

Task force and scanner/ cell phone updates



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This follows my task force report last month regarding the Article 8 Equitability Test Agreement (M-01820) that will be conducted beginning Oct. 1 and will last four consecutive quarters (one year) with the understanding that either party can discontinue the test earlier, but only at the end of a quarter.

The 15 NALC national business agents and the seven USPS area vice presidents have each selected a USPS district that will be participating in the test. The task force also agreed to designate a contact person for both parties in each of the 22 districts that will be part of the test.

We are using someone from each NBA office to oversee the test for his or her region while the USPS is using someone in each participating district. The idea is to provide everyone involved in the test a place to

idea sheets that many of you filled out and turned/mailed in to work from. Many of you expressed an interest in being an Article 8 and/or city delivery test site. We may very well be contacting you as we go forward.

We've made the most progress in the area of Article 8. We are within reach of agreement to test two other concepts. The first one is intended to simplify Article 8 rules and reduce/eliminate mandatory overtime on and off assignment. The second is a form of joint administration of overtime.

It remains to be seen if we'll get to final agreement on either concept, but it looks like we may know something one way or another by the time you read this. That's as far as my crystal ball goes for now.

We got into more serious discussions regarding city delivery test concepts and proposals made by each side, but we are not close to any agreements in this area. No more progress was made with respect to developing another joint route adjustment process that I can report on this month. I will continue to update you as things unfold.

On another note, the Postal Service has updated the software in the scanners to fix the problem of letter carriers having to wait to use the scanner while data is transmitted through the cell phone attachment to achieve near real-time scanning for our customers. The Postal Service is continuing its plan to deploy the cell phones around the country as a bridge to the next-generation scanner.

We accepted an invitation to visit a facility in Virginia, where several engineers are looking at different types of scanners for the future. We talked about the possibility of jointly developing a survey of some type to get ideas and suggestions from letter carriers around the country as to what functions you would like to see in a new device. It remains to be seen whether anything will materialize on this.

I think it serves everyone's interests to not just jointly work on developing better scanners, but also to do what we can to reduce or eliminate as many of the problems associated with scanning as possible, such as barcodes that need to be manually input. There is more than one way to use technology. As long as management is interested in using technology to create opportunities for letter carriers to work smarter and provide better service to our customers, we'll help all we can. If not, it will be another story.

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The Contract Talk section this month is dedicated to showing you which USPS districts will be participating, who the NALC contact is for each region, and how to get in touch with him or her. We also reprinted the text of the agreement in case you missed it last month.

Our task force covering Article 8, city delivery and a joint route adjustment process met twice more in June. We are discussing several other possible tests. However, all of the tests presently under discussion will be on a much smaller scale than the overtime equitability test mentioned above. We're talking about jointly selecting some stations around the country for each idea that we agree on.

For our part in this, we have all those NALC Task Force