

FSS Data Collection & Study: Final Comments by observer Chuck Clark

April 21, 2008

The FSS Data Collection and Study ended on April 17, 2008, in Hyattsville, MD. There were [14 scenarios](#) that were studied during the study period, January 14 through April 15, 2008. The twenty carriers involved in the study "created" their own FSS mail by casing AFSM, periodicals and standard bundles, and then pulling this mail down and placing it into the FSS trays.

On April 17, 2008, the FSS Joint Committee came to the delivery station and collectively interviewed all the carriers involved in the study who were present that day. This meeting lasted approximately 2 hours and there were no data collectors present at this meeting. Following the meeting with the letter carriers, the members of the NALC/USPS data collection team were interviewed (one NALC and one USPS member were not present). The meeting lasted approximately one hour. We reviewed each scenario studied.

The FSS Joint Committee was composed of four USPS managers and four NALC members. Some, if not all of the NALC members were Executive Board members. There were no introductions prior to the meeting so I can't say for sure what positions were held by all the committee members.

Most of the data collectors disliked the merging of residual mail into the FSS mail in the parking lot or at the relay point. Several reasons were given for this opposition including; weather, safety, sore backs from merging and breaking the flow of a carrier's work routine.

I stated that no company, except maybe one, would have their employees doing office work on the street, when it can be done more comfortably and as efficiently or more efficiently, in the office. I also told of being with a carrier who was merging mail at the back of the truck when a man walking a pit bull dog, without a leash, came up behind him. He didn't see the dog until the last minute because he was preoccupied with the merge process. The dog didn't cause him any trouble, but it illustrated to me how this attention to merging had reduced the carrier's awareness of conditions around him.

In February I submitted a written suggestion for an improvement of the [Low Volume Case](#) being used in the study. I suggested that the case have vertical separations, with two addresses per separation, instead of the horizontal layout of the case being used. The suggestion was adopted and scenarios 14 and 15 involved the [Vertical Low Volume Case](#).

On April 18, I was told that the Joint FSS Committee was only considering scenarios #1, #2 and #3, for their agreement. The other scenarios, I was told, would be considered only in a future, reduced residual volume environment. The Joint FSS Committee is expected to reach a decision concerning the handling of FSS, residual and sequenced mail by April 30, 2008.

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