Intelligent Mail Barcode

How would you define the Intelligent Mail barcode?

The intelligent Mail barcode (formerly known as the 4-State Customer Barcode) is the next generation of USPS barcode technology used to sort and track letters and flats. It combines the capabilities of the POSTNET barcode (for routing mailpieces) and the PLANET Code barcode (for scanning and tracking inbound and outbound mail) into one unique barcode and also includes capabilities for Address Change Service, called OneCode ACS.

According to the August 2008 Federal Register, the USPS will implement the basic and Full-service options of the Intelligent Mail barcode on May 11, 2009.

Pricing for the POSTNET and basic Intelligent Mail barcode are expected to be set at the same price and was announced in February 2009 to take effect on May 11, 2009. Pricing for the FULL-service option of the Intelligent Mail barcode was also announced in February 2009 but will not take effect until the fall of 2009.

The POSTNET barcode will remain eligible for automation prices until May 2011.

Relative to reply mail, according to that August 2008 Federal Register, Qualified Business Reply Mail (QBRM) and Permit Reply Mail (PRM) will be required to use Intelligent Mail barcodes, including Mailer ID's, effective May 2010. BRM or Courtesy Reply Mail (CRM) pieces will not be required to have Intelligent Mail barcodes until May, 2011.

What are some of the advantages of using the Intelligent Mail barcode vs. POSTNET?

While the POSTNET barcode essentially serves to route mailpieces, the Intelligent Mail barcode offers business mailers many additional benefits, such as reducing undeliverable as addressed mail with the OneCode ACS (Address Change Service).

The USPS hasn't clearly defined the pricing structure for automation mail with the Intelligent Mail barcode, but it does indicate that postage pricing for the Full Service option will be lower than that of the Basic option.

The Intelligent Mail barcode also enables mailers to have more visibility into the processing and delivery of their mailpieces. Using the full-service Intelligent Mail barcode, the USPS will provide free "Start the Clock" information. At some point, Seamless Acceptance also will be available and will further reduce the mail processing time requirements of inducting the mail into the postal system.

Mailers will be able to track mail with end-to-end visibility using the OneCode CONFIRM. Mailers will know when revenue-generating mailpieces have arrived, so that they can maximize marketing resources. For return and remittance mail, businesses will know when their customers have mailed payments. This can improve operational efficiencies.

What is the Intelligent Mail barcode?

The Intelligent Mail barcode (IMB) can uniquely identify every piece of mail entering the postal system, a first for the USPS. This technology will enable unprecedented visibility into the postal network for mailers and for the Postal Service itself. For example, the advanced barcode will enable mailers to track all outbound statements and inbound payments, greatly improving customer communications when there is a question about a bill or payment.

First introduced in 2006, the bar code largely has been a voluntary program for mailers. More than one billion pieces of mail have already been processed with the new technology, and in 2009, the Postal Service is expected to make it a mandatory requirement for mailers who want to receive certain postal discounts.

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Who is the most likely to be impacted by Intelligent Mail barcodes?

Eventually, all mailers seeking automation-price discounts, regardless of their actual volumes, will be impacted by the Intelligent Mail barcode. A mailer or printer seeking the deepest postal discounts, low or no-cost address notifications, tracking capabilities and visibility into their mailings will benefit from the Intelligent Mail barcode.

What does Move Update compliance entail?

The Move Update standard is a means of reducing the number of mailpieces in a mailing that require forwarding or return by a periodic matching of a mailer's address records with customer-filed change-of-address orders received and maintained by the Postal Service. The intent is to reduce the costs associated with the handling of undeliverable as addressed mail.

Effective November 23, 2008, the minimum frequency for Move Update increases for commercial (nonautomation and automation) First-Class Mail from 185 days to 95 days prior to the date of mailing and the Move Update standard is also required for all Standard Mail.

The Move Update standard is met when an address used on a mailpiece in a mailing for any class of mail is updated with an approved method and the same address is used in a First-Class Mail or Standard Mail mailing within 95 days after the address has been updated.

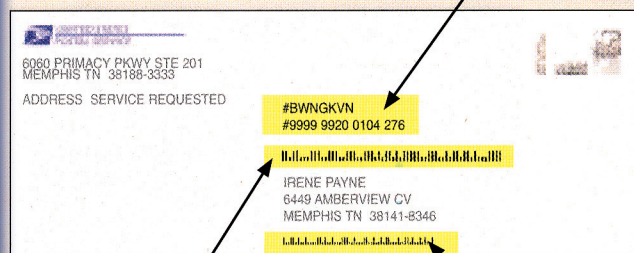## Can you describe some of the USPS-approved Move Update methods?

Ancillary Service Endorsements allow the mailer to obtain, on request, the recipient's new (forwarding) address (if that recipient had filed a change-of-address order with the USPS) or the reason for non-delivery. Approved endorsements include Address Service Requested, Return Service Requested, temporary Return Service Requested (used with Address Change Service for First-Class Mail or as a stand-alone option for Standard Mail).

To complete the Move Update process, the mailer must make the address changes received as a result of the use of the approved ancillary service endorsement. It is recommended that mailers retain address correction records for up to two years.

Address Change Service (ACS) is a process for mailers to receive address changes electronically from the Postal Service to update their next mailing. Depending on the class of mail and the endorsement, mailers may also receive information on addresses that are undeliverable for reasons other than a customer move. There are two options: OneCode ACS using the Intelligent Mail barcode and a mailer ID, or ACS used with a participant code and an appropriate ancillary service endorsement. For either option, the "Address Service Requested" or "Change Service Requested" endorsements can be printed on First-Class Mail and are required for Standard Mail.

Today's mail piece

Address Correction Service Codes

#BWNGKVN
#9999 9920 0104 276

IRENE PAYNE
6449 AMBERVIEW CV
MEMPHIS TN 38141-8346

6060 PRIMACY PKWY STE 201
MEMPHIS TN 38188-3333

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PLANET Code for Confirm Service

POSTNET Code for Sortation

Tomorrow's mail piece

One code per mail type that points to a suite of services.

6060 PRIMACY PKWY STE 201
MEMPHIS TN 38188-3333

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

IRENE PAYNE
6449 AMBERVIEW CV
MEMPHIS TN 38141-8346