

November 18, 2005

**DISTRICT MANAGERS
MANAGERS, DELIVERY PROGRAMS SUPPORT (AREA)
MANAGERS, OPERATIONS PROGRAMS SUPPORT (DISTRICT)**

SUBJECT: 2006 National Rural Mail Count Option Election

In accordance with Article 9.2.C.3.a (5) (amended) of the 2000 National Agreement between the U.S. Postal Service and the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA), a national mail count will be conducted for twelve (12) working days beginning February 24 through March 9, 2006.

The following types of routes must be counted and are NOT included in the option in election process:

- All routes in an auxiliary status as of February 4, 2006
- All vacant regular routes with no regular carrier assigned as of January 6, 2006
- Any auxiliary route converted to regular status between January 7 and February 4, 2006

Option In Election Period

- During the period **December 10, 2005 through January 6, 2006** management and regular carriers can "opt in" to the 2006 mail count.
- Failure to complete the required form by either party by close of business January 6, 2006 will result in a route not being scheduled for the mail count, with the exception of carriers that are unavailable during this period; these carriers will have until January 20th to complete the form, as detailed below.

There is no requirement for a mutual agreement between management and the rural carrier to participate in this national count.

Management decision to count all routes in a delivery unit

Management has the option to make a decision to count every route in a delivery unit. In the event this decision is made, each regular carrier must be provided a round-dated copy of the option form which will serve to advise them of management's option election. If management chooses to count every route in a delivery unit, the regular carriers should receive the round-dated copy of the option form as soon as possible after the decision has been made.

Units where management has NOT opted to count all routes

Mail count option in election procedures, detailed below, must be explained to regular rural carriers in the form of a stand-up talk; ideally this information will be discussed in conjunction with a regular service and/or safety talk. It is expected that dissemination of this information will require no more than a few minutes, consequently no additional compensation will be provided.

December 10, 2005 through January 6, 2006 Option In Election Period

- During this period, any regular rural carrier wishing to have their route counted must request a copy of the attached "2006 National Mail Count Option In Election Form" from their manager.
- A regular carrier may request the form at any time during the option in election period, but must complete the form and present it to the manager or designee no later than close of business January 6, 2006.
- Management may opt to count individual routes by completing the Option In Election Form at any time during the option in election period and providing a round-dated copy to the carrier no later than close of business on January 6, 2006.
- Regular carriers who are on leave during the period December 10, 2005 through January 6, 2006 will be provided information on the option in election procedures immediately upon their return to duty. If management has elected to count the route, the carrier should be notified at this time and presented a copy of the Option In Election Form. If management has not elected to count the route, provide the form to the regular carrier, if requested.

If for any reason the regular carrier is out of the office and unavailable to review or complete the Option In Election Form, management will place the form in the same location as the Form 4240, *Rural Carrier Trip Report*, or present the form to the carrier at the next available opportunity. However, the carrier must present the form to management within five days of receipt but no later than January 20, 2006, whichever is first.

Administrative Procedures—Completed Option In Election Forms

- Ensure that all forms are "round-dated" and signed.
- Place the original form in the route file.
- Provide a copy of the form to the regular carrier as soon as practicable, normally by the next business day.
- District offices may also request copies of Option In Election Forms in order to properly schedule mail count training classes and evaluate staffing needs.

Any questions relative to the option in election should be directed to Area Delivery Programs Support staff.



Patrick S. Conrad
Manager
Rural Delivery

Attachment

2006 NATIONAL RURAL MAIL COUNT OPTION IN ELECTION FORM

In accordance with Article 9.2.C.3.a (5) (amended) of the 2000 National Agreement between the U.S. Postal Service and the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA), a twelve (12) day national mail count is scheduled beginning February 24 through March 9, 2006, for all routes on which either the Employer or the regular rural carrier opts for a mail count. Routes in a vacant status as of January 6, 2006, will be scheduled for the mail count and are not eligible for the option in election.

Either management or the regular rural carrier must complete this form **by close of business January 6, 2006**, in order for the route to be scheduled for the 2006 National Rural Mail Count.

POST OFFICE: _____

ROUTE NUMBER: _____

CARRIER NAME: _____

I ELECT TO OPTION IN THE ABOVE ROUTE FOR THE 2006 NATIONAL MAIL COUNT.

CARRIER SIGNATURE: _____

OR

MANAGER SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Official USPS "round date" should be placed on the form and a copy provided to each regular rural carrier in accordance with instructions.

Once a route is scheduled for the February/March 2006 national mail count, this decision cannot be withdrawn unless mutually agreeable between the signatory parties.



IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2006 RURAL ROUTE INSPECTION AND NATIONAL COUNT OF MAIL

The following are important dates that require some action relative to the inspection of rural routes and the national count of mail.

BEGUN/ COMPLETED BY	ACTION	DATE COMPLETED
DEC. 10, SAT.	BEGIN THE "OPTION IN" PERIOD FOR RURAL CARRIERS. THIS YEAR ONLY RURAL ROUTES THAT THE REGULAR CARRIER OR MANAGEMENT OPTIONS IN ARE SCHEDULED TO BE COUNTED. OPTION IN FORMS AND GENERAL GUIDELINES HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED TO THE DISTRICTS.	_____
JAN. 6, FRI.	END OF THE "OPTION IN" PERIOD FOR REGULAR RURAL CARRIERS. CARRIERS OR MANAGERS MUST HAVE PRESENTED THEIR OPTION IN REQUEST BY CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON THIS DATE. ANY ROUTE WHERE THE CARRIER OR MANAGEMENT DID NOT SUBMIT A REQUEST TO OPTION IN WILL NOT BE SCHEDULED FOR A COUNT. ALL REGULAR ROUTES IN A VACANT STATUS AS OF JANUARY 6 WILL BE COUNTED.	_____
JAN. 25, WED.	WHERE DELIVERY POINT SEQUENCE MAIL (DPS) IS BEING INTRODUCED, THE NRLCA REPRESENTATIVE AND POSTAL MANAGER AT THE UNIT LEVEL MUST JOINTLY REVIEW THE DPS SORT SCHEME TO ENSURE ZIP + 4 CODING OF RURAL ROUTE'S COMPLIES WITH THE CODING CONVENTIONS. DPS MUST BE RUNNING BY THIS DATE. (AT LEAST 30 DAYS PRIOR TO THE MAIL COUNT).	_____
JAN. 25, WED.	RURAL ROUTE INSPECTIONS MAY BEGIN FOR ALL ROUTES SCHEDULED TO BE COUNTED. THERE IS NO REQUIREMENT TO INSPECT ROUTES NOT BEING COUNTED (EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN M-38 PART 512).	_____
FEB. 4, SAT.	ALL ROUTES IN AN AUXILIARY STATUS AND ALL REGULAR ROUTES CREATED BETWEEN JANUARY 7 AND FEBRUARY 4 WILL BE SCHEDULED TO BE COUNTED.	_____
FEB. 8, WED.	PRE-COUNT CONFERENCES MUST BE COMPLETED ON ALL ROUTES BEING COUNTED BY COB THIS DATE.	_____
FEB. 23, THU.	98 PERCENT DPS QUALITY THRESHOLD FOR ROUTES BEING INTRODUCED TO DPS MUST BE COMPLETED BY COB THIS DATE.	_____
FEB. 24, FRI.	A 12 DAY NATIONAL COUNT OF MAIL BEGINS ON ALL RURAL ROUTES WHERE EITHER THE REGULAR CARRIER OR MANAGEMENT HAS ELECTED TO HAVE THE ROUTE COUNTED. ALL RURAL ROUTES IN A VACANT STATUS AS OF JANUARY 6 AND ALL REGULAR ROUTES CREATED BETWEEN JANUARY 7 AND FEBRUARY 4 WILL BE COUNTED. ALL ROUTES IN AN AUXILIARY STATUS AS OF FEBRUARY 4 WILL BE COUNTED. FORM 4239 IS COMPLETED DAILY AND ALL DATA TRANSFERRED DAILY TO FORM 4241.	_____
MAR. 9, THU.	LAST DAY OF THE 12 DAY NATIONAL COUNT OF MAIL. COMPLETE TRANSFER OF DATA FROM FORMS 4239 TO FORM 4241 AND TOTAL. ALL RURAL ROUTE INSPECTIONS FOR THOSE ROUTES RECEIVING A MAIL COUNT MUST BE COMPLETED BY THIS DATE.	_____

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2006 RURAL ROUTE INSPECTION AND NATIONAL COUNT OF MAIL

The following are a continuation of important dates that require some action relative to the inspection of rural routes and the national count of mail.

BEGUN/ COMPLETED BY	ACTION	DATE COMPLETED
MAR. 10, FRI.	ALL FORM 4241 COLUMNS MUST BE TOTALED AND POSTMASTER REVIEW COMPLETED. THE CARRIER MUST BE PROVIDED A COPY OF FORM 4241 FOR THE TWO DAY REVIEW. THE OPTION BLOCK AND CARRIER SIGNATURE ON FORM 4241 ARE USED FOR CARRIERS WHO WERE COUNTED AND WANT TO ELECT A HIGH OPTION. ALL CARRIERS ON ROUTES NOT COUNTED WILL CONTINUE TO BE COVERED BY THE OPTION IN EFFECT OCTOBER 29, 2005, THE BEGINNING OF THE GUARANTEE YEAR.	_____
MAR. 11, SAT.	DISTRICTS CAN BEGIN REVIEW OF FORMS 4241 AND INPUT OF DATA THROUGH THE DIRECT DATA ENTRY PROCESS WHERE POSTMASTER AND CARRIER REVIEWS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED. DATA INPUT OF COUNT FORMS IS A DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITY.	_____
MAR. 14, TUE.	CARRIERS SHOULD HAVE COMPLETED THEIR REVIEW OF FORM 4241 AND BEEN GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO SIGN THE HIGH/LOW OPTION ELECTION BLOCK AND CERTIFICATION OF ACCURACY OF THE COUNT FORM. (CARRIER SIGNATURE IS OPTIONAL. SEE PO-603, PART 533.13. – IF DISAGREEMENT EXISTS, THE CARRIER MUST SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS CONCERNING THE AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT WITH THE COUNT DATA.).	_____
MAR. 15, WED.	SUBMIT ALL COMPLETED FORMS 4241 TO THE DISTRICT.	_____
APR. 7, FRI.	INPUT OF FORMS 4241 DATA MUST BE COMPLETED BY COB THIS DATE.	_____
APR. 8, SAT.	EAGAN ISC WILL PROCESS, PRINT, AND MAIL NEW ROUTE EVALUATION FORMS 4241-A.	_____
APR. 15, SAT.	NEW ROUTE EVALUATIONS GO INTO EFFECT.	_____
APR. 15, SAT.	COMPLETED FORMS 4248 MUST BE FORWARDED TO THE DISTRICT OFFICE. DISTRICTS WILL REVIEW FORMS AND BEGIN INPUT PROCESSING VIA THE FORM 4248 APPLICATION.	_____
MAY 26, FRI.	FORM 4248 INPUT SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THIS DATE.	_____