

Morgan Olson vehicle pilot



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As I have stated in previous articles, the Postal Service must continue the work of replacing older model vehicles used by letter carriers. One step in the process of replacing older vehicle models is acquiring newer commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) vehicles and determining if they are viable options by testing them on delivery assignments. For this month's column, I will share details on the latest COTS vehicle being pilot tested by the Postal Service.

Morgan Olson C175

In October, NALC was notified that the Postal Service planned to pilot five Morgan Olson right hand drive (RHD) internal combustion vehicles at four offices across the country. USPS says that the purpose of the test is to determine how the gas-powered vehicle performs on mounted and curblane routes that are traditionally completed using similar sized RHD vehicles such as the Long Life Vehicle, the Flex Fuel Vehicle and the Mercedes Metris. Models from the Morgan Olson manufacturer are currently in use by Canada Post, and USPS has tested two other Morgan Olson models over the past few years.

My staff visited an office conducting the pilot test in Vienna, VA, to review the vehicle. During the visit, representatives from the manufacturer introduced the four-wheel drive adjustable C175 model and discussed its features. The C175 is composed of a two-door cabin chassis conversion of a Jeep Gladiator and a Morgan Olson custom-built box body with 175 cubic feet of storage space.

The cabin area is accessed using a standard key fob and contains many features that are found in most passenger vehicles on the road today, such as a forward collision warning system, power locks and windows, air conditioning and heating, as well as heated driver's seats, steering wheels and side mirrors. A step is located outside of the curbside cabin door to assist in entering the vehicle. The curbside cabin door is lowered 6 inches, and the curbside mirror is raised to accommodate curblane delivery. The cabin is also equipped with a two-tier adjustable mail tray to the right of the driver that can fit up to three letter trays or two tubs on the top tier, and two trays or one tub on the lower tier. A touchscreen monitor in the middle of



the dashboard contains controls for many of the vehicle's features and displays a rearview camera when in reverse.

The cargo area is equipped with two curbside rollup doors and one rear rollup door accessible using a radio-frequency identification (RFID) key tag. The RFID key tag must be held near RFID tag readers located on the curbside and rear of the vehicle to unlock the doors. The cargo doors unlock for six seconds, allowing the carrier to roll the doors upward to access mail, then the door locks re-engage automatically. Also, the cargo doors do not need to be closed within six seconds for the locks to engage, since



the doors can be closed with or without locks engaged. Each side of the cargo area has an outer light located in its center along the top of the vehicle to enhance vision while loading and unloading. The lights activate when the cargo doors are unlocked and open.

Two motion sensor lights are installed along the ceiling of the cargo area. The lights remain on for five minutes unless motion is detected. The cargo area is not designed for walking, so carriers may need extendable poles to help with loading mail volumes. There are two short foldable trays on each side of the rear door. Each tray can hold up to two mail trays and one mail tub.

Driver safety instructor training was conducted during my staff's observation visit; however, driver training for carriers was moved to a later date, so there was no opportunity to get feedback at this unit. The pilot will also be conducted at the Kettle River Post Office in Kettle River, MN; the Lafayette Post Office in Lafayette, TN; and the Crestview Post Office in Crestview, FL, for a period of four months, ending in late February 2026.

I want to send my thanks in advance to each carrier who will be involved in this pilot. Their input and cooperation will have an impact on deciding the future of the postal fleet. My staff and I will continue to monitor this pilot and provide updates to the membership.

Be sure to read my column each month and visit nalc.org for the latest information.