

Route evaluation and adjustment



**Brian
Renfroe**

Let me start this month by thanking all of you who reached out to your members of Congress to encourage them to vote for the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022. Passage of a bill like this has been a long-time legislative goal for NALC. Its passage—with strong bipartisan majorities in both the House of Representatives and the Senate—is the culmination of years of work by NALC members to educate our elected representatives, the media and the public about the need for postal reform. As usual, a job well done by letter carriers.

As I've written in previous editions of *The Postal Record*, we continue working on the task force established by the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Re: City Delivery and Workplace Improvement Task Force. I serve on this task force along with President Rolando, Director of City Delivery Chris Jackson, Special Executive Assistant to the President Tim McKay and Assistant to the President for City Delivery Michelle McQuality.

In the past, I've provided updates on several of the subcommittees established to address issues included in the MOU. NALC officers and staff continue working daily with Postal Service representatives. This month, I am going to focus on our work toward development of a new joint route evaluation and adjustment process.

I've previously written about the efforts to explore and incorporate the technology that is now available in a route-adjustment process, and about our work with USPS executives and staff discussing the possibility of a national joint route adjustment process that would potentially kick off this year. A sincere interest in developing the first national joint process in several years remains strong by both parties at the national level. I remain optimistic that we can reach agreement on a process that builds on our past success in jointly evaluating and adjusting routes.

Recently, we completed testing in a couple of locations. We used the concepts that retain a similar structure and evaluation period as we had used in the past, but we incorporated a significant amount of

technology that is now available. The technology is nothing more than information. This includes details of what each carrier does on every route each day, the locations of scans, parcel deliveries, accountable deliveries, etc.

We were very happy with the results of the testing. The vast amount of information that is now available allows the joint teams to identify and correct any data problems such as clock-ring errors. The teams also are able to identify allied time on the street, such as relay time and parcel or accountable delivery. The results were very clean data that makes it easy to evaluate routes based on the average time a carrier takes to deliver a route daily.

We also are working extensively with the Postal Service to improve the adjustment part of the process. For many years, we have evaluated territory being transferred to or from a route based on a one-day PS Form 3999. Having a manager accompany a carrier for a full day is expensive and, frankly, not an enjoyable experience for the carrier or the manager. That single day may or may not be representative of the normal time it takes to deliver a particular part of the route. It has been the best we could do for a long time, but the information available now through technology provides an opportunity to improve in this area.

We are working toward using the technology to develop something like a PS Form 3999 for adjustment purposes. The idea is to create a file that is based on the average times over the course of a week rather than a single day. This should result in more representative times when we move territory from one to the other. Maybe more importantly, it would eliminate the need for a manager to accompany the carrier on every route when evaluating and adjusting routes. This would result in a cost savings and a more efficient process.

The feedback from the test sites was unanimously positive. The only difference for the carrier during a route evaluation in this concept is the carrier talking to the joint team about his or her route. Otherwise, nothing changes compared to a normal week or weeks.

We will continue to test and work with USPS representatives to improve the technology for route-adjustment purposes and to get to a point where can we expand the process nationally. A modern, efficient route-evaluation and adjustment process will benefit us all.