

More City Delivery and Workplace Improvement Task Force updates



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As I've written in previous editions of this magazine, we continue working on the task force established by the Memorandum of Understanding Re: City Delivery and Workplace Improvement Task Force. I serve on this task force with President Rolando, Director of City Delivery Christopher Jackson, Special Executive Assistant to the President Tim McKay and Assistant to the President for City Delivery Michelle McQuality.

In the September *Postal Record*, I provided an update on several of the subcommittees established to address issues included in the MOU. NALC officers and staff have been working with Postal Service

representatives on a daily basis. Recently, a good portion of the work of these subcommittees has focused on preparations for our peak season. Below are further updates on those topics I covered in September.

Efficiency and use of space

One of our biggest challenges during the 2020 peak season, and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic in some locations, has been space in postal facilities to create the necessary capacity for processing and preparing parcels for delivery. Obviously, some of the space issues are prevalent in mail-processing facilities. The Postal Service has undertaken several initiatives to remedy this issue. One of those is the removal of some Flats Sequencing System (FSS) machines and using the space for automated parcel-sorting machines. This has resulted in a number of delivery units and ZIP codes no longer receiving FSS mail.

This space crunch has also affected delivery units. The Postal Service is in the process of deploying smaller parcel-sorting machines that sort parcels by route at the delivery unit level. This subcommittee worked on ideas, and we came to agreement on a pilot test for peak season that is designed to create space using a two-in-one casing method. The pilot approaches the two-in-one method much differently than previous versions of this concept. The parties jointly identify routes that will use the concept and it is jointly implemented. One of the main benefits to letter carriers is that half of those involved in the pilot have earlier start times than prior to the pilot.

We will evaluate the pilot through peak season and determine if and where it may be beneficial to use in the future.

Staffing and scheduling

One of our biggest challenges both outside and during peak season is maintaining appropriate staffing levels in some locations. This subcommittee has continued to do deep dives into the staffing issues in a number of installations. One of the most widespread issues we see is difficulty hiring an appropriate number of city carriers.

There are several locations in Colorado and California where we have reached agreement in the past few years to hire and employ an all-career workforce in installations that have experienced this hiring difficulty. It has been successful in those locations. I am hopeful that by the time you are reading this edition of *The Postal Record*, we have an agreement with USPS to apply the same or a similar concept to other installations around the country that are having difficulty hiring. Appropriate staffing is crucial for letter carriers and the service we provide. The success or failure of the Postal Service during peak season and beyond could depend on it.

Route evaluation and adjustment

In September, I wrote about the efforts to explore and incorporate the technology that is now available in a route adjustment process. That work continues, and progress is being made. Additionally, we are now spending a significant amount of time with USPS executives and staff discussing the possibility of a national joint route adjustment process that would potentially kick off in the spring of 2022.

Both parties at the national level have shown a sincere interest in developing the first national joint process in several years. I am encouraged by our discussions and am optimistic that we can reach agreement on a process that builds on our past success in jointly evaluating and adjusting routes.

Mentorship and the new letter carrier experience

These two pilots are both going well and have expanded to multiple other locations since my report in September. There is a lot of promise shown and progress made toward improving the learning experience for newly hired letter carriers. If you would like to read about the details of these two pilot programs, please visit the NALC website at nalc.org and read M-01949 and M-01961 in the Materials Reference System, which is located under the "Workplace Resources" tab.

Please check future editions of *The Postal Record* and the NALC website for further updates.