



Intelligent Mail® Postal Changes and the Impact to Municipal Mailers

The USPS describes it as “the next generation in the evolution of Postal Service barcode technology.” *Intelligent Mail®* is an enhanced barcode system developed by the Postal Service to facilitate the tracking of mail from pickup to delivery. Intelligent Mail also yields a number of side benefits for the sender, as discussed later in this article.

The Postal Service is taking a phased approach to the implementation of Intelligent Mail as the accepted method of encoding for mail automation and tracking. September 1, 2006 saw the launch of the Intelligent Mail barcode, used initially for letters. The USPS then expanded its usage to flats on May 1, 2007. Beginning in May 2009, a full-service Intelligent Mail option becomes available in addition to the existing basic option.

Currently, adoption of the Intelligent Mail barcode is optional, allowing business and organizations to continue using the POSTNET barcode for automation encoding and the PLANET Code barcode for tracking information encoding. This transitional period will effectively come to an end in May 2010, when Intelligent Mail barcodes will be required to qualify for automation pricing.

Still nearly 1½ years away, the May 2010 deadline affords

Postal Service customers time to plan for this major change in dealing with mass mailing.

According to USPS information on Intelligent Mail, the new encoding will contain information that will expedite delivery (such as the service type) and expanded tracking abilities (such as the mailer ID).

With this additional information, mail customers gain the ability to:

- Track mail at every level with a unique serial number generated for the specific mailing and incorporated into the barcode used for the mail, tray/sack and “container” (e.g. pallet, mail hamper)
- Receive payment details, including balance information, fee schedules, postage transactions and payment receipts
- Schedule appointments for the Destination Bulk Mail Center (DBMC), Destination Area Distribution Center (DADC) and Destination Sectional Center Facility (DSCF)
- Obtain “start-the-clock” feedback that indicates when the USPS received the mailing



- Improve address quality through the automated acquisition of non-delivery reasons and changes of address

Despite all the advantages the USPS cites for adopting the new technology that will allow mailers to retain existing postage discounts, there are impediments. Point’s research indicates that implementation of Intelligent Mail will be neither easy nor inexpensive. Although the Postal Service’s goal to reign in the amount of returned and forwarded mail is a sensible one, the impact of adoption will cause most municipalities to simply send tax bills at first class rates.

Having checked with our local Postmaster, the basic discount of presorted primary zip will still be available at a little over .02 cents per item, but without the Intelligent Mail encoding

discounts will end there.

In framing this article, Point is taking a proactive position as we come to terms with this new initiative. While we have been advocates of address correction for some time, the manner in which this is achieved is rapidly changing. This means that methods and/or approaches currently used will need to be adjusted to meet these needs.

As usual, we have some ideas on ways to solve this and have started discussions with both the USPS and Pitney Bowes on this matter. From these initial discussions, we believe there is an opportunity to perfect this data for our customers, meet the USPS Intelligent Mail initiatives and provide printing options for the new generation of bills that are possible from our ReportNET technology.



Calendar of Events

Date(s)	Event	Location
Oct. 6-10	IAAO Course 500: Assessment of Personal Property <i>Sponsored by the Massachusetts Chapter of IAAO</i>	Salonstall Building, 2 nd FL Conference Room D 100 Cambridge Street Boston, MA
Oct. 14-16	MAAO Fall Conference	The Williams Inn 1090 Main Street Williamstown, MA
Oct. 21	MCTA Fall Conference	The Log Cabin 500 Easthampton Road Holyoke, MA
Oct. 22	CCM Convention	Conn. Convention Center 100 Columbus Boulevard Hartford, CT
Nov. 13	CAAO Fall Meeting	Aqua Turf Club 556 Mulberry Street Southington, CT
Dec. 10	MCTA Holiday Meeting	Hogan Campus Center College of the Holy Cross 1 College Street Worcester, MA

Reap the Benefits of Farm Animal Excise Software

The Point collection system is flexible and robust, capable of managing a diverse set of commitment types – some that you may not even be aware that it handles. One example of this is farm animal excise.

In the Point system, farm animal excise is treated as a separate commitment type. This allows it to have its own interest dates, tax rates, and billing parameters.

Implementing farm animal excise is a simple matter for Point users. The assessors' office just needs to supply us with a file and we will take care of converting it into a commitment, ready for producing bills.

Like other commitments these bills can be issued on a quarterly or semi-annual billing cycle, are subject to interest defined by the customer and will trig-



ger interest calculation on all overdue amounts.

Demand notices may also be issued and the commitment may be searched using standard indexing methods typical to the system. The best news is that this commitment type is already part of most customers' software at no additional charge.

To learn more about the farm animal excise features of our software, please contact us 1.800.368.9538.

Tech Tips

Security. It's something every computer user worries about, and rightly so with the persistent danger of identity theft posed by spyware.

Most people are aware that there are a number of anti-spyware programs and tools available to protect against the threat of identity theft lurking on the Internet. What they may not realize is that their PC contains built-in features for dealing with this issue on a more local level.

These features are nothing new, but they are often overlooked. We tend to take it for granted that our office computer is safe internally. However, if you consider that your software manages millions of dollars of revenue, you cannot make that assumption. Below are some ways to access the security features in Windows XP.

Accessing Windows Security

You can access the Windows Security features by pressing **Ctrl+Alt+Delete**.

Locking the Computer

When you will be away from your desk, you should lock your computer so that others cannot use it.

To lock the computer, access Windows Security then click **Lock Computer**.

To unlock the computer when you return, press **Ctrl+Alt+Delete** then enter your password.

Changing Your Password

Users often make the mistake of choosing a password that is too easy to guess. Create a strong password using Microsoft's tips:

<http://www.microsoft.com/protect/yourself/password/create.mspx>

You can then change your password by accessing Windows Security, clicking **Change Password**, then entering the old and new passwords as prompted.