

BEFORE THE
POSTAL RATE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268-0001

EVOLUTIONARY NETWORK DEVELOPMENT
SERVICE CHANGES, 2006

Docket No. N2006-1

MOTION OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
FOR THE ADOPTION OF PROPOSED PROCEDURAL SCHEDULE
AND SPECIAL RULES OF PRACTICE
(February 14, 2006)

The United States Postal Service hereby moves that the Postal Rate Commission adopt the procedural schedule and the related special rules proposed below for the conduct of this proceeding.

The Postal Service has established a framework and a process for a comprehensive realignment of its mail processing and transportation networks to increase efficiency and operational flexibility. Implementation of operational changes that emerge from this process is likely to result in determinations to make changes in postal services -- consisting of adjustments to service standard levels that apply to numerous 3-digit ZIP Code origin-destination pairs for certain mail classes. In some instances, the changes will be in the form of upgrades; in other cases, the changes will be in the form of downgrades. In many cases, there will be no changes.

The core issue raised by the Postal Service's request in this docket is straightforward: does the Postal Service's plan for implementing -- in phases over the next several years -- service changes that result from network realignment conform to the policies of the Postal Reorganization Act?

In accordance with 39 C.F.R. § 3001.72, on or about May 15, 2006, the Postal Service presently intends to implement the service changes resulting from the initial wave of operational changes produced by its network realignment review program. Before implementing these service changes, the Postal Service would prefer to have the benefit of an opportunity to consider any advice that the Postal Rate Commission may offer under the terms of 39 U.S.C. § 3661(b).

In order that the Commission may transmit such advice before that date for consideration, the Postal Service proposes that the Commission adopt a procedural schedule that gives itself the opportunity to formally issue its advisory opinion no later than May 5, 2006. Such a goal could be met if a procedural schedule along the following lines were adopted:

March 7, 2006	Deadline for discovery on Postal Service testimony
March 15, 2006	Hearings on Postal Service testimony
March 16, 2006	Deadline for discovery on the Postal Service
March 24, 2006	Filing of intervenor testimony
April 3, 2006	Deadline for discovery on intervenor testimony
April 11, 2006	Hearings on intervenor testimony
April 17, 2006	Filing of initial briefs
April 21, 2006	Filing of reply briefs

To accommodate this schedule, the Postal Service proposes that special rules be adopted which shorten the deadlines for:

- interrogatory responses -- from the standard 14 days to seven days;
- interrogatory objections -- from the standard seven days to four business days;

- replies to motions -- from the standard seven days to four business days.

It is the view of the Postal Service that the proposed schedule would provide adequate time for the parties to analyze the testimonies and related materials filed in support of the Postal Service's Request and to efficiently utilize discovery to clarify matters which are relevant and material to the policy issues raised by the Request.

In proposing this schedule and the special rules that are contingent upon its adoption, the Postal Service has attempted to anticipate and accommodate the needs of parties who will approach this proceeding with a sharp and disciplined focus on relevant and material issues of policy. The proposed rules may not, nor should they accommodate the interests of those who might view this proceeding as an opportunity to use discovery to delve into all manner of irrelevant, immaterial, localized postal operational or personnel-related minutiae that have no bearing upon the type of policy review for which § 3661 was enacted.

During the course of this docket, the Postal Service intends to provide the Commission with such information as is relevant and necessary to its advisory role under § 3661. In pursuit of that objective, the Postal Service, from time to time, may need to approach its discovery obligations in a manner consistent with its collective bargaining agreement obligations to first notify postal employees unions of agency decisions regarding the consideration and implementation of local Area Mail Processing (AMP) operational changes, when those decisions, *inter alia*, have potential personnel-related impacts.

The Postal Service intends to fulfill its discovery obligations in this docket, but in a manner that respects applicable personnel notice requirements. Accordingly, in response to discovery, the Postal Service can be expected to refrain from confirming, denying,

disclosing or otherwise publicizing (1) pre-decisional proposals to conduct specific local AMP feasibility studies or (2) pre-decisional analysis and recommendations generated during the conduct of specific local AMP feasibility studies. During the litigation of this proceeding, the Postal Service will confirm the issuance of notices of intent to conduct particular local AMP studies¹ and will disclose final AMP review decisions, subject to certain conditions,² as expeditiously as possible after such information is formally disclosed to postal employee organizations.

Respectfully submitted,

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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1 See, for instance, USPS-T-2, Attachment.

2 See, USPS Library References N2006-1/5 and N2006-1/6.