



# Never say never

**T**he parties currently have a dispute pending national arbitration widely referred to as the “third bundle” issue. The NALC’s grievance challenges management’s contention that letter carriers who case their mail using the vertical flat case method may be required to carry pre-sequenced addressed mail as a third bundle on park and loop or foot deliveries.

The NALC asserts that there are only two circumstances when letter carriers may be required to carry more than two bundles on park and loop or foot deliveries: first, the 1980 “simplified address mail” settlement, which provided for the placement of unaddressed mail pieces on the bottom of the appropriate mail bundle (letters, flats, unaddressed bundle); and second, the 1992 memorandum which provided for the DPS “composite work method” (DPS letters, residual letters, flats). Beyond these two exceptions, there has been no agreement to carry more than two bundles on park and loop or foot deliveries.

In some areas of the country, there are several held grievances awaiting a decision on this national issue. The parties recently agreed to a postponement of the national arbitration case, which had been scheduled in March. One reason for the delay is that a test is currently being conducted by the Postal Service in Carmel, Indiana on a Flats Sequencing System (FSS) that places flats in delivery point sequence order. The initial test is scheduled to be conducted for a two month period from April 10 through June 10. The NALC is closely observing the components and results of the test. We will then determine to what extent our agenda in the third bundle case is affected prior to adjudication of the issue. At that point, we will re-schedule the case for national arbitration in an expeditious manner.

**The prototype machine that is being tested in Indiana was built by Northrop Grumman. After the test, the machine will be disassembled and returned to Northrop for its developmental use toward a production machine, which the Postal Service hopes will be ready in 2007. The prototype machine is approximately 50 feet wide and 150 feet long. They anticipate that the production machine will be about 61 feet wide and 261 feet long. The Postal Service has also indicated that they will be testing various**

methods for casing and carrying the mail during the two months the prototype machine is in operation. The NALC will monitor this closely.

**Earlier this year, the Postal Service tested a concept management referred to as “Delivery Point Sequence and Go Fridays” (DPS & Go) in Fort Wayne, Indiana. During our meetings, they indicated that the intent of the test was to level the workload between Fridays and Saturdays by having carriers case only preferential and time-value mail on Friday morning. Upon their return to the office in the afternoon, the carriers would then case the curtailed mail up to 8 hours, with the balance of the curtailed mail cased on Saturday (normally a light volume day for them). For the test, the First Class flats and Standard flats were separated prior to arrival at the delivery unit, and we were told the curtailment would be in compliance with current service standards. While Fort Wayne was the only national test site, USPS headquarters advised us that they did engage in a teleconference with their area offices to share the concept of the national test. We are told that the area offices were advised that this concept of curtailing mail was to be used to level the workload, not as a pivoting plan. Several offices around the country are now experimenting with the concept (not necessarily Friday/Saturday) to level the workload between heavy/light volume days. This has caused some grievances where application of the concept has violated the national agreement.**

**Letter carriers around the country have indicated that the *Route Protection Program Pocket Handbook*, which was mailed to all NALC members in March 2005, has been a useful tool during route inspections. We have had inquiries about how to obtain additional copies. Requests for additional copies of the *Pocket Handbook* should be directed to your National Business Agent.** ☒

**Updated chapters for the NALC Route Protection Program are now available on the NALC website at:  
[www.nalc.org/depart/citydel/index.html](http://www.nalc.org/depart/citydel/index.html)**