

## USPS testing update



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**D**uring recent months, USPS has notified NALC about several new initiatives and proposed tests for city carriers. Many of these initiatives were intended to be conducted during February and March; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they have been postponed. As of the date of this writing, some of these are still on hold, but I want to use this month's article to describe the new initiatives that I believe will be forthcoming.

In a letter dated April 19, 2019, NALC was notified of USPS intent, pursuant to Article 34 of the National Agreement, to collect data related to city carrier office activities. USPS intends to use this data

for potential development of standard work methods for carrier office duties. Subsequently, on March 3, 2020, USPS provided written notification that a contract had been awarded for the data collection and analysis, as well as a list of 36 randomly selected test sites. The contractor will collect information related to office duties performed on approximately 400 regular routes within the identified offices. The contractors will visit test sites Monday through Saturday to observe both morning and afternoon office activities for several routes in the unit each day. On March 18, NALC was advised the Postal Service is temporarily postponing this time study until further notice due to the spread of COVID-19. NALC will be monitoring this proposed test process very closely and I will provide the membership with regular updates.

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On Feb. 6, NALC received notification from USPS about a new program titled Alternate Delivery and Access Point, intended to enhance the customer experience by making it more convenient for customers to send and receive packages. This program allows customers mailing packages through the Postal Service to pick up and drop off packages at a participating retail store location. The Alternate Delivery option allows customers to use participating stores as a destination address when ordering items for delivery. Carriers

will deliver the package to the retail location as addressed and scan the package as delivered. The retail outlet will hold the package in a secure location for the customer to pick up. Using Access Point, customers can drop off USPS pre-paid packages at a participating retail location for mailing. Carriers collect the pre-paid packages during the regular route, scan them as accepted and enter them into the mail stream. USPS states that participating stores will not sell any competitive postal products or services. The program began in late February in all nationwide Staples locations, as well as select Target locations in Des Moines, IA.

On Feb. 12, the Postal Service advised NALC about a new USPS pilot program that would be offered to select Informed Delivery users. The program, which is titled Mail Delivery Notifications, will send users who have opted into the feature an email alert when their mail has been delivered to their home address or P.O. box. Using existing technology from intelligent mail devices (IMDs) and mobile data devices (MDDs), emails will be sent to pilot participants once data is received, indicating home mail delivery when a carrier leaves a ZIP+4 Code location or that P.O. box mail has been made available. USPS states that the mail delivery notification emails do not provide an assurance that a specific mail piece, visible in a user's Informed Delivery daily digest email or dashboard, has been delivered.

In a letter received Feb. 18, NALC was informed that USPS intends to test a new method of addressing marketing mail through a project called Informed Address. During the test, select marketing mail pieces will be addressed with a unique coding system and sorted with DPS mail. The uniquely coded mail pieces will be delivered by city letter carriers in offices throughout Northern Virginia, which are serviced by the Merrifield, VA Processing and Distribution Center.

A correspondence received on Feb. 26 notified NALC of USPS intent to conduct an operational test called Local Area of Commerce Same Day Delivery (SDD), in which city carriers will be alerted using a mobile application to provide package pickup and same-day delivery service. During the test, carriers will be required to use a hand-held test device (separate from the MDD) equipped with Store2Door routing technology. The Store2Door technology will develop the most efficient routes by selecting the optimal carrier, time and route to pick up and deliver these packages. City carriers may be required to deviate from their standard delivery route, as indicated by the SDD Store2Door mobile application, to pick up packages from participating retail locations and either hand off the packages to another carrier or deliver the packages.

USPS routinely conducts various tests throughout the country. I will update you on these and other new tests as more information becomes available.