

Peak season is upon us



**Christopher
Jackson**

Once again, the heaviest mailing time of the year is upon us. This period, commonly referred to as “peak season,” begins in November and continues through the December holidays. Due in part to the rising parcel volume that has resulted from our customers purchasing more and more goods online and having them delivered to their homes and businesses, the workload in peak season continues to increase. This increase is also a direct result of the exceptional service letter carriers provide their customers each and every day throughout the year. More and more, the American public chooses to use the Postal Service for its shipping needs.

Each week I meet with officials at USPS headquarters, and one topic we always discuss is the number of parcels letter carriers delivered the previous Sunday or holiday. Each Sunday and holiday, letter carriers on average deliver around 3 million Parcel Select packages and, as always, provide their customers with excellent service by giving them an on-time delivery rate in excess of 99.5 percent.

Last year, the Postal Service also began delivering Priority Mail on Sundays and holidays, and this service continues to grow. Letter carriers are currently delivering around 300,000 Priority Mail packages each Sunday and holiday. The delivery of Priority Mail on these non-traditional delivery days is not only very important to our mailers, but also to the Postal Service and its employees.

To put the increase in volume during peak season into perspective, consider this: On Sunday, Nov. 19, 2017, 2.85 million Parcel Select packages were delivered. The following Sunday, letter carriers delivered 4.74 million parcels. The subsequent four Sundays through last year’s peak season produced 5.0 million, 5.1 million, 7.5 million and 5.3 million delivered parcels, respectively, and those are just the delivery volumes for Sundays. The increase in parcels on the traditional delivery days of Monday through Saturday was similar. Throughout this time frame, the service letter carriers provided their customers did not waver. The on-time delivery rate of more than 99 percent remained the same.

Previously, I reported that the Postal Service entered into a partnership with a major retailer to begin same-day parcel delivery in four of the company’s stores in Kennesaw, GA; Deptford, NJ; Gilbert, AZ; and Scottsdale, AZ. These locations were chosen based on estimated volume within the delivery area. Customers who live and work within a 10-mile radius of the four stores are eligible for this ser-

vice, which is provided Monday through Saturday. Customers place orders online and the mail is collected from the stores beginning after 1 p.m. It is then sorted at the delivery units and delivered by letter carriers before 6 p.m. USPS officials tell me that the test is still going well, and hopefully the service will expand to other locations soon. Again, I hope this test proves to be a great success.

Expanded training for new letter carriers

On a different note, I would like to update you on our efforts to provide new letter carriers with the information and skills they need to be successful in their new careers. As you may know, in October 2016, NALC and USPS expanded and improved the Standard Training Program for City Letter Carriers. The program consists of five phases, and relies heavily on experienced city letter carrier instructors and facilitators to provide hands-on training and classroom instruction. The five phases of the program are Orientation, Driver Training, Shadow Day, Carrier Academy and On-the-Job Training.

Based on input from Carrier Academy facilitators as well as from those who have attended the Academy, significant improvements and changes were made to the curriculum. In addition to creating the new Carrier Academy, we entered into an agreement with the Postal Service in the form of a joint letter regarding the Academy. The joint letter, Re: Standard Training Program for City Letter Carriers (M-01879 in NALC’s Materials Reference System), recognizes the importance of providing quality training to new city letter carriers and sets some expectations for implementing and monitoring the new Academy. Using the provisions outlined in this joint letter, my office works with officials at USPS headquarters to address any issues that arise in the various Academies throughout the country.

Additionally, one of the provisions in M-01879 states: “The national parties will review and update the Standard Training Program for City Letter Carriers annually, or more frequently if needed.” My staff and I began meeting with Postal Service officials after the one-year anniversary of the new Academy, and we continue to work jointly to identify ways to further improve the Carrier Academy curriculum. I am happy to say that, through these efforts, the Postal Service is very close to completing and distributing newly updated Academy manuals.

In closing, I would like to take the opportunity to personally thank all letter carriers for your hard work throughout the year providing our customers with great service. The Postal Service’s recent abilities to expand its offerings and increase revenue are a direct result of your tireless efforts. Thank you for a job well done! I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year!