



R.I.G.

The parties at the national level continue to disagree as to when management may schedule more than one “day of inspection” during a six-day route count and inspection pursuant to Chapter 2 of the *M-39 Handbook*. To maintain minimal disputes in the field pending resolution of this issue, the parties have again agreed to reinstate the terms of our previous memorandums of understanding regarding multiple days of inspection. The new memorandum of understanding (*M-01571*) was printed in the June 2006 *Postal Record*, and is available on the City Delivery page of the NALC website.

In my *Postal Record* article last month, I mentioned the Postal Service’s testing of a Flats Sequencing System (FSS) that is currently taking place in Carmel, Indiana. I have since had the opportunity to observe the operation of

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the DPS flats machine at the plant in Indianapolis, to carry mail on both park and loop and curblin deliveries in a DPS flat environment in Carmel, and to talk with most of the letter carriers participating in the two-month test. Those managing the test were very cooperative and receptive during our visit.

With regard to the machine itself, it would appear that a machine fashioned after the prototype being tested may at some point be quite capable of sequencing flats, once various mechanical and mailer issues are addressed. The tremendous up front cost and space requirements would then have to be weighed against any potential savings that may or may not be realized.

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and/or methods that could be considered both efficient and safe for mounted or park and loop delivery of multiple bundles of mail. While this is only a test, we will closely monitor the data and results involving the casing and carrying of mail by letter carriers in this environment. As also indicated last month, this phase of the testing is scheduled to end June 10, and we will then determine to what extent our agenda in the national level “third bundle” case is affected by the components and results of the test.

I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to visit with the letter carriers in Carmel. While the letter carriers participating have been offering valuable input and suggestions regarding safety and efficiency during the test, many also indicated that it was as if management did not know there was

a test going on. Some supervisors could not figure out why with an additional DPS flat bundle, street time would increase. Other supervisors could not understand the variance from their already flawed DOIS figures, or why some letter carriers could

not estimate the unknown results of a test. As could be expected, this idiotic mentality has caused some level of discontent among the carriers, and has done nothing to enhance the testing environment.

The data from this test will not be useful if it is skewed to reflect predetermined, desired results rather than analyzed to determine the actual time necessary to perform duties in a safe and efficient manner. In other words, hopefully analysis of the data from the test will not be conducted in the same manner that management analyzes the data from route inspections.

Speaking of which, several carriers around the country are currently testing a program we are developing to monitor route inspection data consistent with the NALC Route Protection Program. Stay tuned for R.I.G. ✉