

NALC pressing USPS on DOIS flaws, abuses

The NALC is actively pursuing the national level grievance over the uses—and abuses—of the DOIS computer system, but top Postal Service managers are still dragging their feet on acting to address the system's obvious flaws.

"The Postal Service has been slow to respond—that's about the nicest way I can put it," NALC Director of City Delivery Fred Rolando said. "We've outlined all our issues and had several meetings to explain how to correct the problems. But management still doesn't seem to get it."

NALC President Bill Young, who designated Rolando to head up the union's battle with the USPS over the Delivery Operations Information System, said he is determined to bring the abuses under control.

"Our members have suffered more than enough," Young said. "More than a year ago we gave postal management a list of DOIS violations—chapter and

verse, right out of their own manuals and handbooks and our National Agreement. They already acknowledge we are correct on many of them."

Tersely underlining the union's position, President Young said, "We are delivering the mail every day in the real world, not some computer fantasy land. If they won't stop hitting letter carriers over the head with 'DOIS says this' and 'DOIS says that,' we will end up in national arbitration."

Because DOIS is used for a variety of functions, the dispute is "very complex," Rolando emphasized. One of the union's major concerns is how the corrupt data is used by supervisors to project letter carriers' work load on a daily basis. "DOIS was programmed so that letter carriers don't get time credits for many office functions. They acknowledged that, and that means the numbers are bogus," he noted. "Additionally, there is no provision in the handbooks and

manuals for management use of a 'percent-to-standard.' And this is all compounded by other base data in DOIS that is not consistent with route inspection records."

"As long as the formulas, base data and input are inaccurate, there is no way DOIS can be a useful tool," Rolando said. "And no tool, no matter how fancy, can replace the judgment of professional letter carriers and supervisors who can recognize reality."

Rolando said NALC and USPS continue to meet at the Headquarters level over how to resolve the national grievance issues, "but it is tough going." The related effort to devise a new system for route adjustments is intermingled with DOIS, he said.

"How quickly we get through this depends on how much management wants to resolve these issues rather than perpetuate the problem," he concluded. ☒



Jennifer Alvarez (l), NALC Special Assistant for Legislation, is joined by Corinna Langelaan (c), an External Relations Manager for Royal Mail Group in Belfast, Northern Ireland, for a meeting with President Bill Young. Langelaan was in Washington for a two-week Community Advocate Mentor Program sponsored by the International Women's Democracy Center. She spent two days with the NALC, "shadowing" Alvarez at various political meetings at Headquarters and on Capitol Hill.