

REPORT ON
THE
OKALOOSA COUNTY COURIER SYSTEM

September 2007

PREFACE

The Okaloosa-Walton College Institute for Senior Professionals is a service organization committed to providing opportunities for talented retired individuals to continue to make contributions in support of the community and the college's programs and activities through participation in problem solving, economic development of the college district and volunteer participation in the college's educational programs.

Since its inception, the ISP has become involved in such topics as educational funding, governmental consolidation, transportation, county fee structure, county facility needs for the future, and management of the county school system among others.

This report entitled "**Report on the Okaloosa County Courier System**" was accomplished by the ISP and members, Howard Dimmig and Larmon Salmon, at the request of the Assistant Administrator of Okaloosa County, Donna Miller, to whom this report is presented. For ease of presentation and understanding, the following are used throughout the report:

DOPU – Drop Off/Pick Up of items/mail

STOP – Park and exit the van to make DOPUs

INTRODUCTION

The Assistant County Administrator of Okaloosa County requested that the ISP study the Okaloosa County Courier Service with a view to improving the efficiency of the system.

The county provides a courier service mail delivery to some thirty-five (35) county entities and constitutional offices in both the north and south portions of the county. This service is provided to the constitutional offices gratis. A majority of the offices are provided DOPU services twice or more each business day, resulting in some ninety-seven (97) DOPUs. This requires approximately 150 miles travel of the courier van daily. At the present time, the county recognizes that an additional three (3) locations will be added to the courier route within the foreseeable future.

To better understand the intricacies and problems of the courier service, a member of the ISP study group traveled with the courier for the entire route one day. The full and pleasant cooperation of the single employee of the system was clearly outstanding and essential to a full understanding of the system.

As the system is presently operated, the courier makes thirty-three (33) STOPS and ninety-seven (97) DOPUs each day. The courier is also required to sort some pieces of mail during the delivery run.

OBSERVATIONS – DISCUSSION

As a result of evaluation of the information gained during the full day travel with the courier and data provided by the person in charge of the courier service, the ISP study team met with senior representatives of the Clerk of Courts, Supervisor of Elections, and the Sheriff's Office which accounted for a significant portion of the DOPU service each day. These discussions centered on the need for repeated DOPU each day with emphasis on the need for both a.m. and p.m. services. It became apparent that both a.m. and p.m. visits were required to properly service the citizens of the county.

A major part of the courier workload is the multiple DOPU service at many of the 33 STOPS. This is particularly the case at the County Courthouse, the Courthouse Annex, and the Water and Sewer Administrative Building with a total of 53 DOPUs each day.

Recognizing that the courier is required to make 33 STOPS and 97 DOPUs with a drive of some 150 miles, and is expected to sort some mail while on the run, it is apparent that the courier is in a stressful environment throughout his daily runs. He is only able to meet the

schedule so long as there are no significant weather events, no unusually heavy traffic and accident tie ups or mechanical problems with the van. It should be understood that the van the courier uses was not designed for the purpose nor is it internally configured to facilitate this type of use.

That the courier, Mr. Steve Garrett, can accomplish the assigned tasks while all the time exhibiting a cheerful, friendly and yet professional demeanor to all “customers” is a true tribute to him and the county is indeed fortunate to have such a dedicated and effective employee.

CONCLUSIONS

- There is a valid need for multiple DOPU services for several of the offices serviced as well as for both a.m. and p.m. service.
- The requirement that the courier provide daily DOPU to each of the offices presently scheduled is not justified and markedly increases the courier’s workload.
- The requirement that DOPU be provided to the location of each office is not justified. One central DOPU at each STOP would significantly reduce courier workload.
- The addition of three STOPS to come on-line in the foreseeable future will overload the system and cannot be accomplished without significant changes in the present method of operation.
- There are some customers who cannot justify daily DOPU and should be changed to on-call service.
- The courier’s van design/lay-out is not adequate for the assigned use.
- The workload/environment for the courier is such that the program could be characterized as stressful due to the production schedule. The fact that there has not been an accident is attributed to Mr. Garrett’s professionalism and extreme care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A single DOPU station be established for each STOP, especially for the Courthouse, Courthouse Annex, Water and Sewer Administrative Building, Brackin Building, and the Human Resources Building.
- The several offices at each STOP be responsible for delivery/retrieving of items at the single DOPU station.

- A vehicle specifically designed/configured for the courier be provided forthwith.
- The county attorney, Facility Maintenance, Agricultural Extension Agent and Airport be established as on-call stops.
- The Tax Collector and Property Appraiser DOPUs be consolidated to one DOPU.
- The Sheriff's Office, South use the Courthouse Annex DOPU.
- The practicability of the constitutional offices providing remunerating for courier services be evaluated.