

Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process



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Shortly before this issue of *The Postal Record* went to press, we reached an agreement with USPS on a new joint route adjustment process for 2022 and 2023. The process is called the Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process (TIAREAP) – 2022-2023. You can read the documents in the Materials Reference System (MRS) on our website at nalc.org/mrs. The memorandum of understanding has been assigned MRS number M-01982, and the jointly developed document that explains the process has been assigned MRS number M-01983.

There will be much more information on the process coming soon. The space I have here is not nearly enough to describe all aspects of the process, but I want to give some insight into what has taken place to lead to this agreement.

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Upon ratification of the 2019 collective-bargaining agreement last March, we began exploring a joint process using the technology that was available. We have more information than ever before, such as the location of parcel and accountable deliveries, scan information, GPS data, etc. We assigned joint teams of veterans of route-adjustment processes to explore this technology. Over time, we were able to adapt a program called Digital Street Review (DSR) for use in a joint route adjustment process.

We tested concepts in a few locations. The feedback was positive from both the teams doing the evaluations and adjustments as well as the carriers in those locations. We were eventually able to reach agreement on this new process.

There are some important points to understand about this new process. While the technology provides the joint teams with more information than ever before about each route, the evaluation and adjustment are based on what the letter carrier actually did and his or her input on the route. There are no projections involved. Certain events are flagged for the team to review, but it is completely up to the team using the information they have and the carrier’s input to make all decisions about each route.

Second, the new tools we have available will allow the teams to identify and eliminate any data errors or other issues that may affect the actual average time for the route in the evaluation period. The process combines this increased information with more interaction and input with the carriers. Clean data and ample input from each carrier made evolutions of routes straightforward and evident in our test sites.

Another area of improvement is in the adjustment process. In past adjustments, managers would accompany carriers on the route to create a PS Form 3999 that was used to determine the value of territory transferred from one route to the other. The DSR program allows the teams to choose a representative day and generate a PS Form 3999. There is a process that involves the carrier’s input and the teams’ review to ensure that the file is representative and the data is clean. In most cases, this eliminates the need for managers to go with a carrier on the street for route-adjustment purposes. This new process was very popular with both carriers and managers in the test sites.

We are in the process of setting up training on the process and will begin selecting zones to be evaluated and adjusted in July. We look forward to a productive process over the next two years.

I want to offer my congratulations to former Vice President Lew Drass. Lew stepped down as vice president a few weeks ago. As a young second-generation letter carrier, I had an interest in getting involved in the union. I met then-Region 8 National Business Agent Lew Drass when I attended my first state convention in Mississippi. That day changed my life. Lew raised me in NALC, gave me opportunities to help letter carriers, and made sure that I learned through each and every one. It has been my pleasure to have learned from Lew and worked with him for many years, and to have developed a close friendship that will last forever. I am eternally grateful for what Lew has given to our union, to letter carriers and to me personally.

I am also very excited to have my friend and brother James Henry serving as the new vice president. James is a perfect fit for the duties of that position. He is off and running and will do an outstanding job for our members.