**UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE**

September 28, 2012

Mr. Cliff Guffey
President
American Postal Workers
 Union, AFL-CIO
1300 L Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005-4128

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Dear Cliff:

This letter is in regard to the jurisdictional craft determination for operation of the Advanced Facer Canceller System 200 (AFCS 200). On July 10 the RI-399 National Dispute Resolution Committee (NDRC) visited the Southern Maryland Processing & Distribution Center (P&DC) to observe the AFCS 200 in operation. By letter dated July 11, the Postal Service asked the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU) to provide input regarding whether a craft jurisdictional determination is required, and if so, which craft should be the primary craft for operation of the machine, in light of the recent enhancements.

The existing AFCS (legacy system) is a high-speed machine that culls, faces, and cancels letter mail through a series of automated operations. It recognizes postage stamps, Facing Identification Marks (FIM), and metered indicia. The AFCS processes letter mail through a series of system components that include an over-thick culler, an edger-feeder, a flat extractor, a fine cull unit, a facer canceller, and a camera system that performs an image lift. Letter mail pieces that fall within required size and thickness dimensions are faced, cancelled if needed, and sorted to one of seven stackers. The AFCS ejects oversized mail pieces from the automated mail stream. A phosphorescent detector is used to detect postage stamps, and grayscale cameras capture front and back images of each mail piece for encoding.

The AFCS 200 will perform the same functions as the legacy system while also providing significant additional capabilities. Some components of the legacy AFCS that cull and singulate mail are being reused on the AFCS 200. Existing doubles detectors and inkjet cancellers will also be reused on the AFCS 200. The remainder of the machine is completely replaced. The system enhancements illustrated below are significant and represent a complete change in the performance and service of the AFCS.

- **Upgraded Transport System** – The AFCS 200 can process thicker mail (up to 5/16"), moving this mail from mechanized and manual operations into automation. Also, the new reverter faces mail into a single orientation.

- **Two-Tier Stacker Module** – The existing AFCS has seven output stackers. The AFCS 200 includes a two-tier output stacker configuration consisting of 12 stackers. These additional bins increase depth-of-sort capabilities.

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- **POSTNET Barcode Printer** – A new printer improves process flow and <u>reduces downstream handlings</u>. The AFCS 200 sprays a POSTNET barcode on mail pieces it encodes, thus allowing this mail to <u>bypass the Output Subsystem</u> (OSS) and be sorted directly on the Delivery Barcode Sorter (DBCS).

- **New ICS Reader** – The latest version of Identification Code Sort (ICS) reader provides improved identification (ID) tag verification rates. The error rate on sprayed ID tags is expected to be about 1.5 percent or about 50 percent lower than that of the existing AFCS reader, improving <u>sortation on the AFCS 200 and reducing downstream automation handlings</u>.

Some of the benefits expected from these enhancements include:

- <u>Greater Depth-of-Sort</u> – The combination of <u>additional stackers</u> (12 versus 7) and a new reverter that faces mail in a single instead of two orientations (which frees up three existing stackers) provides <u>eight extra stackers to meet additional sorting needs</u>.

- <u>Cross-Utilization Opportunity</u> – The AFCS 200 <u>can be used as a stand-alone OCR</u> or <u>backup input Subsystem (ISS) machine</u> to encode, or lift images, and apply the corresponding POSTNET barcodes.

Additionally, the Postal Service intends to modify the induction process used to enter letter mail on the AFCS 200 machines. This image processing flow modification will stop the image capture of mail pieces when the address cannot be determined at the AFCS 200. The mail piece will flow to the Delivery Barcode Sorter (DBCS) Input/Output Subsystem (DIOSS) machine first. This will significantly reduce the need to send images to the Remote Encoding Center (REC) for an operator to determine the address on the mail piece to the extent possible. This change will add significant value to the depth of coding, manual flow and time to clear the outgoing process.

The staffing of the AFCS 200 consists of a single operator who is capable of performing the AFCS 200 core functions of culling, prepping mail, jogging, and grooming the mail, in addition to the feed and sweep duties.

After reviewing the equipment operation, carefully considering the input from the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union, and applying the principles of RI-399, the Postal Service has determined that on the AFCS 200, the duties performed by the operator are similar to the duties performed by a Mail Processing Clerk. Accordingly, the primary craft for the operator position on the AFCS 200 is the Clerk Craft. The primary craft for the induction activities on the AFCS 200 will continue to be the Mail Handler Craft.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Rickey Dean at extension 7412.

Sincerely,

Patrick M. Devine
Manager
Contract Administration (APWU)

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