meeting or create the opportunity yourself to present your idea. I've had some pretty wacked out ideas but at times it's my raw enthusiasm that drives the point home in order for the idea to spark itself into something greater.

Taking initiative is scary for most people because we have been taught to conform. There are rules to follow and parameters set up for our own well being.

I could go on and on with so many great examples of ideas that

have materialized before my eyes while working with "The Rock". As a driver, it could be as little as giving a note saying the directions are messed up, here's something better! It benefits the next driver and yourself if you ever get dispatched there again. As an office worker, it's listening to your surroundings to sentences like "I WISH there was..." Stop wishing and think of solutions. After all, we are not mindless robots, we are paid to think.

## Freight Damages by Steve McEntee

Whenever you encounter damage on your trailer, it must be documented immediately. As soon as you see problems occurring, grab your camera and take pictures. The key is to try to take pictures before it happens. For example, you see the boxes are crushing but the load bars are holding it up. If you see a tipped over skid, take pictures.

The damages need to be noted on the bills of lading. The pictures and documentation help you in the long term to determine who is at fault. If the load has fallen over, and it was not secured properly, the driver can be at fault. But if it was secured properly and the packaging didn't survive the trip, than it changes the story. Without pictures or documentation, it's the driver's word against the shipper's.

Pictures help tell the story. Maybe the bottom layer of boxes are not stacked properly which causes the entire skid to be unstable. Maybe the fork lift driver placed the skid incorrectly or bumped it.

Once damages are detected, right then is the time to deal with it. You must ask the receiver to take a look at it for themselves. Bring your camera. Be sure to document your conversation right after so it's fresh in your mind. If the receiver doesn't allow you to inspect the damages, get a Little Rock dispatcher on the phone immediately to resolve this matter. **DO NOT PULL AWAY FROM THE DOCK UNTIL THIS IS RESOLVED.**

If you do not notify Little Rock of damages or potential damages at the time of the delivery or pick up we cannot supply our customer with the information. Once a driver leaves the facility we cannot dispute the situation. This can result in a freight claim for the damaged freight. Freight claims are very costly. They can easily exceed several thousands dollars for just a few cases.

We have a few drivers who claim not to know these procedures, even drivers who have been with Little Rock for years. Use common sense, when you see damages occurring, the blame goes to the ones who does not defend themselves properly. Someone is going to have to pay for the damages. Ignorance of not knowing what to do and allowing the situation to happen without saying anything is not a valid excuse neither is saying "I didn't know...!" We have 24 hour dispatching to assist drivers to make the right decisions.

### When Encountering Damages:

- Document Packaging & Situation.
- Take Pictures.
- Contact Dispatch Immediately.