August 11, 2005

RUDOLPH K. UMSCHEID
VICE PRESIDENT, FACILITIES

SUBJECT: Management Advisory – Data Integrity and Reliability of the Facilities Single
                     Source Provider System (Report Number FA-MA-05-002)

This report presents the results of our review of the data integrity and reliability of
selected aspects of the Facilities Single Source Provider (FSSP) system. We initiated
this review as a result of data reliability issues we identified during our audit of
Maintenance Offices' Acceptance of Facilities' Repair and Alterations Projects in the
Southeast Area (Project Number 05XG012FA001). The Postal Service requested we
expand our scope to include a review of data collected through the Response Line in
Postal Service areas that have implemented the FSSP system.

Background

Facilities is an enabling organization within the Postal Service whose primary mission is
to provide quality real estate and facilities products and services that meet the present
and future needs of Postal Service operations and realize optimum value from facilities
assets and transactions. Facilities is comprised of a headquarters' organizational unit,
with eight supporting Facilities Service Offices (FSOs) throughout the country.

Facilities reengineered their support process by developing the FSSP program, a
"shared service" concept that created a single point of contact for all facility work within
a Postal Service area. Under the FSSP program, all Facilities' services previously
provided by the FSO, Administrative Services, and the area Processing and Distribution
Team were incorporated under the management of the FSO. In addition, the FSO
assumed facility repair work and lessor maintenance enforcement services previously
managed by postmasters.

One component of the FSSP program is the Response Line, a toll-free number Postal
Service personnel use to report all facility repair needs. Dedicated personnel manage
the Response Line and record each problem in the FSSP system, a Web-based
tracking system. The FSSP system contains a report generation function that
management uses as a tool for workload management and budget planning. The

system generates a customer satisfaction survey for every FSO-managed problem. Additionally, the system allows Postal Service personnel to track the status of individual problem assignments, provides auto e-mail notification to customers and the facility maintenance office, and generates reports the FSO and area management can use. Currently, five of the nine Postal Service areas have implemented the FSSP program, with plans to complete implementation in all Postal Service areas by the end of fiscal year 2005.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

The objective of this review was to test the integrity and reliability of data from the FSSP system relating to maintenance offices' acceptance of facilities' repair and alteration projects. To accomplish our objective, we analyzed documentation from the FSSP system and independently computed the number of problems accepted and the corresponding acceptance rates for each district within the Northeast, Southeast, and Eastern Area offices. We chose these areas because they were the initial Postal Service areas that fully implemented the FSSP system. We also conducted interviews with the Postal Service officials with primary responsibility for the FSSP system.

This review was conducted from February through August 2005, in accordance with the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, Quality Standards for Inspections. We discussed our observations and conclusions with appropriate management officials and included their comments where appropriate.

Prior Audit Coverage

We did not identify any prior audits related to the objective of this review.

Results

The data in the FSSP system was generally relevant, accurate, and complete. However, our review identified issues related to internal controls over access to data and system generated reports related to maintenance offices' acceptance rates. We discussed these issues with the appropriate Postal Service officials, who agreed with our determinations.

Specifically, our review of the system-generated reports identified issues related to maintenance offices' repair and alteration project acceptance rates. We analyzed documentation from the FSSP system and independently recalculated the corresponding acceptance rates for 34 districts. (See Appendix A.) Based on our analysis, we determined the acceptance rates contained in the initial reports were actually higher in all 34 districts, with one district's rate four times higher than the recorded acceptance rate. Errors in the reported acceptance rates occurred because maintenance personnel performed work without completing key data fields in the FSSP

system to indicate whether they accepted or declined facility repair work. In addition, the formula programmed into the system to calculate the acceptance rates inappropriately included all calls that were logged through the Response Line, including those that were the responsibilities of property lessors. The accuracy of system-generated reports is critical because Postal Service officials use the information to manage workload assignments and plan budgets. Further, the importance of reporting accuracy will increase as the FSSP is implemented nationwide and more users in the FSOs and area and district maintenance offices rely on this data.

We also noted that the capability to delete or backdate transactions was not adequately restricted, as the Facilities programs analyst, FSSP system administrators, and Response Line technicians have the capability to delete or backdate completed and active transactions. Further, the system did not provide a log or other audit trail to track changed or deleted transactions, therefore not providing a mechanism to monitor or track such occurrences. The Facilities programs analyst advised that the system was not programmed to provide an audit trail to track or monitor changes to the data. Weaknesses in controls over access to data could diminish the integrity and reliability of computerized data. Further, without an adequate audit trail for deleted transactions, there is reduced assurance that all calls received were properly logged, tracked, and resolved. System programming changes could correct the issues identified in the report.

Recommendation

We recommend the vice president, Facilities, direct the Facilities programs analyst to:

1. Program the system to prompt users to complete key data fields, including the maintenance offices' action and a date field.

Management's Comments

Management agreed with the recommendation and stated that they have changed the functionality of the Response Line application to require users to enter specific data related to problem completion and maintenance office action. These changes were to be included in the next program update which was originally scheduled for release by July 31, 2005. Subsequently, on August 5, 2005, management advised that due to additional enhancements to the system, the program update has been rescheduled for release in September 2005. Management's comments, in their entirety, are included in Appendix B of this report.

Recommendation

2. Program the system to compute the maintenance offices' acceptance rate percentages based on the number of problems referred to the maintenance offices, rather than all problems logged through the Response Line.

Management's Comments

Management agreed with the recommendation and stated that they plan to implement a change to the program logic that will eliminate any landlord maintenance-specific problems from the calculation for the maintenance acceptance percentage. Management will include these changes with enhancements scheduled for release by September 30, 2005.

Recommendation

We recommend the vice president, Facilities, direct the Facilities programs analyst to:

3. Modify security for the appropriate data files to restrict the authority to delete or backdate transactions and to provide an audit trail for deleted and modified transactions recorded in the Facilities Single Source Provider system.

Management's Comments

Management agreed with the recommendation and stated that currently only users with Administrative or Response Line Tech rights have the authority to delete transactions. Management also stated they have enhanced the application so that when a user deletes a call/problem, the status will change but the record will not be removed from the database. Such data will be available for extract via reports. Management has also made a change to restrict users from modifying data fields once they complete a call. These changes were to be included in the next program update which was originally scheduled for release by July 31, 2005. Subsequently, on August 5, 2005, management advised that due to additional enhancements to the system, the program update has been rescheduled for release in September 2005.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

Management's comments are responsive to recommendations 1, 2, and 3 and actions planned should correct the issues identified in the finding.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact Janet Sorensen, Audit Manager, at (312) 601-3904, or me at (703) 248-2300.

/s/ Colleen A. McAntee

Colleen A. McAntee
Deputy Assistant Inspector General
  for Field Operations

Attachments

cc: William P. Galligan, Jr.
     Steven R. Phelps

Fiscal Year 2005 Facilities Review -
Data Integrity and Reliability of the Facility Single Source Provider System

FA-MA-05-002

APPENDIX A

AREA MAINTENANCE OFFICE ACCEPTANCE RATES

Chart A
Northeast Area Maintenance Office Acceptance Rates
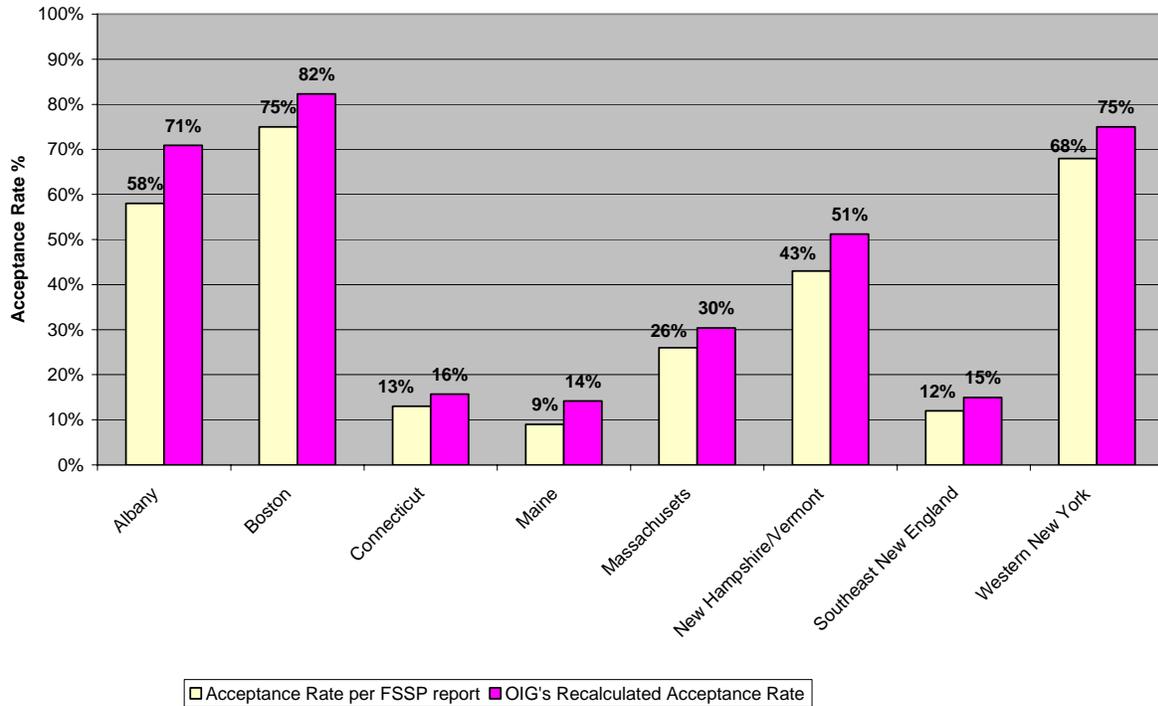
Chart B
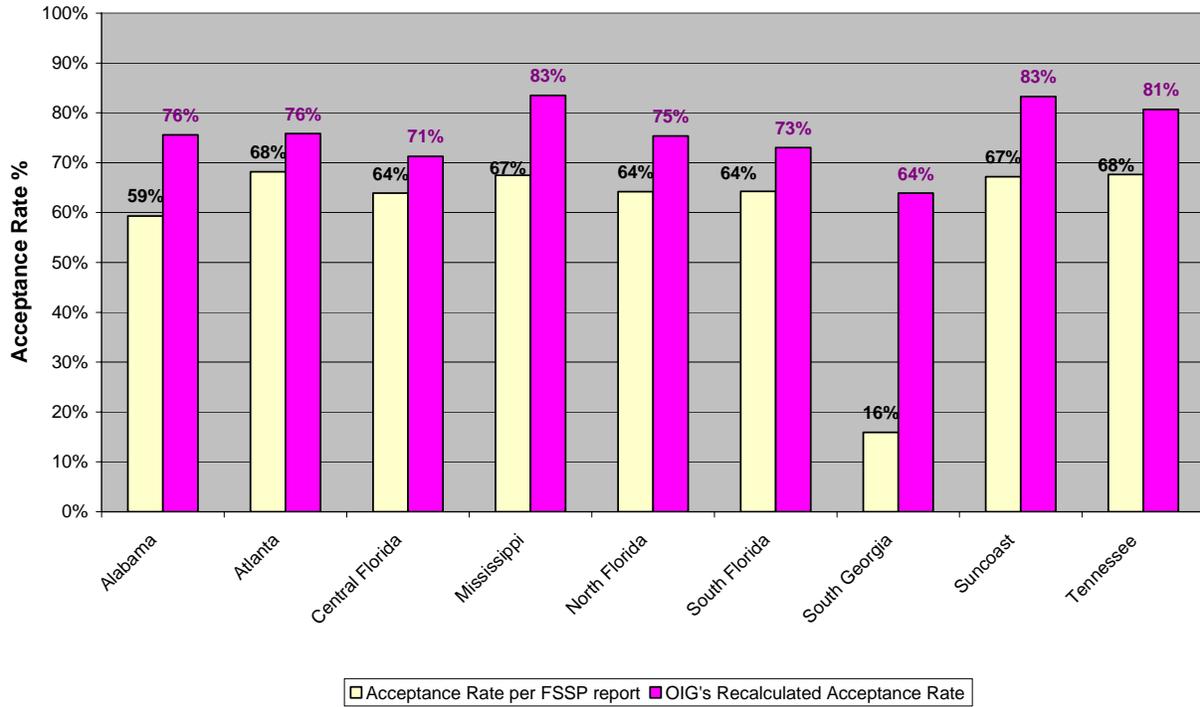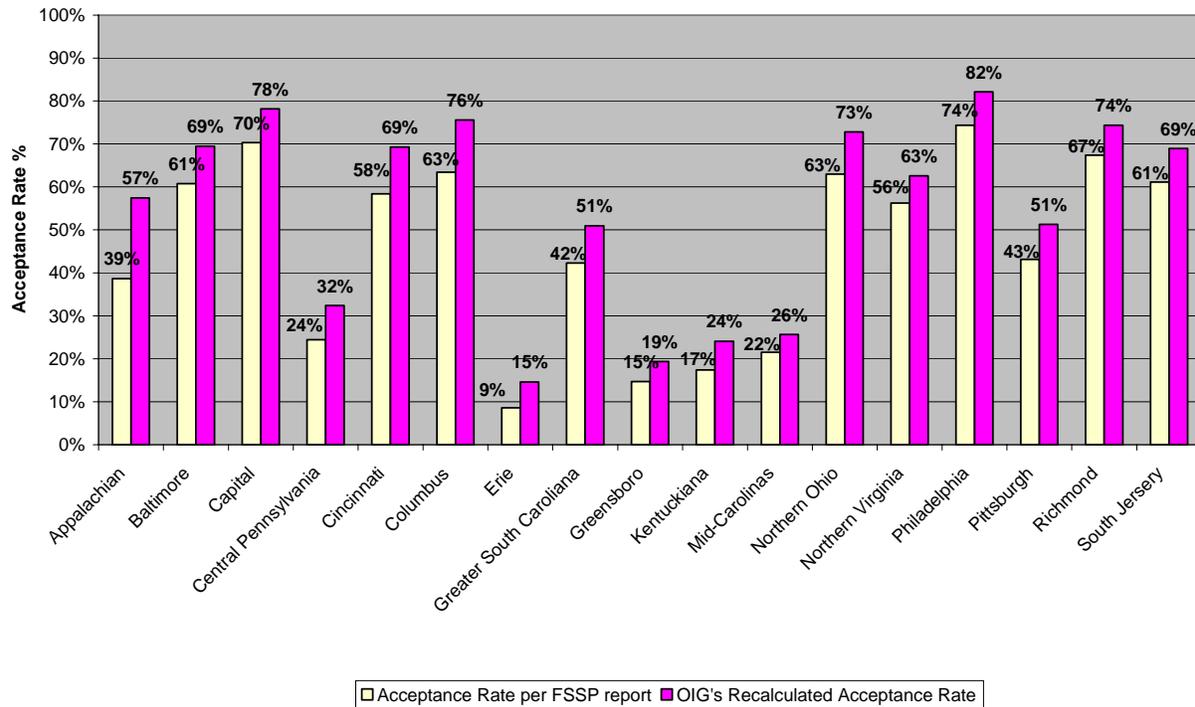**Southeast Area Maintenance Office Acceptance Rates**

Legend: ☐ Acceptance Rate per FSSP report ■ OIG's Recalculated Acceptance Rate

Chart C
Eastern Area Maintenace Office Acceptance Rates

Legend: ☐ Acceptance Rate per FSSP report ■ OIG's Recalculated Acceptance Rate

APPENDIX B. MANAGEMENT'S COMMENTS

Rudy Umscheid
Vice President, Facilities

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

July 14, 2005

KIM H. STROUD
DIRECTOR, AUDIT REPORTING

SUBJECT: Draft Management Advisory – Data Integrity and Reliability for the Facilities
　　　　　　　　Single Source Provider System (Report Number FA-MA-05-DRAFT)

Please use this letter as the official response to all three recommendations.

1.　Program the system to prompt users to complete key data fields, including the
　　maintenance offices' action and a date field.

Management Response: Management agrees with this recommendation. While the
recommendation asks for a prompt to users, we have changed the functionality of the Response
Line application to require users to enter specific data in the following scenarios:

　　a)　Problem Completion – Users will be required to enter a Work Complete
　　　　date prior to changing a problem status to Complete.
　　b)　Maintenance Action – Maintenance office users will be required to change the
　　　　MO Action field to Accepted prior to completing problems assigned to their
　　　　respective office.

These changes will be included in the next program update currently scheduled for release by the
end of July 2005. We feel these changes will adequately address recommendation #1.

2.　Program the system to compute the maintenance offices' acceptance rate percentages
　　based on the number of problems referred to the maintenance offices, rather than all
　　problems logged through the Response Line.

Management Response: Management agrees with this recommendation. We have plans to
implement a change to the program logic on the Weekly Report that will eliminate any Landlord
Maintenance specific problems from the calculation for the maintenance acceptance percentage.
This will be incorporated along with other report revisions that we plan to include with the next
release of enhancements currently scheduled for September 2005.

3.　Modify security for the appropriate data files to restrict the authority to delete or backdate
　　transactions and to provide an audit trail for deleted and modified transactions recorded
　　in the Facilities Single Source Provider system.

Management Response: We agree with the statement that the authority to delete transactions
should be restricted. This policy already exists within the application. Currently, only those users
with Administrative or Response Line Tech rights within the program can delete a call/problem.
We have also changed the application so that when a call/problem is deleted, it will now only
change the status for that call/problem, not actually remove the record from the database. The

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record of the deleted call/problem will not be visible to users, but will be available for extract via reports. We have also made a change to the application that will not allow users to modify data fields on a call/problem once it is complete. Both of these changes for the deleting of calls/problems and the backdating of data will be included in the program update scheduled for release in July 2005. We feel these changes will adequately address recommendation #3.

In conclusion, we appreciate the efforts of the OIG audit team in the review of data collected through the FSSP Response Line.

Rudy Umscheid

cc: Patrick Donahoe
    William Galligan
    Colleen McAntee
    Jae Pak
    Steven R. Phelps
    Tim Perez