



## New scanners and services

### Intelligent Mail Devices

The Postal Service has recently provided us with an update of the deployment schedule for the new scanners they are calling Intelligent Mail Devices. Currently, they are planning to conduct specific performance tests of the device in the field. The first such test we were advised of was a sun-light test to evaluate the scanning performance of the device in bright outdoor conditions. They plan to begin engineering testing in January 2006 and then begin testing in an actual office in April 2006. If the engineering and field testing goes as planned, the Postal Service hopes to begin deployment of the devices in May 2006, starting with the Capital Metro Area. They anticipate that completion of the nationwide deployment would then take between six and 12 months.

**“If testing goes as planned, the Postal Service hopes to begin deployment of the new scanners in May 2006.”**

The Postal Service has developed a train-the-trainers program for the new scanners. Letter carriers will receive approximately one hour of end-user training when the devices arrive. Additionally, we have been advised that stand-up talks regarding the new scanners are being developed to be given to carriers in advance of the deployment. Each route will be assigned a user guide, and each letter carrier will be provided with a pocket quick reference card for the scanner functions.

The new scanners have a larger screen, and weigh about three ounces more than the current devices. The scanners will take a digital picture of the customer's signature, prompted by a barcode situated below the signature block on the PS Form 3849. Unlike the current scanners, the new devices will scan at any angle. The new scanner also has an adjustable hand strap, a full alphabet keyboard, and additional large scan buttons on both sides of the device. We were also advised that the device is turned on when pulled from the cradle, and that carriers will use a barcode on their badge to scan in.

### Premium Forwarding Service

The Postal Service has begun a two-year test of a new Premium Forwarding Service (PFS). The service is designed for residential customers who want all their mail forwarded to a temporary address. Using this service, residential customers can have all their mail, regardless of mailpiece endorsements, sent to a temporary address for a minimum of two weeks up to a maximum of one year. The customer's mail is sent to the temporary address each Wednesday in a Priority Mail package. Additional packages will be sent if necessitated by the volume of mail. Parcels that do not fit in the weekly shipment will be sent separately, as will any mail that requires a scan, signature, or additional postage.

Customer's applications for the Premium Forwarding Service can only be accepted at the post office that serves the primary address. The cost to the customer is \$10 to enroll plus \$10 per week for the duration of their request. Additionally, the customer cannot have an active change-of-address (Form 3575) in effect at the same time they are using the Premium Forwarding Service.

In each office, management will assign a designated control point employee (DCPE) who will be responsible for the process. A PFS shipping card is placed in the carrier case and contains the customer's information including the last weekly shipment date as determined by the employee who accepted and processed the application. The back of the card is for recording the date of each weekly shipment with the initials of the employee who makes the shipment. Local issues such as where and how letter carriers hold the PFS mail and how and where the weekly shipment is packaged and shipped may vary in different offices. Carriers should continue to reroute Express, Priority, and Accountable mail as usual, as well as parcels too large for the weekly shipment, keeping in mind the end date of the customer's request.

While there is a cost associated with this new service, the customer will receive all of their mail regardless of class on a regular basis, and without being subjected to the errors and delays associated with mail forwarded through the CFS while they are temporarily away. 