

New scanners on the way, and more



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I want to thank President Rolando for placing confidence in me by giving me the opportunity to serve as your director of city delivery. I am extremely grateful and excited to have the chance to serve the members of NALC. As the son of a letter carrier, I literally grew up learning about our jobs and the challenges we have faced over the years. Our union has a long and proud tradition of rising to meet every challenge presented to us throughout our 125-year history. I couldn't be more excited to have the chance to help continue that tradition.

The Postal Service recently announced a contract with Honeywell International, Inc. to produce the next generation of handheld scanning device for letter carriers. The new handheld scanner, called the Mobile Delivery Device (MDD), will eventually replace the Intelligent

ducted over a six-week period late last fall in three separate delivery units. The test sites were Diamond Farms Station in Gaithersburg, MD; Lost Lake Station in Minneapolis; and the Plano MPO in Plano, TX.

I am happy to report that after testing was completed, the Postal Service chose the device that the letter carriers involved in the test liked best. The first phase of the deployment will take place this summer and the new scanners will be assigned to approximately 75,000 city and rural routes, mostly in major metropolitan areas and other areas involved in the same-day and Sunday parcel delivery initiatives. The second phase is expected to include an additional 75,000 routes and be completed by the end of calendar year 2014, with the final phase of deployment to cover all city and rural routes taking place in 2015.

The new MDD has a large screen and a full keyboard of both numbers and letters. The most noticeable difference between the new device and the IMD is the vast improvement in scanning technology. This should result in far fewer instances of letter carriers being forced to manually input article numbers because a barcode will not scan.

The new MDD has nearly endless capabilities. Improvements in functionality will not require a new device; they can be done through software updates. During the initial deployment of the MDD, the functions will not be much different from the functions of the current scanner. We have been in discussions with postal management and engineering regarding additional functionality and software that should be included in the MDD. We will continue to engage them and work to develop and implement functionality that improves our jobs and provides the highest level of service to postal customers.

On a different note, there have been numerous reports of city carrier assistants (CCAs) having difficulty getting their initial uniform allowance. CCA uniform allowances are covered by the March 6, 2014, Questions and Answers 2011 USPS/NALC National Agreement (NALC Materials Reference System number M-01833), Questions 47-56.

CCAs become eligible for a uniform allowance upon completion of 90 work days or 120 calendar days of employment as a CCA, whichever comes first. If CCAs are not provided a Letter of Authorization within 14 days of the *first day* of eligibility, they should inform their steward and a grievance should be filed as soon as possible citing a violation of M-01833.

If a manager has difficulty providing the uniform allowance or says he or she doesn't know how to do so, detailed instructions on providing uniform allowances to CCAs are available in the NALC Materials Reference System (M-01822). Both M-01822 and M-01833 are available on the NALC website at nalc.org/depart/cau/step4mrs.html.

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Mail Device (IMD) that letter carriers have used for the past eight or so years. Even more importantly, to many, the MDD also will replace the cell phones that most letter carriers are pairing with the IMD to transmit scan data.

About a year ago, the Postal Service solicited potential devices to replace IMDs from a number of manufacturers. The initial group included about a dozen devices that varied in size, keyboard configuration and appearance. After USPS engineering tested the durability of these devices, we held several meetings with the Postal Service to discuss the best way to test them and determine which one was best suited for our jobs.

The first phase of testing took place at the USPS engineering facility in the Washington, DC, area. Two letter carriers from the area and staff members from NALC Headquarters tested each of the devices and provided feedback on each. Based on this initial test, the number of devices was narrowed to six.

The next phase of testing was a field test where letter carriers used each of the six devices for a week and provided feedback on each one. This phase of testing was con-