March 18, 2005

WILLIAM J. BROWN VICE PRESIDENT, SOUTHEAST AREA OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Surface Transportation – Bulk Mail

Center Highway Transportation Routes - Southeast Area

(Report Number NL-AR-05-005)

This report presents results of our Bulk Mail Center Highway Transportation Routes audit (Project Number 04YG013NL002). Our objectives were to evaluate the effectiveness of bulk mail center routes and identify opportunities for cost savings. This report responds to a request from the vice president, Network Operations Management, and focuses on routes controlled by the Southeast Area.

The Postal Service could save about \$6.6 million over the term of existing Southeast Area bulk mail highway contracts by canceling, not renewing, or modifying 52 trips. The savings represent potential funds that could be put to better use and will be reported as such in our Semiannual Report to Congress. The Postal Service could eliminate or modify the trips without negatively affecting service because trip volume was low and mail could be consolidated on other trips. We recommended the vice president, Southeast Area Operations, verify the actual cancellation, modification, or substitution of the 52 trips.

Management agreed with our recommendation. They stated that they had already started implementing all 52 changes, explained the changes involved negotiating with the contractors or soliciting new contractors, and stated they would complete the process by April 15, 2005. Management also agreed with our annualized savings estimate. Management's comments and our evaluation of these comments are included in this report.

The OIG considers recommendation 1 significant, and therefore requires OIG concurrence before closure. The OIG requests written confirmation when corrective actions are completed. This recommendation should not be closed in the follow-up tracking system until the OIG provides written communication that the recommendation can be closed.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff during the audit. If you have any questions, or need additional information please contact Joe Oliva, Director, Transportation, or me at (703) 248-2300.

/s/ Mary W. Demory

Mary W. Demory Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Core Operations

Attachments

cc: Patrick R. Donahoe Paul E. Vogel Anthony M. Pajunas Steven R. Phelps

INTRODUCTION

Background

Bulk mail includes magazines, advertising, and merchandise shipped by major mailers like publishers, catalog companies, or on-line retail companies. It is processed by a system of 21 bulk mail centers and other facilities nationwide. The Postal Service spends more than \$500 million annually on contracts to transport bulk mail over highway networks. Contracted routes are controlled by individual Postal Service areas.

This report focuses on the routes controlled by the Southeast Area and responds to a request from the vice president, Networks Operations Management.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The objectives of our audit were to evaluate the effectiveness of scheduled bulk mail center highway transportation routes and to identify opportunities for cost savings.

Using Postal Service computer-generated data, we identified 966 trips operated under 139 Southeast Area contracts that had at least one bulk mail center service point. In preparation for our work, we provided area officials and Postal Service managers with the list of Southeast Area contracts we intended to audit. During our work, we interviewed officials at headquarters and in the Southeast Area; reviewed relevant Postal Service policies and procedures; visited three bulk mail centers; interviewed managers and employees; and observed and photographed operations. We consulted with financial analysts, computer analysts, and other subject matter experts; evaluated mail volume and the type of mail carried; considered service standards; and analyzed all 966 trips. We also discussed our observations and conclusions with appropriate management officials and included their comments where appropriate.

We conducted work associated with this report from July 2004 through March 2005 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards and included such tests of internal controls that we considered necessary under the circumstances.

Data Limitations

During our audit, we examined computer data in management's Transportation Contract Support System and Transportation Information Management Evaluation System. We did not audit or comprehensively validate the data; however, we noted several control weaknesses that constrained our work. For example, the Transportation Information Management Evaluation System had missing records and inaccurate trailer load volumes. Even though data limitations constrained our work, we were able to partially compensate by applying alternate audit procedures, including source document examination, observation, physical inspection, and discussion with responsible officials. We also applied conservative principles to our monetary impact estimates, and, accordingly, always selected the most restrained assessment.

Prior Audit Coverage

Over a two-year period, the Office of Inspector General issued ten audit reports covering evaluation of highway contract routes, and has worked with the Postal Service to identify 1,011 highway contract trip eliminations, consolidations or modifications, potentially resulting in savings of \$50.5 million over the life of the contracts. The Postal Service eliminated or modified most of these trips without negatively affecting service or operational flexibility because mail volume was low and mail could be consolidated on other trips. For more detailed information about these audits, see Appendix A.

AUDIT RESULTS

Contracted Bulk Mail Center Highway Trips

The Postal Service could save about \$6.6 million over the term of existing Southeast Area bulk mail highway contracts by canceling, not renewing, or modifying 52 trips. The Postal Service could eliminate or modify the trips without negatively affecting service because trip mail volume was low, and mail could be consolidated on other trips. As indicated below, about 62 percent of affected trips will expire within one year. The other 38 percent have one to three years remaining.

PROPOSED NONRENEWALS AND CANCELLATIONS

TRIP CATEGORY	AFFECTED TRIPS	NUMBER OF TRIPS	ESTIMATED SAVINGS
Contracts expiring within one year	62 percent	32	\$5,685,502
Contracts expiring in one to three years	38 percent		878,080
All terminated trips	100 percent	52	\$6,563,582

Postal Service policy requires transportation managers to balance service and cost. Although managers continually strive to optimize transportation through aggressive cost



Highway transportation contractor departing the Memphis Bulk Mail Center July 12, 2004.

cutting efforts such as their breakthrough productivity initiative, transportation requirements are dynamic and constantly change. Consequently, the Postal Service could attain additional savings through further service reductions

by not renewing unnecessary trips that are scheduled to expire within one year, or by canceling unnecessary trips that are currently contracted to continue for one to three years. The savings we identified include savings from nonrenewable trips, plus savings from trip cancellations net of cancellation fees totaling approximately \$125,440.

Cooperative Effort and Rapid Implementation

As a result of our continuing effort to partner with and bring value to the Postal Service, we had ongoing communication with Southeast Area officials throughout this audit. After we completed our analysis, we provided the Southeast Area officials with a list of our specific trip proposals, and the officials reviewed each proposal in conjunction with their own assessment of area-wide network requirements. After the area's review, we met with area officials, discussed our proposals and area operational needs, and made appropriate adjustments to our proposals. As a result of the cooperative effort, the area agreed with the 52 proposals outlined in Appendix B.

Network management is dynamic and transportation requirements are continually changing and we thank the area for their rapid review and planned implementation of our proposals. The Postal Service will soon be realizing transportation savings because of the area's quick action on our proposals. The area will provide full documentation when they have implemented all trip proposals.

Recommendation

We recommend the vice president, Southeast Area Operations:

1. Verify the actual cancellation, modification, or substitution of the 52 trips with which Postal managers agreed and give the date the action was taken.

Management's Comments

Management agreed with our recommendation. They stated that they had already started implementing all 52 changes, explained that the changes involved negotiating with the contractors or soliciting new contractors, and stated that they would complete the process by April 15, 2005. Management also stated that they agreed with our annualized savings estimate. Management's comments, in their entirety, are included in Appendix C of this report.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

Management's comments are responsive to our recommendation. We applaud the immediate action taken by the Southeast Area, and we consider the actions the area has taken or planned sufficient to address the issues we identified in the finding.

APPENDIX A. PRIOR AUDIT COVERAGE

Report Name	Report Number	Report Final Issue Date	Number of Trips Identified for Elimination	Potential Savings Identified	Number of Trips With Which Management Agreed	Number of Trips With Which Management Disagreed	Number of Trips Identified by Management
Highway Network Scheduling-Pacific Area	TD-AR-02-003	9/24/2002	158	\$ 4,500,417	76	34	48
Highway Network Scheduling-Northeast Area	TD-AR-03-002	11/25/2002	18	776,992	10	8	
Highway Network Scheduling-Capital Metro Area	TD-AR-03-007	3/28/2003	34	1,144,218	20	14	
Highway Network Scheduling-New York Metro Area	TD-AR-03-008	3/31/2003	32	470,123	12	20	
Highway Network Scheduling-Southwest Area	TD-AR-03-010	7/11/2003	249	5,989,082	148	101	
Highway Network Scheduling-Western Area	TD-AR-03-013	9/23/2003	70	2,721,530	30	40	
Highway Network Scheduling-Southeast Area	TD-AR-03-014	9/26/2003	101	11,352,881	23	24	54
Highway Network Scheduling-Eastern Area	TD-AR-03-015	9/30/2003	181	10,577,367	128	53	
Highway Network Scheduling-Great Lakes Area	NL-AR-04-003	3/29/2004	72	5,352,877	48	22	2
Bulk Mail Transportation Routes-Great Lakes Area	NL-AR-04-004	9/29/2004	96	7,660,533	49	7	40
Totals			1011	\$ 50,546,020	544	323	144

APPENDIX B TRIPS IDENTIFIED DURING AUDIT WORK WITH WHICH PLANT MANAGERS AGREED

Effective Date of Last Change	End Date of Contract	HCR Number	Trip Number	Specific Recommen- dation	Origin to Destination	Annual Budget Cost	Estimated Contract Cost	Cancellation Fees	Estimated Cost Savings
6/15/2004	6/30/2005	30095	805	Whole Trip	Atlanta BMC to Birmingham P&DC	\$70,433	\$281,731	\$0	\$281,731
6/15/2004	6/30/2005	30095	806	Whole Trip	Birmingham P&DC to Atlanta BMC	70,433	281,731	0	281,731
1/1/2004	6/30/2005	30118	1	Whole Trip	Atlanta BMC Annex to North Metro P&DC	20,255	81,019	0	81,019
1/1/2004	6/30/2005	30118	2	Whole Trip	North Metro P&DC to Atlanta BMC Annex	19,889	79,557	0	79,557
1/1/2004	6/30/2005	30118	7	Whole Trip	Atlanta BMC Annex to North Metro P&DC	20,255	81,019	0	81,019
1/1/2004	6/30/2005	30118	8	Whole Trip	North Metro P&DC to Atlanta BMC Annex	19,889	79,557	0	79,557
1/1/2004	6/30/2005	30118	13	Whole Trip	Atlanta BMC Annex to North Metro P&DC	20,255	81,019	0	81,019

Effective Date of Last Change	End Date of Contract	HCR Number	Trip Number	Specific Recommen- dation	Origin to Destination	Annual Budget Cost	Estimated Contract Cost	Cancellation Fees	Estimated Cost Savings
1/1/2004	6/30/2005	30118	14	Whole Trip	North Metro P&DC to Atlanta BMC Annex	19,889	79,557	0	79,557
6/12/2004	6/30/2005	30190	801	Eliminate Saturday	Atlanta BMC to Huntsville P&DF	14,221	56,884	0	56,884
6/12/2004	6/30/2005	30190	802	Eliminate Saturday	Huntsville P&DF to Atlanta BMC	14,221	56,884	0	56,884
7/1/2003	6/30/2005	30197	803	Eliminate Saturday	Atlanta BMC to Mobile P&DC	21,498	85,990	0	85,990
7/1/2003	6/30/2005	30197	804	Eliminate Saturday	Mobile P&DC to Atlanta BMC	21,498	85,990	0	85,990
9/14/2003	6/30/2005	301U8	1	Whole Trip	Atlanta BMC Annex to Marietta	44,341	177,365	0	177,365
9/14/2003	6/30/2005	301U8	2	Whole Trip	Marietta to Atlanta BMC Annex	48,635	194,539	0	194,539
5/15/2004	6/30/2005	30291	801	Eliminate Saturday	Atlanta BMC to Skyland Station	16,312	65,250	0	65,250
5/15/2004	6/30/2005	30291	802	Eliminate Saturday	Skyland Station to Atlanta BMC	16,312	65,250	0	65,250
6/12/2004	6/30/2005	30310	801	Eliminate 10 Holidays; Increase Truck size to 53'	Atlanta BMC to Dallas BMC	9,791	39,163	0	39,163

Effective Date of Last Change	End Date of Contract	HCR Number	Trip Number	Specific Recommen- dation	Origin to Destination	Annual Budget Cost	Estimated Contract Cost	Cancellation Fees	Estimated Cost Savings
6/12/2004	6/30/2005	30310	802	Eliminate 10 Holidays; Increase Truck size to 53'	Dallas BMC to Atlanta BMC	9,791	39,163	0	39,163
6/12/2004	6/30/2005	30310	803	Eliminate Saturday; Increase truck size to 53'	Atlanta BMC to Dallas BMC	50,912	203,649	0	203,649
6/12/2004	6/30/2005	30310	804	Eliminate Saturday; Increase truck size to 53'	Dallas BMC to Atlanta BMC	50,912	203,649	0	203,649
4/24/2004	6/30/2005	30313	801	Whole Trip; Increase trailer to 53'	Atlanta BMC to Jacksonville BMC	138,090	552,359	0	552,359
4/24/2004	6/30/2005	30313	802	Whole Trip; Increase trailer to 53'	Jacksonville BMC to Atlanta BMC	138,090	552,359	0	552,359
5/15/2004	6/30/2005	30314	801	Eliminate Monday; Increase truck to 53'	Atlanta BMC to Detroit BMC	40,121	160,484	0	160,484
5/15/2004	6/30/2005	30314	801	Eliminate 8 Holidays; Increase truck size to 53'	Atlanta BMC to Detroit BMC	6,172	24,690	0	24,690
5/15/2004	6/30/2005	30314	802	Eliminate Monday; Increase truck to 53'	Detroit BMC to Atlanta BMC	40,121	160,484	0	160,484

Effective Date of Last Change	End Date of Contract	HCR Number	Trip Number	Specific Recommen- dation	Origin to Destination	Annual Budget Cost	Estimated Contract Cost	Cancellation Fees	Estimated Cost Savings
5/15/2004	6/30/2005	30314	802	Eliminate 8 Holidays; Increase truck size to 53'	Detroit BMC to Atlanta BMC	6,172	24,690	0	24,690
6/12/2004	6/30/2006	32210	801	Service Point Elimination	Jacksonville BMC to Detroit BMC	8,782	11,709	1,464	10,245
6/12/2004	6/30/2006	32210	802	Service Point Elimination	Detroit BMC to Jacksonville BMC	8,782	11,709	1,464	10,245
6/12/2004	6/30/2006	32210	803	Eliminate Tuesday	Jacksonville BMC to Detroit BMC	68,949	91,932	11,492	80,441*
6/12/2004	6/30/2006	32210	804	Eliminate Wednesday	Detroit BMC to Jacksonville BMC	68,949	91,932	11,492	80,441*
7/1/2004	6/30/2006	32219	801	Eliminate 5 holidays on Mondays	Jacksonville BMC to Dallas BMC	6,476	8,634	1,079	7,555
7/1/2004	6/30/2006	32219	802	Eliminate 5 holidays on Mondays	Dallas BMC to Jacksonville BMC	6,458	8,610	1,076	7,534
6/12/2004	6/30/2006	32290	904	Whole Trip	Tampa to Jacksonville P&DC	120,658	160,878	20,110	140,768
6/12/2004	6/30/2006	32290	905	Whole Trip	Jacksonville P&DC to Tampa	108,318	144,424	18,053	126,371

Effective Date of Last Change	End Date of Contract	HCR Number	Trip Number	Specific Recommen- dation	Origin to Destination	Annual Budget Cost	Estimated Contract Cost	Cancellation Fees	Estimated Cost Savings
6/12/2004	6/30/2006	32298	803	Whole Trip; Increase trailer to 53'	Jacksonville BMC to Melbourne Apollo Annex	89,009	118,678	14,835	103,843
6/12/2004	6/30/2006	32298	804	Whole Trip; Increase trailer to 53'	Melbourne Apollo Annex to Jacksonville BMC	89,009	118,678	14,835	103,843
6/12/2004	6/30/2006	32299	803	Eliminate Saturday	Jacksonville BMC to Cocoa	8,440	11,254	1,407	9,847
6/12/2004	6/30/2006	32299	804	Eliminate Saturday	Cocoa to Jacksonville BMC	8,440	11,254	1,407	9,847
7/1/2004	6/30/2006	38111	803	Eliminate Sundays	Memphis BMC to Atlanta BMC	20,033	26,711	3,339	23,372
7/1/2004	6/30/2006	38111	804	Eliminate Sundays	Atlanta BMC to Memphis BMC	20,033	26,711	3,339	23,372
7/1/2004	6/30/2006	38114	803	Eliminate Monday	Memphis BMC to Cincinnati BMC	34,102	45,469	5,684	39,786*
7/1/2004	6/30/2006	38114	804	Eliminate Monday	Cincinnati BMC to Memphis BMC	34,102	45,469	5,684	39,786*
7/1/2004	6/30/2006	38115	801	Eliminate 10 Holidays	Memphis BMC to Denver BMC	12,614	16,818	2,102	14,716

Effective Date of Last Change	End Date of Contract	HCR Number	Trip Number	Specific Recommen- dation	Origin to Destination	Annual Budget Cost	Estimated Contract Cost	Cancellation Fees	Estimated Cost Savings
7/1/2004	6/30/2006	38115	802	Eliminate 10 Holidays	Denver BMC to Memphis BMC	12,688	16,918	2,115	14,803
7/10/2004	6/30/2006	38117	801	Eliminate 10 Holidays	Memphis BMC to Springfield BMC	13,399	17,865	2,233	15,632
7/10/2004	6/30/2006	38117	802	Eliminate 10 Holidays	Springfield BMC to Memphis BMC	13,399	17,865	2,233	15,632
5/15/2004	1/29/2005	38121	801	Eliminate 10 Holidays	Memphis BMC to San Francisco BMC	31,321	125,283	0	125,283
5/15/2004	1/29/2005	38121	802	Eliminate 10 Holidays	San Francisco BMC to Memphis BMC	31,321	125,283	0	125,283
10/2/2004	6/30/2005	38123	801	Whole Trip	Memphis BMC to Dallas BMC	159,473	637,890	0	637,890
10/2/2004	6/30/2005	38123	802	Whole Trip	Dallas BMC to Memphis BMC	159,888	639,551	0	639,551
7/10/2004	6/30/2005	38693	801	Eliminate Sundays	Memphis BMC to Alexandria	22,882	91,530	0	91,530
7/10/2004	6/30/2005	38693	802	Eliminate Sundays	Alexandria to Memphis BMC	27,217	108,867	0	108,867

Effective Date of Last Change	End Date of Contract	HCR Number	Trip Number	Specific Recommen- dation	Origin to Destination	Annual Budget Cost	Estimated Contract Cost	Cancellation Fees	Estimated Cost Savings
7/10/2004	6/30/2005	38694	801	Eliminate Tuesday	Memphis BMC to Gulfport	20,383	81,532	0	81,532
7/10/2004	6/30/2005	38694	802	Eliminate Tuesday	Gulfport to Memphis BMC	20,383	81,532	0	81,532
	TOTALS		52 ¹			\$2,174,015*	\$6,689,022*	\$125,440*	\$6,563,582*

BMC -Bulk Mail Center

P&DC - Processing and Distribution Center

P&DF- Processing and Distribution Facility

* Minor Rounding Differences

¹ Recommendations cover 52 trips as reflected in the report. Appendix B reflects 54 line items because HCR 30314, trips 801 & 802, involve two different modifications. As such, to ensure clear understanding of specific trip proposals, we separated the distinct actions.

APPENDIX C. MANAGEMENT'S COMMENTS

WILLIAM J. BROWN

 VICE PRESIDENT, AREA OPERATIONS SOUTHEAST AREA



March 8, 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Kim H. Stroud

Director, Audit Operations Office of Inspector General

SUBJECT:

Draft Audit Report - Surface Transportation Bulk Mail Center Highway Transportation Southeast Area (Report NL-AR-05-Draft)

As requested in your February draft memo, this is to provide you with a status of the 52 trips identified in your audit.

The Southeast Area is in agreement with the 52 Highway Contract Route (HCR) trip recommendations which were outlined in the draft audit report of February 22, 2005.

This report stated an annual savings of \$2.1 million. The Southeast Area is in agreement with this savings. While our preliminary calculations indicate we should achieve the original estimated \$2.17 million annualized savings, we have found that after the entire process is completed, there is usually a difference from the projected estimated savings and the actual savings.

We have begun the implementation process of the 52 trips. We have entered 50 of the trips into the Southeast Area web-based service change request program. The last two recommendations will be entered into the program in the near future. Entering the changes into the service change request program is the first step in our implementation process. This change request process provides the network analyst an opportunity to review the revised schedule and other changes. If approved, the service change request moves to the contract specialist who negotiates the change with the contractor or solicits for a new contractor.

We have attached a summary of the status of all 52 recommendations. We are anticipating implementation of all 52 trips by April 15, 2005, with an estimated annual savings of \$2.1 million. We will provide you with an update of the final savings and implementation schedule in April.

William J. Bown

Attachment

225 N HUMPHREYS BLVD MEMPHS TN 38166-0100 901-747-7333 Fax: 901-747-7491

OIG BPI Audit - Summer 2004

			Jaci	sonville F	L				
HCR	Туре	OIG Recommendation	Original OIG Annual Savings	Entered into	HQ Approval	Received FAF	Additional Changes	Sent to SEA Contracts for implementation	Anticpated Implementation Date
32210		Change frequency and eliminate stop 801-804	\$155,431.86	Yes	Yes	THE THE REAL PROPERTY.	Travel & Load Time		April 15, 2005
32290		Combine 3 round trips	\$228,976.22	Yes	NAMES OF THE PERSON OF THE PER	Yes	No	completed	January 11, 2005
32298	intra	Combine 3 round trips, increase to 53 foot trailer	\$178,017,40	Yes	AND THE RESERVE	Pending	No		April 15, 2005
32299		Eliminate trips 803-804 on Saturday	\$16,881.00	Yes		Pending	No		April 15, 2005
32219	inter	Eliminate 5 holidays on Mondays trips 801&802	\$12,915.56	Yes	Yes	972000000000000000000000000000000000000	Travel & Load Time		April 15, 2005
			Me	mphis TN					
38111	inter	Eliminate Sunday trip 803 & 804	\$40,065.90	Yes	Yes	STATE OF THE STATE	Travel & Load Time		April 15, 2005
38114	inter	Eliminate Monday trip 803 &804	\$68,204,08	Yes	Yes	North State of	No		April 15, 2005
38115	inter	Eliminate Holidays on trips 801 & 802	To be determined	Yes	Yes	5010050050	Travel & Load Time		April 15, 2005
38117	inter	Eliminate Holidays on trips 801 & 802	To be determined	Yes	Yes	Sec. 25 (2007)	Travel & Load Time		April 15, 2005
38121	inter	Eliminate Holidays on trips 801 & 802	To be determined	Yes	Yes		Travel & Load Time		April 15, 2005
38123	inter	Eliminate Entire trips 801 & 802	\$319,340.22	Yes	Yes	SERVENCE POR	No		April 15, 2005
38693	intra	Eliminate Sundays on trips 801&802 (change to eliminate Sundays on 801 and Mondays on 804	\$50,099.27	Yes	e estate de la	Yes	No	completed	March 1, 2005
38694	intra	Eliminate Tuesdays on trips 801 & 802	\$40,766.10	Yes		Pending	No		April 15, 2005
			A	tlanta GA					
30095	intra	Eliminate round trip 805&806	\$140,865.62	Yes	9129000929	Pending	No		April 15, 2005
30118	intra	Eliminate trips 1,2,7,8,13,14	\$120,432.00	Yes		Pending	No		April 15, 2005
30190	intra	Eliminate Saturday on 801 & 802	\$28,441.92	Yes		Pending	No		April 15, 2005
30197	intra	Eliminate Saturday on 803 & 804	\$42,995.14	Yes		Pending	No		April 15, 2005
301U8	intra	Eliminate trips (801 & 802) and entire HCR	\$92,975.98	No		Pending	No		April 15, 2005
30291	intra	Eliminate Saturday on trips 801 & 802	\$32,624.98	Yes		Pending	No		April 15, 2005
30313	inter	Eliminate trips 801 & 802	\$276,179.64	Yes	Pending	Section 1989	No		April 15, 2005
30314	Inter	Eliminate Mondays on trips 801 & 802	\$80,242.08	Yes	Pending	NOTE OF STREET	No		April 15, 2005
30314	inter	Eliminate holidays on trips 801 & 802	\$12,344.94	Yes	Pending	B03316-156	No		April 15, 2005
30310	Inter	Eliminate Saturdays on trips 803 & 804	\$101,824.42	Yes	Pending	30 (0.00)	No	774 114	April 15, 2005
30310	inter	Eliminate holidays on trips 801 & 802	\$19,581.62	Yes	Pending	Design Street	No		April 15, 2005
30319	inter	Eliminate holidays on trips 801 & 802	\$18,860.06 \$2,078,066.01	Yes	Pending	12050300000	No		April 15, 2005