

City delivery updates



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In my May article for *The Postal Record*, I discussed updates on a few initiatives from the Postal Service. Now that we are into the fall season, I think it's important to share more updates on topics we have encountered in city delivery since the spring.

Sunday hub expansion

In May, USPS advised me of its intent to expand Sunday hub delivery operations by 2,393 additional ZIP codes nationwide. Initially, the first three phases of the expansion were going to include 784 ZIP codes that would align with existing hubs across the country. However, in August USPS reduced this number to 528 ZIP codes,

which were implemented in July. The remaining ZIP codes will begin providing delivery service in the fourth phase as soon as hubs and ZIP codes are decoupled for the 2022 peak season.

Flat Sequencing System (FSS)

In July, I informed the membership of the Postal Service's intent to discontinue the use of the Flat Sequencing System (FSS) in various locations across the country. In another letter from USPS, NALC was notified FSS would be discontinued at an additional 321 facilities. For more information on the discontinuation of FSS, read my article in the July 2021 *Postal Record*.

Nimbio pilot program

Over the summer, USPS introduced Nimbio, a pilot program that USPS hopes will facilitate secure, first-attempt parcel delivery using an alternate method of accessing locked delivery points. Nimbio provides access to buzzer buildings and gated communities utilizing secure, patented, innovative software and hardware technology that allows letter carriers to access locked facilities directly with their Mobile Delivery Device (MDD).

Upon approaching a Nimbio enabled building, the MDD will display a message asking the carrier if he or she wishes to unlock access to the location. If the carrier selects yes, the Nimbio unit will allow entry to the secure facility/delivery point. USPS says that the response time from MDD open request to open is nearly instant. Time to entry with the Nimbio solution is significantly faster than when using a key keeper, duplicate keys or arrow keys to gain entry.

Preliminary testing began in April in New York City with additional testing planned through 2023. In June, USPS expanded testing to include parcel post routes. Nimbio plans to have

1,000 installations in New York City by December and a total of 8,000 locations installed in New York City by the end of 2023.

USPS says that Nimbio's system provides an extra layer of security against thieves looking to access community mailboxes and packages, and it hopes that the technology will result in an efficient, safe, secure entry by the carrier every time.

eBike testing

In continued efforts to determine whether eBikes are a viable option for use in city delivery, USPS sent notification of a renewed partnership with Coaster Cycles to test two Freighter eBikes on walkout routes at the Fredericksburg, VA Post Office. The testing of the eBikes began on Aug. 13, and will continue for a three-month period.

Electric delivery vehicle testing

USPS sent notification of its plans to conduct two pilot tests of all-electric delivery vehicles. USPS states that the purpose of the tests is to evaluate the performance and maneuverability of the vehicles when used in Postal Service operations. During the tests, both vehicles, the BrightDrop EV600 and the Ford E-Transit, will be operated by employees who normally operate the Promaster vans, 2-ton vehicles, Flex Fuel Vehicles (FFVs) and/or Long Life Vehicles (LLVs).

Testing on the BrightDrop EV600 began Oct. 10 and is expected to be ongoing through Nov. 10 at the Falls Church Post Office in Fairfax, VA. Testing on the Ford E-Transit began Sept. 27 and is anticipated to continue through Nov. 18 at the Vienna Post Office in Vienna, VA.

Small Delivery Unit Sorter (SDUS)

In my January article, I explained that USPS had resumed deployment of Small Delivery Unit Sorters (SDUS) throughout the country. The SDUS is capable of sorting 2,250 packages an hour to carrier routes and/or segments within a carrier route. In September, USPS provided me with an additional list of 34 SDUS machines scheduled for installation through Nov. 5.

USPS also advised that additional SDUS machines are tentatively scheduled to be installed in January and February 2023, and that it would provide specific locations and installation dates once they are finalized. For more information on the SDUS, read my article in the April 2021 edition of *The Postal Record*.

The Postal Service frequently initiates programs and updates technology for potential use in city delivery. I will continue to update the membership on any effects these actions may have on city carriers and will provide more information as it becomes available. Be sure to read my article each month and visit nalc.org for all of the latest updates.