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Integrating 31-digit Intelligent Mail® Barcodes by January 2009

by Wanda Senne

The USPS has provided advance notice on new barcode requirements which are to take effect January 2009 for letter and flat mail. While some details are still being worked out, this promises to be one of the most significant postal changes this decade.

Benefits from the Intelligent Mail® Barcode (IMB) concept are numerous, including combining multiple codes into a single code allowing more space on the mailpiece and increased visibility into the mail processing system. But the transition will require upgrading of mail processes, equipment, and quality control processes (can not manually decode the IMB to determine if the barcode on the piece matches the delivery address).

Mailers must obtain and integrate a "mailer identification code" that identifies the specific mailer, mail owner, or subscriber along with either a 6 or 9 digit sequence number that must remain unique for each 45-day period.

Two Options

"Full Service" Intelligent Mail

Will require the use of unique IMB applied to letter and flat mailpieces, trays, sacks, and containers, such as pallets and to submit electronic mailing documentation.

"Basic" Intelligent Mail

Mailers must apply IMB on mailpieces and not on trays and containers. At a minimum, the IMB at this level will include the same delivery point information that is included in the POSTNET barcode today,

as assigned Mailer ID, the class of mail, and optional endorsement line (OEL) information if an OEL is printed on the mailpiece. Mailers using pressure sensitive barcoded presort labels will not be required to include this information in the IMB.

Mailpiece barcode

The 31-digit, 65-bar IMB can accommodate information about presort level, class of mail, special services, and the delivery point ZIP Code for the delivery address.

Tray barcode

The 24-digit IMB-format sack or tray label will contain information about the destination of the container as they currently do, along with information about the content of the container, the identify of the mailer, and a unique identifier for the container.

Container barcode

A 21-digit IMB-format label or container placard will be required for pallets, APCs, and other rolling stock. Eighteen of the digits in the barcode will identify the mailer and, uniquely, the container.

Electronic Documentation and Appointment Scheduling

The requirement for the Full Service option includes the requirement to submit postage statements and mailing documentation electronically using one of three options, Mail.dat, Wizard Web Service, or The Postage Statement Wiz-

ard. This requirement will enable the Postal Service to enhance its ability to exchange data with customers electronically.

Mailers will also be required to schedule appointments using the Facility Access and Shipment Tracking (FAST) system for drop-ship and all origin-entered mail verified at a detached mail unit.

Will you be ready for the IMB? The USPS and PCC's are hosting Intelligent Mail Symposium in four locations in March - with one right here in Atlanta.

Be sure to register for the Intelligent Mail Symposium to be held on March 13, 2008 from 10:30 to 4:00 at the Georgia International Convention Center located



Map to the Georgia International Convention Center near the Atlanta airport. You will hear from mailers and USPS Headquarters personnel to gain a better understanding of what the new IMB will offer, and how you can be ready for the transition.

Log onto <http://www.usps.com/atlanta/pcc/intelmail.html> to register and for more details.



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URGENT Items Please Read!

Are You Ready for the Intelligent Mail® Barcode? Register for the USPS Headquarters symposium on March 13 to learn all you need to know. **Space is limited** so register today! Visit <http://www.usps.com/atlanta/pcc/intelmail.html> to sign up.

Registration: 10:30

Lunch: 11:00 program ends at 4:00

USPS Announces Price Change!

On May 12, the Postal Service will adjust prices for mailing services – First-Class Mail, Standard Mail, Periodicals, Package Services and Special Services. The average increase by class of mail is at or below the rate of inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

Visit usps.com/prices for more details.

Go for the Gold, Silver, or Bronze... Become a 2008 Greater Atlanta PCC Member!

It's membership renewal time again! Because your Greater Atlanta PCC has aggressively pursued special programs to educate our members, such as the exciting upcoming Intelligent Mail Symposium, we have expanded our membership categories to allow for greater giving and greater recognition for our members. There are now three donation levels starting at \$250 for the Gold Corporate Level, \$100 for the Silver Corporate Level, and \$25 for the Bronze Individual Level. Recognition and the many benefits for each level are described on our web site or when you renew online at www.usps.com/atlanta/pcc/sponsor.html

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