

Consolidated casing update and more



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NALC is closely observing and evaluating several recent USPS initiatives. My staff and I have spent many hours in meetings and visiting test sites. Here are some updates on these initiatives.

USPS unilateral consolidated casing test—On April 24, NALC filed a national-level grievance on this unilateral USPS initiative. As stated in my column in the May *Postal Record*, this initiative will occur in three phases. Phase One of the test began in Annandale, VA, on May 18. On June 5, NALC received notification of Phase Two test sites to be implemented in June. Phase Three will see expansion to the remaining

sites on the list of 240 test sites provided to NALC. USPS anticipates that all sites will be implemented by the end of July.

Annandale is considered by USPS to be the perfect initial test site. Annandale is an FSS-equipped site with low parcel volume, has first stop distribution truck runs, and typically, low letter carrier overtime hours. During the initial weeks of the test, Annandale reported using significantly higher work hours on a daily basis. Allegedly, USPS created routes as eight-hour assignments; however, the majority of Annandale letter carriers are working 10 to 12 hours per day.

USPS states that all office caser/carrier assignments were created based on location. Geographically central routes were designated office caser/carrier assignments and the adjacent routes were made into street carrier assignments. Management used the Carrier Optimal Routing (COR) program to create the assignments. These adjustments were made outside the provisions of Chapters 1 and 2 of the *Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services*.

Prior to the test, Annandale had two vacant routes, which were absorbed during the adjustment process. Because the routes were vacant, no occupied routes were eliminated and no regular carriers removed from their existing assignments. NALC anticipates that this may not be the case in the majority of test sites. NALC representatives should ensure that all vacant assignments are posted for bid in accordance with Article 41 and local memorandum of understanding provisions.

NALC is committed to protecting the contractual rights of city letter carriers. Prior to the test beginning in Annandale, President Rolando appointed NALC representatives from

around the country to observe the initial site and learn as much as they could about the test. These individuals have been observing Phase One of the test and now will be used to assist branches with training, information, resources and, if necessary, grievance handling related to the consolidated casing initiative. The representative designated will assist your branch with local issues that we anticipate may arise, based on our experience in Annandale. For more information on the consolidated casing initiative, please review my column in the May edition of *The Postal Record*.

NALC representatives have observed many violations of the National Agreement during the initial weeks of the pilot. Local NALC representatives are filing grievances regarding these violations.

Mobile Delivery Device (MDD) test—USPS has completed testing of prototypes for the next-generation MDD. Four prototypes have been tested in multiple locations throughout the country. Two models are manufactured by Honeywell, maker of the current MDD, and two models are manufactured by Zebra, maker of the previous Intelligent Mail Device (IMD). USPS will compile carrier feedback and test data and will meet with manufacturers in the coming weeks. USPS anticipates a selection for the next-generation MDD will be made by the end of 2019.

Heating and cooling seat test—USPS continues testing replacement seats with heating and cooling elements for use in long-life and flex-fuel vehicles. USPS is testing a total of eight vehicles equipped with the test seat in six test sites. Letter carriers at the test sites will rotate usage of the equipped vehicles. NALC had begun receiving carrier feedback and testing is expected to continue through November. Once testing is complete, USPS will review test data and feedback for potential use of these seats.

Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV)—USPS has provided four potential suppliers of the NGDV—Karsan, Oshkosh, VT Hackney and Mahindra—with the final statement of work containing required USPS production specifications. Prospective manufacturers will review these specifications and submit production proposals to USPS. Once these proposals are received, USPS will select a supplier and negotiate a contract. USPS's NGDV project is moving forward with an anticipated contract award before the end of 2019. USPS anticipates that 180,000 NGDVs will be produced, with the first production vehicle to be deployed in 2020.

Looking ahead, the remainder of 2019 appears as if it will continue to be eventful for city delivery. Be sure to read my column every month for the latest information and updates on all USPS testing and initiatives.