Postal Service Starts Electronic Mail Service; Same-Day Delivery Plan Proposed

The Postal Service Board of Governors last week authorized temporary implementation of E-COM service, an advanced electronic message service for large volume mailers. It also approved filing with the Postal rate Commission for a new same-day delivery service within major metropolitan

E-COM service was first proposed to the Postal Rate Commission September 8 as a subclass of first class mail. The Postal Reorganization Act permits the Postal Service to implement such services on mission has not rendered a decision within 30 days. In the meantime, the Commission has scheduled formal hearings on the filing to begin February 5.

The Governors' approval permits the Postal Service to implement E-COM service starting on or about December 18. Initially, five private corporations, representing the manufacturing, oil, insurance, finance and utility industries, will participate. An estimated 60 companies will be added to the system during the 15month initial phase.

messages will range from 30 cents for volumes over 50,000 messages over four weeks to 55 cents for the minimum four week volume of 5,000 mess-

An additional fee of 10 cents will be charged for two-page messages.

Primary users of the service will be customers who depend on the mails as a billing and invoice media. E-COM's speed and consistency of delivery also will be suited for other communications such as price change, product recall, and new product announcements. In other actions, the Governors authorized filing with the Postal Rate Commission for an Express Mail Metro Service, aimed at providing highly expedited same-day delivery of time-sensitive materials within the local business com-

munity.

A subclass of Express Mail, Metro Service would allow customers to bring letters or packages to one of several designated post offices in a given metropolitan area before 10 a.m. for delivery before 5 p.m. Items deposited by noon at a main post office in a city also would receive deliv-ery before 5 p.m. In addition. mail deposited at designated post offices by 5 p.m. would be delivered by 10 a.m. the next morning. Pick-up of mail at the customer's premises would be available on a pre-arranged, scheduled basis.

Metro Service could start 100 days after filing, or as soon as April 1, in Chicago, Columbus, Ohio and Gulfport, Mississippi. An additional 22 metropolitan areas are planned for

1979. Postal Service officials plan full operation of Metro Service by mid 1981. Delivery standards would be

implementation by October

backed by a service guarantee that provides full postage re-fund if delivery is late. Standard Express Mail insurance will be provided at no additio-

nal cost. Three rates are proposed: \$9 for items up to one pound, \$12 for materilas weighing over one and up to eight pounds and \$15 for pieces over eight up to 70 pounds in weight. A charge of \$5.25 will be made for pick-up service.

Postmaker General William F. Bolger said "the new ser-vice would fill a need for guaranteed same-day deliv-

ery of letters, business document, data and merchan-dise." Postal Serice surveys indicated market demand currently was being met in part by private messenger services but that approximately 76 percent of this volume is sent by companies using their own employees to effect same-day

delivery. Postal Service estimates place the potential volume at 66.3 million pieces annually. FY 1980 volume, however, is expected to reach 9.1 million pieces generating revenues of \$97 million. Projecting normal

growth, the service could generate \$350 million in five years, half the full projected potential of the market.

Monthly Meeting Instead of a regular monthly meeting in December, the Metrolina Chapter of N.O.W. highlights its '78 membership drive with a wine and cheese party on Sunday, December 17, from 4 p.m. 6 p.m. at the Charlotte Friends Meeting

House, 2327 Remount Rd. Special guest will be Observer columnist Harriet Doar. All interested persons



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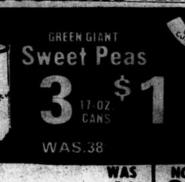
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