

## New initiatives



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**A**s the director of city delivery, I receive many communications from the Postal Service regarding new city delivery test initiatives, potential technology changes, and changes to mail processing and distribution. During June and July, I received notifications of several new city delivery tests, parcel processing facilities and technology enhancements initiated by the Postal Service. I would like to use this month's article to describe these new initiatives.

### Digital access—parcel lockers

**In a letter dated June 8, USPS announced that it would be partnering with Atmos Digital Incorporated to test secure but unattended mail receptacles for parcel delivery.** USPS hopes to use these receptacles to provide an efficient and secure alternate package delivery method for customers. The Atmos systems have a single-unit system and a multi-unit array system that use three locker access modes. Carriers can access lockers via the last four digits of the USPS tracking number, by using a Bluetooth connection pilot supplied device or by accessing the locker via a QR barcode pre-affixed by the shipper. The test began June 28 and is expected to last approximately six months at seven selected addresses in Ogden, UT.

### Sunday parcels—loading test

**In April, the Postal Service began a pilot test using non-career employees to load Sunday Amazon parcels into delivery vehicles prior to the assigned delivery carrier reporting for work.** During the test, city carrier assistants (CCAs) and/or rural carrier associates (RCAs) are assigned to load parcels for four separate routes. The CCA/RCA reports to the office, clocks onto the appropriate street operation and then retrieves parcels for the first route. The carrier loads the parcels into the first vehicle in order of delivery using either the MDD Load Truck feature or Dynamic Delivery sequence numbers. The loading carrier then repeats the same process for the second, third and fourth routes. This test is being conducted at 81 test site locations within the WestPac area.

### Package Support Annexes

**Another letter, dated June 15, informed me that the Postal Service intends to acquire 46 Package Support Annexes (PSAs) in key locations to assist existing facilities with the processing of parcels.** USPS anticipates that these PSAs will be leased for a minimum of two years and will operate on a year-

round basis beginning in August. The Postal Service plans to deploy modified versions of the Small Delivery Unit Sorters (SDUS), known as the Single Induction Package Sorter (SIPS), to 42 PSAs and nine mail-processing facilities throughout the country. The SIPS, in contrast to the SDUS, will be affixed with an optical character recognition (OCR) unit, allowing it to read the text of addresses as opposed to only barcodes. For more information on the SDUS, read my article in the April edition of *The Postal Record*.

### MDD/MDD-TR enhancements

**In late June, the Postal Service advised me of the release of Mobile Delivery Device (MDD) software update Version 7.35 to enhance device functionality.** Release 7.35 provides a new feature that alerts the carrier when the Inspection Service has placed a hold on a suspicious parcel. During the Load Truck process, the carrier will receive an alert prompting them to intercept the package and return it to the supervisor. If the package is not intercepted during the Load Truck process, Package Look Ahead will highlight the package in red and prompt the carrier not to deliver the parcel and return the item to the office.

Version 7.35 also includes multiple features being tested for future use, including Timecard Tracking, DPS Optimization/Edit Book and Customer Connect Lead Card Enhancement. At this time, these features still are being tested in limited areas and have not been deployed nationwide.

Of particular interest to city carriers is the future Timecard Tracking test. In my article in May, I informed you that the Postal Service was looking for a timekeeping alternative to the Electronic Badge Readers (EBRs). The EBRs are more than 25 years old and failing, and some replacement parts are no longer available.

In this test, the MDD application is modified to accept clock ring time entries that can be posted in the Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS) application. Once initiated in the test sites, city carriers will access the timekeeping workflow via the On Street menu or by hot key combination "Red" + "K" on MDDs or "hamburger" menu on the MDD-TRs. Carriers must scan their identification badge prior to recording the time entries. During the test, five types of clock rings are available for carriers to use: "Begin Tour," "Out for Lunch," "Return from Lunch," "Move" and "End Tour." USPS indicates that once the "Depart to Route" scan is performed, the MDD will automatically suppress "Out for Lunch" and "Return from Lunch." USPS states that if the carrier makes a clock ring "Move" entry, the scanner will provide a list of operations and prompt the carrier to choose the proper operation.

NALC will be monitoring this test closely to ensure that usage of the MDD to make time entries is compliant with all contractual and handbook provisions.

**As with all technology, updates can occur rapidly; be sure to read my article each month for the most up-to-date information.**