Spring updates

Christopher Jackson

Over the years, the Postal Service has introduced new vehicles, equipment and technologies for use in city delivery initiatives. As the director of city delivery, I communicate regularly with USPS regarding these projects and often get to observe these equipment advances and new technologies firsthand. I want to use this month's article to provide an update on a few of these initiatives.

NGDVs

As I am sure many of you are aware, on Feb. 23, NALC received notice that USPS had awarded a 10-year contract to Oshkosh Defense to manufacture the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV). NALC and city carriers have been involved in providing input and feedback on the NGDV since the beginning of the program in 2014.

Under the initial contract, Oshkosh will finalize the production design of the NGDV—a purpose-built, right-hand drive vehicle for mail and package delivery. The NGDVs will include fuel-efficient gasoline engines or gasoline-electric hybrid powertrains, air conditioning, 360-degree cameras and significantly improved safety features. The vehicles will also have increased cargo capacity to better accommodate higher parcel volumes.

The purpose of the NGDV is to replace the aging fleet of Long Life Vehicles (LLVs) and to expand the current delivery fleet. The Postal Service anticipates that Oshkosh will produce between 50,000 and 165,000 vehicles under the initial contract. Based on the anticipated 18-month timeline communicated to NALC, the first NGDVs will be deployed before the end of 2023. To bridge the gap between today and the deployment of the NGDV, the Postal Service has acquired commercial off-the-shelf vehicles, such as the right-hand drive Mercedes Metris and the Dodge ProMaster, to supplement the delivery fleet. For more information on the NGDV and NALC's involvement in the development and selection process, visit the NALC website's "News and Updates" section.

MDD-TR

In August of 2020, the Postal Service began deploying the new Mobile Delivery Device – Technology Refresh (MDD-TR) to replace the current MDD in various locations nationwide. On Feb. 26, USPS provided me with an updated list of the remaining offices where the MDD-TR will be deployed. Approximately 1,000 offices that employ city letter carriers are scheduled to receive the new scanner by the end of May 2021. For more information on the new MDD-TR devices, see my article in the December 2019 edition of *The Postal Record*.

"The NGDVs will include fuel-efficient gas engines or gas-electric hybrid powertrains, air conditioning, 360-degree cameras and significantly improved safety features."

Virtual MSPs

On Feb. 10, the Postal Service advised me of implementation of the new virtual managed service points (VMSPs) on city delivery routes. USPS indicates that VMSPs will provide near real-time data of identified locations, with the ability to observe when the locations have been serviced and include documented time stamps. On the day of implementation, the current MSPs listed in the Delivery Operations Information System (DOIS) program migrated to the DMS platform and became the initial VMSPs. Time and location breadcrumb data of these VMSPs will be recorded automatically by the MDD/MDD-TR when the carrier comes within 30 feet of the mapped geofence coordinates for the delivery point. The Postal Service is currently developing a stand-up talk for carriers describing the VMSP program. Letter carriers should alert management of any issues with the current MSP locations/labels to prevent any interim discrepancies between the traditional MSP program and the VMSPs.

The 2019 USPS-NALC National Agreement contains a memorandum of understanding that provides for the termination of the traditional barcode-scanning managed service point (MSP) program. The current manual city delivery process of requesting, printing and physical scanning of street barcodes will cease within 60 days of ratification of the 2019 National Agreement. Since the VMSP information is automatically recorded by the MDD, there will no longer be any need for carriers to scan the traditional MSP barcodes once the traditional MSP program

(continued on next page)

Spring updates (continued)

has ended. In the interim, city carriers will continue to scan the current MSPs as part of their normal duties.

Smart Lockers

In my December 2020 article, I informed the membership of a partnership between the Postal Service and Smarte Carte to pilot test the usage of USPS Smart Lockers in 10 Northern Virginia locations. USPS hopes to use the Smart Lockers to enhance the customer package delivery experience by providing increased visibility, 24-hour access and reduced failed first delivery attempts.

Testing of the Smart Lockers began in Annandale, VA, in December and to date, five of the 10 locations have begun using these lockers. For more detailed information on Smart Locker usage and the test process, refer to my article from December.

A bank of Smart Lockers in Vienna, VA, is shown. Testing of the Smart Locker program began in December of 2020.

"USPS hopes to use the Smart Locker to enhance the customer package delivery experience by providing increased visibility, 24-hour access and reduced failed first delivery attempts."

SDUS

In February of 2018, USPS began testing a smaller version of the automated delivery unit sorter (ADUS) machine, ultimately named the small delivery unit sorter (SDUS) in Centreville, VA. USPS stated that the SDUS machine was designed to support the processing of large volumes of packages received in small to medium-sized delivery units. The SDUS is capable of sorting 2,250 packages an hour to carrier routes and/or segments within a carrier route. In July of 2020, the Postal Service provided me with notification of a contract with the supplier for acquisition and deployment of an additional 100 SDUS machines. Included with the notification was an anticipated list of sites that would receive the SDUS.

On Feb. 12, I received an updated list of the delivery units where USPS intends to install the SDUS. To date, there is only one SDUS machine in use for city delivery, in York, PA. City carriers are reminded that usage of the SDUS for parcel sortation does not change any handbook provisions related to the handling of small parcels and rolls (SPRs) and parcels.

These are just a few of the recent USPS initiatives related to city delivery. Be sure to visit nalc.org, the NALC Member App and our social media outlets for all of the latest news and updates.