OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

May 28, 2008

THOMAS G. DAY
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, INTELLIGENT MAIL AND ADDRESS QUALITY

WALTER O'TORMEY
VICE PRESIDENT, ENGINEERING

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Status of Intelligent Mail Enabling Infrastructure
          (Report Number DA-AR-08-005(R))

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of the status of Intelligent Mail (IM) enabling infrastructure (Project Number 08YG005DA000). Our objectives were to evaluate the readiness of the key mail processing equipment (MPE), the status of nesting abilities, the progress of the Mail Processing Infrastructure (MPI) Phase III, and the status of the Integrated Data System (IDS)/National Directory Support System (NDSS) server consolidation program. Click here to go to Appendix A for additional information about this audit.

Conclusion

Intelligent Mail Infrastructure Support Implementation

We determined that management has upgraded key letter and flat MPE and the MPE is capable of scanning the new Intelligent Mail barcode (IMB). In addition, more than 300 U.S. Postal Service facilities have been upgraded with increased network capacity due to the early completion of Phase III of the MPI program. Therefore, these IM components are ready to support IM implementation.

The Postal Service material handling group is taking proactive steps to prepare for the transition to the 24-digit IM tray barcode, which will enhance nesting abilities. However, clarification of requirements is needed to ensure material handling systems fully support future IM programs. Click here to go to Appendix B for our detailed analysis of this topic.

We recommend the Senior Vice President, Intelligent Mail and Address Quality, in coordination with the Vice President, Engineering:

1. Clarify the 24-digit barcode requirements and funding for material handling systems.

Adherence to Integrated Data System/National Directory Support System Consolidation Schedule Critical

The IDS/NDSS server consolidation program Decision Analysis Report (DAR) approval and deployment schedule is critical to IM implementation. The program must be on schedule in order to support future IM programs. However, in the event there is a schedule slippage, the Postal Service has devised a contingency plan which consists of establishing month-to-month maintenance contracts for both legacy systems. If maintenance suppliers are unable to serve remote facilities, the Postal Service will use National Remote Processing Computers (NRPC).[1] These micro-computers would replace failed units on an emergency basis, until management deploys new servers. However, the expected service life and maintenance agreement for the micro-computers will expire in 2009. Therefore, management needs to consider extended maintenance contracts for these NRPCs or develop other contingency plans. Click here to go to Appendix B for our detailed analysis of this topic.

We recommend the Senior Vice President Intelligent Mail and Address Quality, in coordination with the Vice President, Engineering:

2. Ensure contingency plans for the Integrated Data System/National Directory Support System server consolidation program include extended maintenance for microcomputers or provide for other appropriate contingency plans if deployment is delayed beyond 2009.

Management's Comments

Management agreed with the recommendations. In response to recommendation 1, management highlighted key actions. For the first action, Intelligent Mail and Address Quality, in conjunction with Engineering, finalized the specifications for the 24-digit tray label. This was completed and made available to customers on May 16, 2008. For the second action, Engineering will use existing funds to upgrade material handling systems to read the 24-digit tray label in time for the May 2009 offering date.

To address recommendation 2, management plans to establish monthly maintenance contracts for legacy systems before January 2009 if deployment is delayed. Management also plans to extend NRPC maintenance coverage at remote processing locations beyond 2009.

Management's comments, in their entirety, are included in Appendix D.

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[1] The NRPC is a microcomputer-based system that provides the IDS data collection functionality for MPE at remote processing facilities. It also provides functionality at those sites that do not have a co-located NDSS computer. The NRPC was purchased in late 2004 and has a 5-year maintenance agreement and expected service life.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

The U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) considers management's comments responsive to the recommendations, and the corrective actions should resolve the issues identified in the report.

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

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Miguel Castillo, Director, Engineering, or me at (703) 248-2100.

E-Signed by Darrell E. Benjamin,
VERIFY authenticity with ApproveIt

Darrell E. Benjamin, Jr.
Deputy Assistant Inspector General
  for Support Operations

Attachments

cc: Patrick R. Donahoe
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APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

The Postal Service presented the IM Corporate Plan in 2003 to explain their OneCode Vision. OneCode Vision refers to an information-rich code on all mail, aggregates of mail, and business forms that enables end-to-end visibility into the mail stream. The plan identifies three key strategies for achieving this vision: (1) uniquely identify mail and aggregates, (2) develop and deploy enabling infrastructure, and (3) enhance address quality. This audit evaluates aspects of the second strategy of the corporate plan.

Infrastructure is the hardware, software, telecommunications system, power, data wiring, and associated support necessary to underpin business applications. The information-sharing requirements of a successful IM effort depend upon suitable infrastructure being in place where needed, when needed. The IM program focuses on the infrastructure components that are (a) not currently in place or are in need of upgrading and (b) critical to successfully creating a knowledge-based IM system.

In evaluating the IM infrastructure, the key components to consider are the mail platforms which are being upgraded to accommodate IM data capture and collection; visibility of mail by tracking (nesting); the upgrade of plant data wiring (MPI program); and the upgrade and consolidation of the IDS and NDSS. IDS is the resource for the collection and distribution of mailpiece, tray, and container tracking data and NDSS maintains all mail processing sort programs and address directory files.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

Our objectives were to evaluate the readiness of key MPE, the status of nesting abilities, the progress of the MPI Phase III, and the status of the IDS/NDSS server consolidation program.

To accomplish our objectives, we interviewed Engineering personnel to determine the minimum software version required for IMB readiness of each MPE designed to read the IMB. We interviewed maintenance personnel to determine whether they released the applicable software to the field. We consulted with OIG experts to determine the appropriate methods for accurately evaluating the readiness of key MPE. Also, we consulted with IM Planning and Standards personnel to develop testing of key MPE to determine their capabilities for capturing IM scanned barcode data. Subsequently, we obtained and analyzed test results from scanned data compiled nationally by site, machine type, and automated area distribution center (AADC) after barcode tests were developed.

Additionally, we analyzed documentation and interviewed program management and Marketing and IM personnel regarding the status of nesting abilities, completion of Phase III of the MPI program, and the progress of the IDS/NDSS server consolidation program.

Further, we obtained data from the IDS and Electronic Maintenance Activity Reporting and Scheduling System (eMARS)[2] databases to evaluate the MPE's capabilities for scanning data from the IMB. Previous OIG reports related to these systems did not reveal weaknesses that would impact our audit.

We conducted this performance audit from November 2007 through May 2008 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards and included such tests of internal controls as we considered necessary under the circumstances. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We discussed our observations and conclusions with management officials on April 15, 2008, and included their comments where appropriate.

PRIOR AUDIT COVERAGE

We did not identify any prior OIG audits or reviews related to the objectives of this audit.

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[2] The eMARS is a computerized maintenance management information system that provides field maintenance personnel with the ability to schedule maintenance and personnel, track labor and material costs, maintain a spare parts inventory, and report on maintenance.

<u>APPENDIX B: DETAILED ANALYSIS</u>

Key Mail Processing Equipment Ready for Implementation

Letters and flats MPE are ready for implementation of the IMB. Since 2003, the IM Planning and Standards team has been compiling a weekly report from national IMB scan data obtained from the IDS group. We worked with IM analysts to develop two tests to evaluate whether key MPE was capable of reading and reporting the IMB. The testing criteria for the two tests are listed in Table 1:

Table 1. Testing Criteria for IM Barcode MPE Readiness

Testing Criteria	Test One	Test Two
Type of Data Extracted	All national IMB scans	Destination Confirm mailings
Source of Data	IDS	Confirm
Type of MPE Tested	IM-related MPE universe	IM-related MPE universe
Type of Mailings Examined	Letters and flats	Letters and flats
Reporting Category	By machine type, area, and site (office name)	By AADCs
Period of Time Tested	One full month of data - Nov. 2007	One full month of data - Nov. 2007
Purpose of Testing	To determine whether MPE, nationwide, is capable of scanning IMB	To determine whether applicable MPE is able to process IMB scans
Category of Exceptions Noted	MPE not reporting scans	AADCs not reporting scans

Test One – IDS National Scans

The data for Test One was compiled from IMB scans reported nationally from upgraded MPE[3] during November 2007. As indicated in Table 2, Test One results show the IMB scan counts per machine type and site for letter and flats mailings. Also, machines not reporting IMB scans during the same timeframe were identified.

Table 2. Total National IM Barcode Scan Counts from IDS in November 2007

Machine Type[4]	Number of Machines	Number of Machines with No IMB Scans Reported	Percentage of Machines Not Reporting	Number of IMB Scans Reported
AFSM100	530	8	1.5	12,685,372
CIOSS	278	0	0.0	49,096,828
CSBCS	2,664	1	0.0	153,225,160
DBCS	3,734	7	0.2	714,054,449
DBCSEC	1	0	0.0	52,797
DBOCR	8	0	0.0	1,682,764
DBOSS	884	1	0.1	164,390,769
DIOSS	807	2	0.2	98,938,108
UFSM1000	281	40	14.2[5]	918,596
WFOVMP	182	3	1.6	21,275,292
Grand Total	9,369	62	0.7	1,216,320,135

Only equipment upgraded with the proper software release can properly process IMB scans. Therefore, Test One concluded:

- 1.2 billion IMB scans were reported nationally.
- Key MPE were capable of reporting IMB scans.
- 99.3 percent of the IMB-related MPE universe reported scan activity.
- 0.7 percent of MPE did not report IMB scans.[6]

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[3] Identified under 'Machine Type' in Table 3.
[4] See Glossary in Appendix C for MPE descriptions.
[5] UFSM1000 has the ability to operate in the manual keying mode where data is not reportable via IDS. Without the 14.2 percent figure for UFSM1000s, the percentage of non-reporting machines would decrease significantly. However, we can not determine what portion of the 14.2 percent may be due to the lack of upgraded MPE.
[6] There are factors other than lack of software upgrades (e.g., insufficient IMB mail volume) that could be attributed to a machine not reporting IMB scans for a month. Thus, these machines are not necessarily incapable of processing IMB scans.

Test Two – Destination Confirm Scans

The data for Test Two[7] was compiled from Destination Confirm scans from three test mailers during November 2007, as well as mailings prepared by the National Customer Support Center during the same period. The test data breakdown was by AADC. This test was developed to analyze scans from the Confirm mailings and to determine if the IMB is being read and reported nationally for all AADCs. Test Two results showed that:

- 60.1 million Confirm scans were reported nationally.

- The four mailers reported Confirm scans matching their unique mailing from virtually all AADCs.

- Exceptions (not reporting scans) noted were minor events. They were:

    (1) Two Air Mail Facilities (AMFs) – These sites are military mail processing facilities which are unlikely to have IMB mail.

    (2) Two AADCs – Exceptions could be due to both facilities processing limited amounts of mail or no mail being processed because of their unique situations. During our testing, we determined these two sites were offline (no connectivity to the reporting network).

    (3) Three additional AADCs that did not report any IM barcode scans for flat mailings. However, the mailer's presence in these AADCs is very minimal and we do not consider these to be errors.

Therefore, both tests confirmed the scanning capability of both letters and flats by site, machine type, area, and AADC. Furthermore, the tests confirmed that appropriate software upgrades were installed with at least the minimum software version on MPE enabling adequate reading of the IMB. Through these two tests, we were also able to conclude that the MPE was scanning the IMB and the IDS is adequately collecting and transmitting scanned data.

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[7] See glossary in Appendix C for more detailed descriptions of testing terminology.

Postal Service is Taking Proactive Role in Nesting Readiness

The 2003 IM Corporate Plan states that, to the extent that it can be done economically, one-to-one nesting[8] information will be captured. As mailpieces are collected into trays, knowing which mailpiece is in which tray enables the visibility of the individual pieces to be maintained by tracking those trays. These nesting capabilities support future IM program requirements.

The Postal Service has proposed that customers display their mailings' nesting relationship on electronic manifests. For these mailings, the manifest will list each container, the trays in each container, and the unique mailpiece identifier number within each tray. According to mailer feedback, there is a concern about the additional investment costs in producing these manifests without knowing the return on investment. Most of the concerned mailers currently use Multi-Line Optical Character Readers (MLOCRs).[9] However, the Postal Service is presently taking measures to work with vendors to ensure that software is developed for MLOCR users to enable the generation of the electronic manifests.

We determined that some of the IMB-related tools capable of capturing nesting data are the: (1) Intelligent Mail Data Acquisition System (IMDAS), which are hand-held scanners capable of capturing the container, tray, and mailpiece IMB; (2) key MPE evaluated during this audit, which are capable of scanning the IMB; (3) Material Handling Systems, which can read the 10/24-digit transitional IMB tray labels and are being surveyed to prepare for the 24-digit IMB tray labels; and (4) Surface Visibility scanners, which have the ability to scan IMB container labels.

In further evaluating Postal Service nesting abilities, we interviewed the Postal Service's material handling group to determine the ability of material handling systems to scan the IMB tray and container labels. We determined that all robotics and tray management systems are capable of reading the 24-digit IM tray label barcode. Also, all standard low cost tray sorters deployed during and after Phase I of the surface visibility program are capable of reading the 24-digit IM tray label barcode. However, the remainder of the material handling fleet is currently not capable of reading the IMB.

Presently, all material handling equipment is capable of reading the 10-digit portion of the 10/24-digit barcode label. Although there are no requirements set for upgrading equipment to scan the 24-digit IM tray barcode, we commend the Material Handling Group for proactively mitigating the transition to a 24-digit IM tray barcode environment. Specifically, they have initiated a survey of the current fleet of material handling/fixed mechanization systems to determine the extent of work necessary to ensure these systems can support the 24-digit IM tray barcode. Their proactive measures should reduce the risk of operational disruptions in the event of a full transition from the 10/24-digit tray barcode format to the 24-digit only format. However, material handling systems

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[8] Nesting is defined as the association of handling units (tubs, trays, sacks) to a container (rolling stock—general purpose mail containers, universal mail containers, hampers, and pallets).
[9] See Appendix C for further description of MLOCR.

may not be fully ready to support the complete transition to a 24-digit tray label without clear technical requirements and support funding.

MPI Program, Phase III, Ready for Implementation

Prior to the MPI Program, the data wiring bandwidth in most mail processing plants was incapable of accommodating new business applications. However, implementation of this program resolved the critical shortcoming in plant bandwidth by installing networks to maximize performance, as well as ensure integrity of the data traffic required for IM. MPI replaced copper wiring with fiber optic cables to provide an extremely high data communication capacity. MPI also uses a configuration of digital switches to segment the local area network into a collection of small sub-networks.

We determined that management completed deployment of MPI, Phase III, in September 2007, about 3 months ahead of schedule and $8 million[10] below the DAR-approved budget. The total number of sites to be upgraded in MPI, Phase III, was 166 (158 processing and distribution centers [P&DCs] and eight remote encoding centers [RECs]).

Engineers conducted a final inspection and test of the MPI system before accepting it to assure optimal performance. Checklists used for testing upgraded sites show each site successfully passed technical requirements. Program management of MPI Phase III stated there are still plants and RECs that management has not updated. However, selection criteria were used to identify sites with the greatest need, which was determined based on the number of network connected machines and data communication requirements. High-priority sites have been upgraded and are ready for IM program implementation.

Adherence to IDS/NDSS Consolidation Schedule Critical

IDS is the resource for the collection and distribution of mailpiece, tray, and container tracking data as well as mail processing and machine status data from all automated mail processing and material handling equipment. It is also a system for IMD compilation for several Postal Service systems. The IDS is currently capable of collecting and transmitting scanned data, as evidenced by our earlier test analyses of the readiness of key MPE.

Both the IDS and NDSS have reached end-of-life status and replacement is planned via the IDS/NDSS server consolidation program in order to sustain current operations. The January 7, 2008, DAR projects a contract award for the program in May 2008 and deployment from January to July 2009.

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[10] According to MPI Phase III Program management and the DAR, $3.7 million in contingency funding was not used. Even though this amount is included in the $8 million surplus amount, the program was still completed under budget.

Schedule slippage would become critical in late 2009 due to the deployment of other IM-related programs. However, in the event of a schedule slippage, the Postal Service has already devised a contingency plan. The plan consists of establishing month-to-month maintenance contracts for both legacy systems. If monthly maintenance contracts are unable to serve the legacy systems at remote facilities, they will use NRPC systems. These micro-computers would replace failed units, on an emergency basis, until management deploys new servers. However, the expected service life and maintenance agreement for the micro-computers will expire in 2009. Therefore, management needs to consider extended maintenance contracts for these NRPCs along with other potential contingency plans.

We also determined the Postal Service has prepared for future expansion of the IDS/NDSS servers. The anticipated platform will consolidate the two systems into one cabinet and allow additional servers to be added for future program expansion and more network capabilities.

Additionally, during our fieldwork we noted a concern relating to IDS data discrepancies. As of March 2008, IDS data discrepancy issues amounted to 3 to 4 percent of IMB scans. To remedy the situation, the Postal Service developed software fixes which are undergoing testing. As a result, we conclude the IDS/NDSS server consolidation program will be ready for IMB implementation within the program schedule.

APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Terminology Used in Appendix B

Term	Description
10/24-Digit (transitional) Tray Label	The Postal Service developed a transitional label that includes both a 10-digit barcode and a new 24-digit IM tray barcode. This short-term strategy allows the Postal Service to incrementally upgrade its infrastructure to recognize the final 24-digit IM tray label.
24-Digit Tray Label	The tray barcode will be required on letter trays, flat trays, and sacks. Unlike the current 10-digit tray barcode that only contains routing information, the 24-digit IM tray barcode includes additional fields to identify the mailer and uniquely number each tray or sack.
Automated Area Distribution Center (AADC)	An AADC is a mail processing facility that receives, processes, and distributes mail destined for specific ZIP Code areas under the Managed Mail Program.
Container Label	The IM container barcode will be required on all containers used to transport mail. This 21-digit IM container barcode includes fields to identify the mailer and uniquely number each container.
Destination Confirm Service	Allows mailers to uniquely identify and receive an electronic notification with mail processing data for outgoing mailpieces.
Electronic Uncoded Address Resolution System (eUARS)	The eUARS generates a mailing when a customer submits a change of address with a new address that cannot be matched to a ZIP+4 in the Address Management System database and when uncoded Address Element Corrections are created.
Intelligent Mail Barcode (IMB)	The 65-bar IMB, which accommodates 31 digits of data, is used to sort and track letters and flats.
Intelligent Mail Data Acquisition System (IMDAS) scanners	The IMDAS hand-held scanners support tracking mailpieces, unit loads, transportation, inventory, and performance operations.
Move Validation Letter (MVL)	The MVL is sent to a customer's old address by the National Customer Service Center immediately upon receipt of electronically transmitted change of address information.
Multiline Optical Character Reader (MLOCR)	The MLOCR allows licensed users, using automation-compatible mail, to automatically check names and addresses against a national Postal Service database that contains only permanent changes of address as their mail is processed.
Remittance Mailing	A payment which is typically in the form of a check mailed in a Courtesy Reply Envelope by way of First-Class Mail®.
Robotics System	Tray loading system that automatically sorts and loads sleeved, strapped, and open mail trays/tubs into mail containers or onto pallets.
Surface Visibility Scanners	Wireless, hand-held devices that collect real-time data at the handling unit (sack, tray, tub), container, and trailer levels in order to track volume throughout the surface transportation network.
Tray Management System	A custom-engineered transportation and information system that automates the movement of trays of mail within a plant.

Terminology for Key MPE for Letter/Flat Mail

Acronym	MPE	Description
AFSM 100	Automated Flats Sorting Machine 100	A fully automated flats sorting machine designed to streamline flats mail processing.
CIOSS	Combined Input Output Subsystem	Provided as a kit upgrade to DBCS machines (both standard and Extended Capability) and provides full DIOSS functionality. It is also configured with the Wide Field of View (WFOV) camera system.
CSBCS	Carrier Sequence Barcode Sorter	The first piece of computerized mail sorting equipment designed for use at delivery units.
DBCS	Delivery Barcode Sorter	A multilevel, high-speed barcode sorter which sorts mail in carrier walk sequence, eliminating the need for additional sorting at the delivery unit. The DBCS uses the WFOV camera system, which is a barcode reader that performs image capture and processing of multiple barcodes, including the IMB.
DBCSEC	Delivery Barcode Sorter Extended Capability	The DBCSEC has expanded capabilities allowing it to sort taller, thicker mail employees would normally sort by hand.
DBOCR	Delivery Barcode Sorter/Optical Character Reader	A DBCS enhanced with Optical Character Reader capability which can locate and read addresses on mail that bypasses the Advanced Facer Canceller System.
DBOSS	Delivery Barcode Sorter/Output Subsystem	The DBCS/OSS applies PostNET barcodes and sorts the letters into cartridges. Also, see DBCS description above.
DIOSS	Delivery Barcode Sorter with Input Subsystem and Output Subsystem	See DBCS description above.
UFSM 1000	Upgraded Flats Sorting Machine 1000	Machine that can sort flat mailpieces that are beyond the size range of the AFSM 100s.
WFOVMP	Wide Field of View Mail Processing Bar Code Sorter	These are stand-alone WFOV cameras that are add-ons to the Mail Processing Bar Code Sorter/Output Subsystem machines

APPENDIX D: MANAGEMENT'S COMMENTS

**UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE**

May 12, 2008

JOHNSON JOHN
ACTING DIRECTOR, AUDIT OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Draft Audit Report – Status of Intelligent Mail Enabling Infrastructure
              (Report NumberDA-AR-08-DRAFT)

We have reviewed the OIG's April 25 audit report on the Status of Intelligent Mail (IM) Enabling Infrastructure. The report accurately identifies that the mail processing equipment has been upgraded and is capable of scanning the new intelligent Mail Barcode (IMB). The capabilities implemented in support of IM initiatives enable the U.S. Postal Service to enhance mailpiece tracking visibility and establish the basis for offering IMB services to its customers.

Recommendations

We recommend the Senior Vice President, Intelligent Mail, in Coordination with Vice President, Engineering:

1.   Clarify the 24-digit barcode requirements and funding for material handling systems.

We agree that clear 24-digit barcode requirements with supported funding are necessary towards the success of the Intelligent Mail Enabling Infrastructure. Engineering has reviewed the revised tray label specification and understands the requirements for reading the 24-digit code on material handling systems. The following represents the approach Engineering will follow when making changes to equipment to support the 24-digit bar code:

   ➢ The 24-digit barcode requirements will be finalized and announced to customers not later than May 16, 2008.
   ➢ Material handling bar code scanning equipment will be modified to read a 24-digit bar code. The modification will provide a 10-digit result from a 24-digit bar code so that sorter/tray system control hardware/software does not need to be modified. This will be accomplished in time for the May 2009 implementation of the Full Service Intelligent Mail Barcode.
   ➢ In mailer tray induction scanning locations where the 24-digit data needs to flow to an external system (through IDS for example), a second port on the scanner (if available) or the USPS designed E-Box will provide the separate path for the 24-digit data. This will be accomplished in time for the May 2009 implementation of the Full Service Intelligent Mail Barcode.

This should provide necessary capability at a fraction of original cost estimates. Capital funds to accomplish this work are available within Engineering's existing budget.

2.   Ensure contingency plans for the Integrated Data System/National Directory Support System server consolidation program include extended maintenance for micro-computers or provide for other appropriate contingency plans if deployment is delayed beyond 2009.

- 2 -

We agree that contingency plans for the Integrated Data System/National Directory Support System server consolidation program will include other appropriate contingency plans if deployment is delayed beyond 2009. Engineering has devised a contingency plan for the Integrated Data System/National Directory Support System consolidation program prior to Board approval, which included extending the legacy integrated data system servers' maintenance contract until January 2009. As part of this contingency plan, we will also establish a monthly maintenance contract after January 2009 to extend the maintenance coverage in the event of a schedule slippage.

In addition, for NRPCs (micro-computers) located at remote facilities, we will consider plans to extend the NRPC maintenance contract for the strict purpose of continuing the service coverage at remote sites beyond 2009.

Action:
- Establish monthly maintenance contract for legacy systems prior to January 2009 if program schedule slippage occurs.
- Consider plans to extend existing NRPC maintenance contract for the purpose of providing maintenance coverage at remote sites beyond 2009.

Conclusion

In general, we agree with many of your findings and have already taken steps to mitigate risks associated with potential IDS/NDSS consolidation program schedule slippage prior to this audit. We look forward to providing the field offices with systems that will improve data flow, automation support and customer satisfaction. If you have any questions or request further information on this response, please contact Tim Gribben, Manager, Mail Technology Strategy at 202-268-8030,
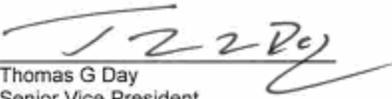
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