



## Bad form

**T**he Postal Service made another short-sighted, foolish decision recently. In a letter to President Rolando dated Aug. 26, the Postal Service announced that it was opting out of the Joint Alternative Route Structure Test. This joint test was established in the Memorandum of Understanding Re: Joint Alternative Route Structure (M-01743) that we signed with the USPS back in March (*see next page*).

This project started with the Postal Service notifying us sometime last year that it wanted to test in lower-volume offices a concept it called “Casers and Deliverers.”

Its idea was to have one letter carrier case and pull down three to four routes while other letter carriers come in, get their keys and accountables, then go straight to the street. The USPS believes it can eliminate some office time (especially fixed office time) in the process. It even had a “one size fits all” blueprint all drawn up of how everything would work.

One point the USPS seemed to have forgotten about is

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that it tried this same concept close to 15 years ago under the unilateral “Delivery Redesign” initiative. For those of you who weren’t delivering then or have forgotten, suffice it to say, the results were that the concept didn’t work.

The Delivery Redesign initiative went on for about four years and was the subject of a national dispute. This matter was resolved on March 3, 2006, with the National Level Settlement M-01567.

This settlement is important in that the national parties agreed a “test conducted pursuant to Article 34 does not modify provisions of the National Agreement, including handbooks, manuals and published regulations incorporated through Article 19, beyond the scope of the new work measurement system or work or time standard being tested.”

**Back to the “Casers and Deliverers” blueprint: My view of this plan was that it was a real dud. I hope you’re sitting down, but it wasn’t very well thought out and totally**

ignored all the variables and many of the details that take place at a real post office every day.

Instead of just letting USPS representatives go into offices against our wishes with a plan doomed for failure, President Rolando decided to go in a different direction. I think he made the right decision here. We agreed to test the USPS’ concept while looking at testing other concepts and variables of what it was looking for as well. The rules were simple:

1. The “Casers and Deliverers” blueprint was out.
2. The only offices that would be included in the test were where NALC volunteered to participate.
3. Each plan would be built at the local level with no interference from the district, area or headquarters.

I know this sounds crazy, but we figured that the people in the best position to find better ways to do our work are the people doing the work. With that in mind, we negotiated the criteria for the test (M-01743).

We submitted a total of 36 sites from all over the country for this test. Local NALC representatives were ready and willing to work to develop a test plan. For the most part, the USPS never showed up. Unfortunately, in the few places USPS representatives did show up, they didn’t follow rules No. 1

and No. 3 above.

I want to thank each NALC activist and the letter carriers in each unit for your efforts to try to get this going. I’m sorry for the way things turned out, but I’m not sorry for making the effort. It was the right thing for us to do under the circumstances.

The Postal Service’s decision to opt out of this joint project was its to make. We had the same right. The thing that bothers me is the bad-faith behavior it engaged in after signing this deal with us.

I know this bad-faith display pales in comparison with what it did in the halls of Congress in August, but it serves as another example of where we are right now. I sure hope the Postal Service comes to its senses soon.

**In closing, I just want to say thanks to all of you who participated in the Save America’s Postal Service rallies on Sept. 27. See you at the rap session.** ✉