

August 17, 2004

Refer to: HSA-10/SS-125

Mr. Tom Friend
Innovations
P.O. Box 636 Hibbing, Minnesota 55746

Dear Mr. Friend:

Thank you for your email correspondence of July 7, 2004, requesting Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) acceptance of modifications to your company's breakaway mailbox supports for use on National Highway System (NHS). Accompanying your letter were drawings of the new Model #037 mailbox support. You requested that we find it acceptable for use on the National Highway System under the provisions of National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 350 "Recommended Procedures for the Safety Performance Evaluation of Highway Features."

Introduction

Sign supports and mailbox installations should meet the guidelines contained in the NCHRP Report 350, "Recommended Procedures for the Safety Performance Evaluation of Highway Features". Requirements for breakaway supports are those in the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' (AASHTO), "Standard Specifications for Structural Supports for Highway Signs, Luminaires and Traffic Signals".

The original Friend Town and Country Mailbox Support was found acceptable by the FHWA acceptance letter B-24 dated June 16, 1993. The acceptance was based on a comparison to the mailbox support designed and crash-tested by the Minnesota Department of Transportation. You also had an informal, live-driver test conducted at an impact speed of 62 mph.

The modifications to the Town and Country Mailbox are summarized below:

- 1) A single muffler clamp replaces the yoke clamps, used for height adjustments.
- 2) The extension U-post has been deleted.
- 3) Revised U-post driver, which is discarded upon installation.

We agree with your assertion that these modifications will have no significant affect on the breakaway performance of your company's mailbox support. Therefore, the modifications to your mailbox support described above and shown in the enclosed drawings for reference are acceptable for use as a Test Level 3 device on the NHS under the range of conditions as the similar mailbox support was tested, when proposed by a State.

Please note the following standard provisions that apply to FHWA letters of acceptance:

Our acceptance is limited to the crashworthiness characteristics of the devices and does not cover their structural features, nor conformity with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Any changes that may adversely influence the crashworthiness of the device will require a new acceptance letter.

Should the FHWA discover that the qualification testing was flawed, that in-service performance

reveals unacceptable safety problems, or that the device being marketed is significantly different from the version that was crash tested, it reserves the right to modify or revoke its acceptance.

You will be expected to supply potential users with sufficient information on design and installation requirements to ensure proper performance.

You will be expected to certify to potential users that the hardware furnished has essentially the same chemistry, mechanical properties, and geometry as that submitted for acceptance, and that they will meet the crashworthiness requirements of the FHWA and the NCHRP Report 350.

To prevent misunderstanding by others, this letter of acceptance, designated as number SS-125 shall not be reproduced except in full. As this letter and the supporting documentation which support it become public information, it will be available for inspection at our office by interested parties.

The Friend Town and Country Mailbox Support is a patented device and is considered "proprietary." When proprietary devices are *specified by a highway agency* for use on Federal-aid projects they: (a) must be supplied through competitive bidding with equally suitable unpatented items; (b) the highway agency must certify that they are essential for synchronization with existing highway facilities or that no equally suitable alternative exists or; (c) they must be used for research or for a distinctive type of construction on relatively short sections of road for experimental purposes. These provisions do not apply to exempt non-NHS projects. Our regulations concerning proprietary products are contained in Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 635.411, a copy of which is enclosed.

This acceptance letter shall not be construed as authorization or consent by the FHWA to use, manufacture, or sell any patented device for which the applicant is not the patent holder. The acceptance letter is limited to the crashworthiness characteristics of the candidate device, and the FHWA is neither prepared nor required to become involved in issues concerning patent law. Patent issues, if any, are to be resolved by the applicant.

Sincerely yours,

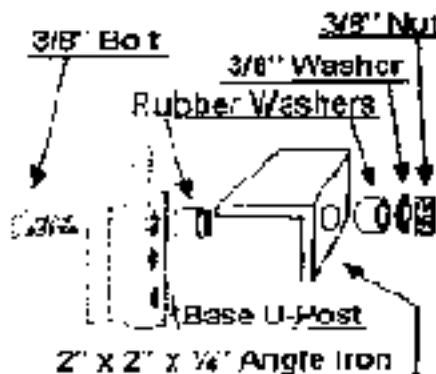
/Original Signed by/

John R. Baxter, P.E. Director, Office of Safety Design
Office of Safety
Enclosures

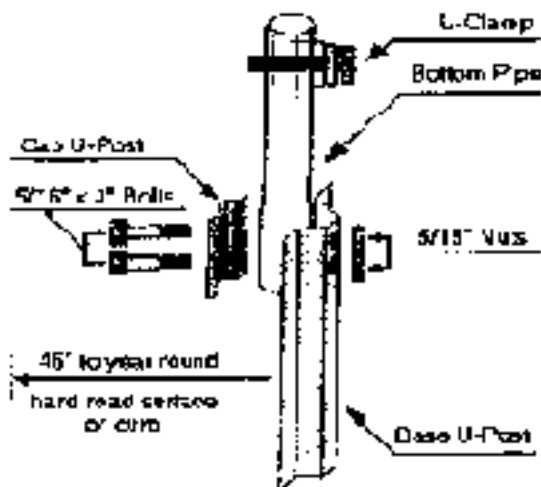
INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Attach Top Post Driver to 3/4" Base U-Post as shown below. Use 8 lb. Sledge Hammer with half swings, make sure Base U-Post is going to plumb (straight up and down), leaving 4" of the Base U-Post out of the ground. Now remove U-Post Driver.

Note: Do not over tighten U-Post Driver. Finger tighten and then tighten more with a wrench.

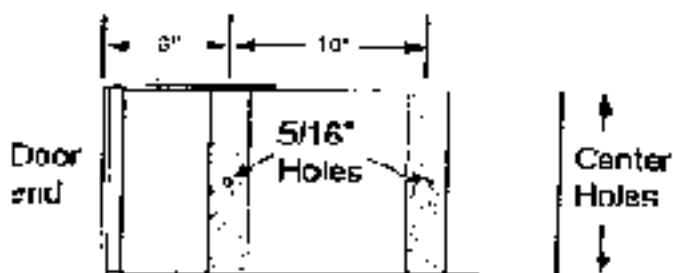


2. Attach 24" Bottom Pipe (angled end) and the Cap U-Post to the Base U-Post.

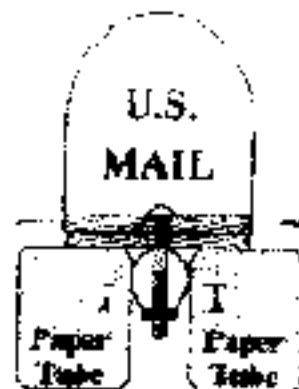


3. Center U-Clamp assembly over slots in Bottom Pipe, finger tighten. Then insert Middle Pipe (not yet up).
4. Cut 2 Wooden Blocks 1/8" narrower than the bottom inside of the mailbox, then insert Wooden Blocks as shown in the drawing. Insert 4 Drywall Screws thru mailbox lip into Wooden Blocks and tighten. Now mark hole centers as shown. Using 5/16" drill bit, drill thru Wooden Blocks and the bottom of the mailbox. Be certain to cautiously remove any sharp burrs from inside of the mailbox.

From face of door to hole center to hole center



5. With the mailbox on its side, insert 2 - 1/2" x 4" Carriage Bolts thru the holes from inside of the mailbox. Next, holding the Carriage Bolt that is farthest back with your left hand and using your forearm to hold the Carriage Bolt closest to the door, with your right hand hold the Top Pipe between the two holes, insert up the two holes with the Carriage Bolts and push both Carriage Bolts thru the Top Pipe. Slide 1 - No. 10 Washer over each Carriage Bolt and tighten 3/4" Nut until the Top Pipe is set in Wooden Blocks. Note: Wood blocks will show slight indent.



6. If you have no paper tubes, go to instruction 7. To install up to 2 paper tubes, use 2 Drywall Screws and 2 - #10 Washers per paper tube. Hold tube under mailbox and Wooden Blocks, yet tight to the Top Pipe (as shown) Note: Paper tubes ends should go beyond end of Top Pipe. Fasten securely to Wooden Blocks (use 6" Phillips screw driver) via existing holes in bottom of mailbox.

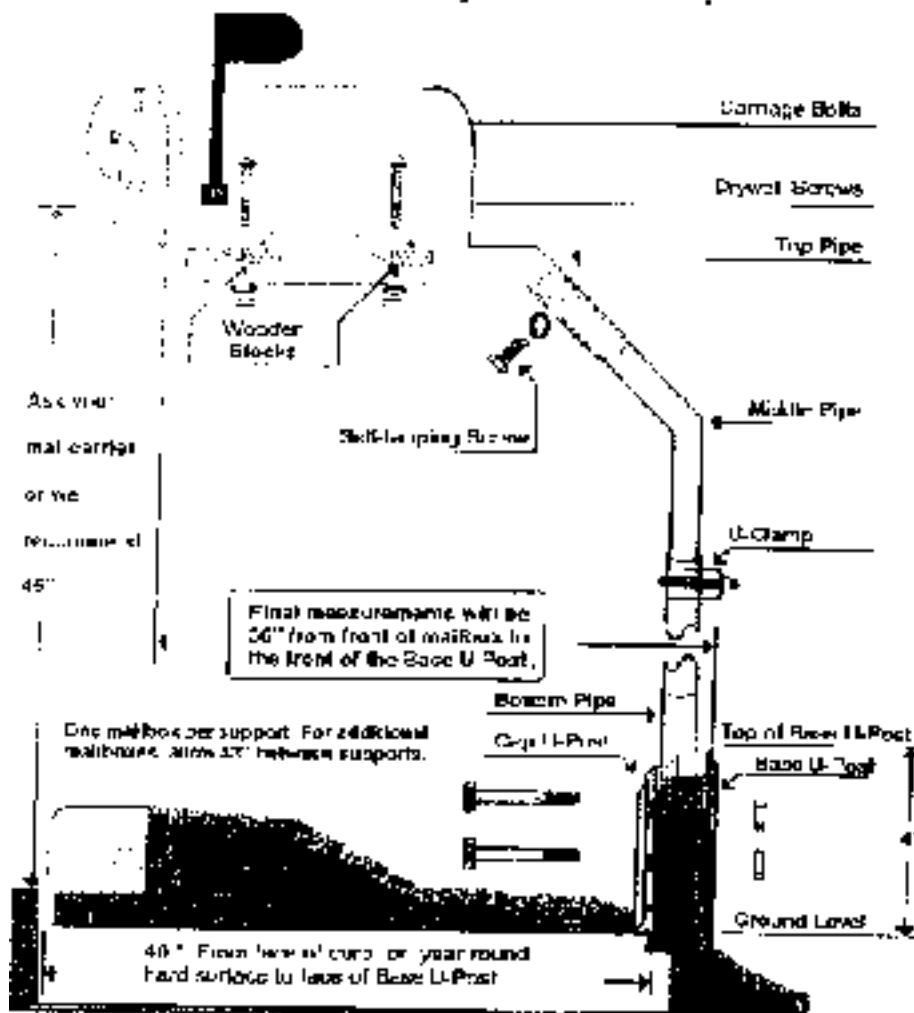
7. Slide Top Pipe over Middle Pipe (slotted pipe), and insert the 1/2" x 1/2" Self-tapping Screw (with #10 washer) into the hole on the underside of the Top Pipe. Make certain the screw is set into the slot of the Middle Pipe.

8. Adjust height, point straight towards the road. If everything looks good, tighten the U-Clamp Assembly Bolts and Flange Nuts securely. Tightening will cause the Bottom Pipe to compress around the Middle Pipe and lock it into position.

FRIEND INNOVATIONS

Installation Instructions

We are pleased to offer you our # 037 Mailbox Support!



Model 037 PARTS LIST:

- 1 Top Pipe – 1 3/4" O.D. x 36"
- 1 Middle Pipe – 1 1/2" O.D. x 36"
- 1 Bottom Pipe – 1 1/2" O.D. x 24"
- 1 Cap U-Post 1.12 lbs./ft.
- 1 Base U-Post – 31' 2 lbs. Per ft.
- 1 – Self-tapping Screw – 1/4" x 3/4" w/ No. 10 Washer
- 2 – Bolt w/Nut 5/16" x 3"
- 1 – Bolt w/Nut & Washer 3/8" x 1 1/4"
- 1 – U-Clamp Assembly w/Saddle and 2 – 3/8" Flanged Nuts
- 8 – Drywall Screws
- 5 – Washers No. 10
- 2 – Carriage Bolt 1/2" x 4" w/Nut and Washer No. 10
- 2 – Wooden Blocks

Used for installation only:

- 1 – U-Post Driver – 2" x 2" x 7/4" Angle Iron, w/ 1 – 3/8" x 1 1/2" Bolt, w/ Nut & Washer. Also includes 2 Rubber Washers

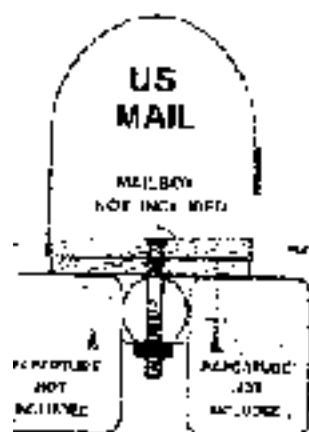
For special Needs:

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Phone/Fax/Message 218.263.4457

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WARNING:

1. Buried electrical Lines, gas, steam, T.V., telephone, etc. **MAY BE HAZARDOUS OR FATAL TO YOUR HEALTH** check with your local utilities before installing the Base U-Post (in Minnesota call 1.800.252.1166)
2. Metal edges maybe sharp, wear gloves and keep children away. Also wear ear protection, safety glasses, proper clothing, and keep others away in case metal fragments come flying about from hammering on the U-Post Driver.

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Patented

(over)

See 625.411 Material or product selection.

(a) Federal funds shall not participate, directly or indirectly, in payment for any premium or royalty on any patented or proprietary material, specification, or process specifically set forth in the plans and specifications for a project, unless:

(1) Such patented or proprietary item is purchased or obtained through competitive bidding with equally suitable unpatented items, or

(2) The State highway agency certifies either that such patented or proprietary item is essential for synchronization with existing highway facilities, or that no equally suitable alternate exists, or

(3) Such patented or proprietary item is used for research or for a distinctive type of construction on relatively short sections of road for experimental purposes.

(b) When there is available for purchase more than one nonpatented, nonproprietary material, semifinished or finished article or product that will fulfill the requirements for an item of work of a project and these available materials or products are judged to be of satisfactory quality and equally acceptable on the basis of engineering analysis and the anticipated prices for the related item(s) of work are estimated to be approximately the same, the PS&E for the project shall either contain or include by reference the specifications for each such material or product that is considered acceptable for incorporation in the work. If the State highway agency wishes to substitute some other acceptable material or product for the material or product designated by the successful bidder or bid as the lowest alternate, and such substitution results in an increase in costs, there will not be Federal-aid participation in any increase in costs.

(c) A State highway agency may require a specific material or product when there are other acceptable materials and products, when such specific choice is approved by the Division Administrator as being in the public interest. When the Division Administrator's approval is not obtained, the item will be nonparticipating unless bidding procedures are used that establish the unit price of each acceptable alternative. In this case Federal-aid participation will be based on the lowest price so established.

(d) Appendix A sets forth the FHWA requirements regarding (1) the specification of alternative types of culvert pipes, and (2) the number and types of such alternatives which must be set forth in the specifications for various types of drainage installations.

(e) Reference in specifications and on plans to single trade name materials will not be approved on Federal-aid contracts.