



Route Inspection Kit

In last month's article, I indicated that we were testing a program developed to assist officers, stewards, and other letter carriers with monitoring route inspection data. The program, previously referenced as RIG, will be titled the Route Inspection Kit (RIK). This new computer program was developed as a supplement to the NALC Route Protection Program that was distributed last year.

This new program will prompt users to enter route inspection data from PS Forms 1838-C and 1840-B, as well as applicable data from PS Forms 3996 and 3999. The program will then generate properly calculated PS Forms 1838 and 1840 for the week of inspection. The program features an extensive help index, direct links to each chapter of the Route Protection Program, and a Grievance Checklist for route inspection issues. The new NALC Route Inspection Kit should be a useful and convenient supplement to the Route Protection Program when deal-

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ing with route counts and inspections.

In many areas, management is bringing in “national route inspection teams” to conduct counts and inspections. The feedback from the field is that these teams have limited knowledge of the handbooks and manuals, and have little interest in conducting fair inspections or properly adjusting routes to eight hours. Rather, they appear to specialize in fabricating improper deductions to office and street times. The Route Inspection Kit will also help identify when deductions have been made by comparing the program's generated 1838s and 1840s to those computed by management. The information in the Route Protection Program can then be applied as necessary to challenge improper deductions.

We plan to distribute copies of the Route Inspection Kit to the delegates at the National Convention in Las Vegas, and send out a copy to each NALC branch shortly thereafter. Time permitting, we will give a demonstration of the RIK program during the CAU/City Delivery workshop on Wednes-

day and Thursday mornings of convention week.

In my November 2005 *Postal Record* article, I provided information on the new scanners known as Intelligent Mail Devices. At that time, the Postal Service planned to begin nationwide deployment in May 2006. We have been advised that deployment is now scheduled to begin in late August, to be completed by July 2007. Once deployment in an area begins, it will take three to six months to complete. The current schedule indicates that deployment will begin in Capital Metro Area, followed by Eastern (Sept 06), Southeast and Great Lakes (Oct 06), Western and Northeast (Jan 07), Southwest and Pacific (Feb 07), and New York Metro (Apr 07).

In my April 2006 article, I provided information regarding service talks that emphasized the new mind-set that letter carriers are ambassadors of the Postal Service, and that we

must take the time necessary to communicate with customers to promote revenue generation and customer satisfaction. Management has indicated that these service

talks are about 75 percent completed, with the balance to be conducted by the end of September. To further emphasize our role as information liaisons, management is in the process of developing additional service talks for carriers to be conducted in fiscal year 2007 (Oct. 1, 2006–Sep. 30, 2007). These talks will provide information on our role as revenue generators, the competitive advantages of using the Postal Service, convenient ways customers can do business with the Postal Service, and ways to introduce our products and services to customers.

As another route count and inspection season approaches, remember that the time it takes a letter carrier to obtain and update product and service information, as well as the time it takes us to provide and explain this information to our customers, is now part of our normal route duties. Any attempts to deduct any office or street time associated with our roles as ambassadors of the Postal Service and information liaisons to our customers should be challenged. ☒