

Letter carriers testing new scanners

The Postal Service is in the process of developing a next-generation handheld device, commonly called a “scanner.”

Letter carriers in the Diamond Farms Station in Gaithersburg, MD, Lost Lake Station in Minneapolis, and the main office in Plano, TX, recently participated in testing several devices. The test spanned a six-week period, in which the participating letter carriers used a different device each week. At the end of each week, the carriers filled out a survey about each device.

The input collected from the carriers will be used to help the Postal Service decide which device to purchase and deploy at some point in 2014.

“NALC has worked with the Postal Service throughout the process and will continue to do so,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said, “with a goal of selecting the best possible device with capabilities that improve the letter carrier job and provides the highest level of service to postal customers.” **PR**

Reminder:

The February issue of *The Postal Record* will be the special COLCPE edition. There will be no Branch Items, State Summaries or Retiree Reports.

Carrier killed while delivering after dark

On Nov. 23, Tyson Jerome Barnette, a 26-year-old city carrier assistant from Upper Marlboro, MD, was shot and killed while delivering mail in Cheverly, MD, a suburb of Washington, DC.



Police said that at about 7:20 p.m. officers responded to reports of a shooting. When they arrived, they found Barnette suffering from appar-

ent gunshot wounds. He was pronounced dead at the scene. Officials

said detectives are working to identify the suspect or suspects and a motive in this case. Postal officials and police are offering a combined \$125,000 reward for information leading to an arrest in the case.

George T. Maffett Jr., a spokesman for the U.S. Postal Service, said that Barnette had been a letter carrier for six years and had been on this particular route three times in the last month.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with Tyson and his family during this very difficult time,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “The nation’s letter carriers deliver the mail in every community throughout the country. This tragic incident highlights the need in all operational decisions about how and when mail is delivered to give priority consideration to the safety of these dedicated public servants.” **PR**



As part of NALC’s initiative for continuing education for NALC national officers and staff, 15 regional administrative assistants, one from each NALC region, participated in a week-long advanced training course on injury compensation held in early December at the Maritime Institute near Baltimore. The RAAs worked up to 14 hours a day to become proficient with the recently published 6th edition of the *AMA Guide to Impairment Ratings*, as well as reviewing complex case files and preparing and presenting oral arguments before a mock hearing and review officer. The training was conducted by Director of Retired Members Ron Watson, who is also a former director of compensation. Assistant to the President for Workers’ Compensation Kevin Card (see story page 8) and Director of Education Jamie Lumm also contributed to the training.

Customer and employee rights when USPS solicits customers to change to centralized delivery

NALC has become aware of an effort by the Postal Service in various parts of the country to convince customers to agree to change their mode of delivery to cluster box or centralized delivery. As many carriers are receiving questions about this from their patrons and aren't well versed on what to say or have the time to give a complex answer, NALC has created a web page detailing what customers' rights are. They can find the information at nalc.org/deliveryrights.

Additionally, the following information details the rights of both postal customers and letter carriers:

Customer Rights

Sections 631.6 and 631.7 of the *Postal Operations Manual (POM)* govern conversion of mode of mail delivery. A conversion involves changing from one mode of delivery to another. The most common example of this occurs when USPS solicits customers to change from receiving mail at their door to a centralized location where a number of deliveries are made into a cluster box. In such cases, the customers have to go to the cluster box to retrieve their mail.

As letter carriers know, these changes often are pushed without regard for the safety of the customers or the security of the mail. The relevant language from the *POM* is shown below followed by a brief explanation highlighting a few key points.

631.6 Conversion of Mode of Delivery

In this section, conversion refers to changing existing mail delivery to a more economical and efficient mode. The key to converting existing deliveries is identifying those deliveries that

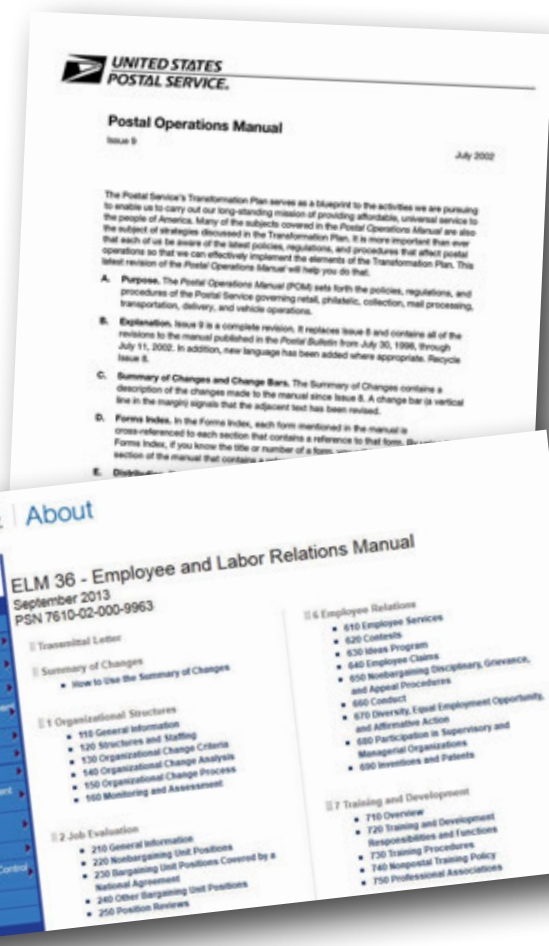
are most costly to the Postal Service. Delivery managers can go into any delivery territory where delivery has been established for over 1 year and solicit to convert the mode of delivery if it would be cost beneficial to the Postal Service.

Postmasters should not establish a mixed delivery area where the carrier must zigzag from the door to the curb when previously the carrier took obvious shortcuts to effect delivery. Postmasters must weigh the advantages and disadvantages of converting less than 100 percent of the deliveries.

Customer signatures must be obtained prior to any conversion. In single-family housing areas (including manufactured housing and mobile homes) where the residences and lots are owned, each owner must agree to the conversion in writing. Owners who do not agree must be allowed to retain their current mode of delivery.

When a residence is sold, the mode of delivery cannot be arbitrarily changed prior to the new resident moving in. The existing mode of delivery must be retained. If an owners' association represents the community, it can direct the mode of delivery for the community. In rental areas, such as apartment complexes and mobile home parks, the owner or manager can approve the conversion.

The language above makes clear that property owners must sign to indicate their agreement with the conversion. If property owners do not sign, they



retain their current mode of delivery. Owners' associations and managers in rental areas also may control the mode of delivery. The final paragraph states that the Postal Service may not arbitrarily change the mode of delivery when a residence is sold.

Employee Rights

Section 667.12 of the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)* provides the following in regard to employees engaging in campaigns for or against changes in mail service:

667.12 Engaging in Campaigns for Changes in Mail Service

Employees in active status must not engage in campaigns for or against changes in mail service. This regulation must not be construed to infringe on the rights to participate in labor organizations. **PR**