

# City Delivery updates



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**T**he last few months in City Delivery have been very eventful. Last month's article was dedicated to the Postal Service's new consolidated casing initiative. I want to use this month's article to focus on some other Postal Service initiatives and update you on changes in these projects:

**Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV)**—Four manufacturers—Oshkosh, Mahindra, Karsan and VT Hackney—currently have prototypes under consideration for the NGDV. All testing has been completed on these prototypes and USPS is meeting with the suppliers to finalize the specifications. Article 41.3.L of the National Agreement allows NALC to

examine, and to comment and submit recommendations on, new vehicle specifications. Since 2014, NALC has been closely involved in the NGDV project. NALC has observed and assessed each of the prototypes and provided USPS with recommendations. USPS has stated that the NGDV will be equipped with air conditioning as well as additional safety features, a vast improvement over the current Long Life Vehicle (LLV) and Flex-Fuel Vehicle (FFV). USPS anticipates selecting a manufacturer and awarding a contract for 180,000 vehicles in calendar year 2019. The first NGDVs should be ready approximately 18 months after the contract is awarded.

**Heating/cooling seat test**—USPS notified NALC that it intends to install seats equipped with heating/cooling elements in eight test vehicles, which will be rotated among carriers in six selected test units. This test began on May 1, 2019, and will last about six months. These seats are intended for use in current LLVs and FFVs to improve comfort levels. Letter carriers will be asked to provide feedback regarding the effectiveness of the seats.

**Slide-and-glide shelving**—USPS continues to test slide-and-glide shelving in ProMaster vehicles in Annandale, VA. Five ProMaster vehicles were selected to be equipped with the shelving. Two vehicles have motorized units and three have manual pull shelves. Letter carriers have provided USPS with mixed feedback on the functionality and usefulness of the proposed shelving. USPS will evaluate this feedback when considering whether to expand usage of the shelving.

**Autonomous vehicles (AV)**—In February 2019, USPS notified NALC of its plan to solicit outside companies and indus-

try experts with experience in AV technology for possible use in future mail delivery. USPS believes that it potentially may be able to use AV technology to drive the vehicle while the carrier performs curbside delivery; park the vehicle or follow the carrier during park-and-loop delivery; and return the vehicle to the delivery unit to obtain additional mail or parcels during the course of the work day. This technology may also be used to provide customers with 24/7 parcel delivery using a mobile parcel locker concept.

**Mobile Delivery Device (MDD) prototype testing**—Also in February 2019, USPS performed a cold-weather test of two new prototype devices under consideration for the next generation of the MDD. The prototypes were supplied by Honeywell, maker of the current MDD, and Zebra, maker of the Intelligent Mail Device (IMD). Each supplier provided one prototype for cold-weather testing intended to focus on battery consumption and touchscreen functionality in extreme weather conditions. USPS is conducting a second round of testing that began on May 13. This test includes the two initial models and two additional models, one more from each supplier. The second round of testing will last about one month in selected units throughout the country. During this second testing phase, letter carriers again will be asked to complete evaluation questionnaires. This carrier feedback will be an important factor in the decision-making process for the next generation MDD.

**BoxLock**—USPS has introduced a new service called BoxLock to improve customer service and provide more efficient, secure package delivery. BoxLock is a customer-purchased lock with barcode-scanning capabilities that allows letter carriers and other delivery personnel to place packages in a locked storage container provided by the customer. The BoxLock will scan the package's shipping barcode and release to allow access to the box. Once the carrier places the package inside the container, the lock will send a mobile notification to the customer indicating successful delivery of the item. Only packages with an "out for delivery" scan on the day of delivery will be able to open the locked container. USPS hopes this service will provide customers with an added level of protection from parcel theft.

**These are just some of the proposals USPS has communicated to NALC.** New and improved technology, while inevitable, may be daunting for letter carriers. I will provide more information on these and other USPS initiatives as it becomes available.