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Less than 10 employees in operations reassigned to Dallas area

By JESSICA CRAWFORD • Daily Leader The rumor mill has hit once again and has National Carriers packing up and moving to Dallas. Not the case, according to National Carriers Claims Manager and Assistant Safety Manager Doug LaFreniere.

The driver operations division, consisting of less than 10 National Carriers employees, has moved to Dallas to cut costs. However, the majority of the company remains alive and well in Liberal.

“We moved our operations people there,” LaFreniere said. “That is equivalent to about eight people. We have no plans to move the company. We are maintaining our presence here and have a claims department, compliance department, safety department and settlements that are staying here.”

Driver orientation became quite an expensive operation, LaFreniere said. With 20 prospective drivers per week, not all would make the cut. Liberal had no bus service to get these particular drivers back home. So, a van would load up two to three times a week and take drivers not meeting qualifications to Amarillo.

“If we had to release a driver out of orientation, we would have to drive them back to Amarillo and that just became pretty expensive after awhile,” he said. “By the time we finished up background checks, they would do their drug screening and physicals, we usually would lose four or five. We average about 20 new drivers a week.”

Bringing prospective drivers to Liberal for a week-long orientation was also a very expensive endeavor, LaFreniere said.

“It became really fiscally impossible to get them back and forth to Liberal since there are no busses,” he said. “We were having to send a van down to Amarillo two or three times a week to pick them up and bring them up here.”

“We have to bring them in for an orientation process which takes a week,” he explained. “It is a lot easier to do this out of Dallas, we have busses and such. We were spending almost \$2,200 per person to get them up here to Liberal. It is a lot cheaper to get them to Dallas.”

The new office in Dallas has made it much easier to allow new drivers to get acquainted with their superiors. With the entire operations division in one location, National Carriers looks to save a substantial amount of money.

“We have purchased a training facility and a new office in Dallas,” he said. “It makes it possible for the new driver to walk over and meet his load planner and his fleet manager. This way he can go over and meet them, it is all packaged in one place.”

National Carriers still has very much to do with Southwest Kansas and will continue to do so, LaFreniere said.

“We run about 120 bullwagons, and all they do is service the Dodge City and Liberal plants. We are staying here.

“We are still here in Liberal,” he concluded. “We still have our shops. It was just the operations people, who are the dispatchers and load planners, so they could be there to meet the orientation classes.”

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