

POSTAL NEWS

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1. First area Goin' Postal shipping services franchise opens

By Kim Mikus | Daily Herald Columnist

Published: 2/5/2008 12:16 AM

Irene Robinson recently opened the first Goin' Postal franchise in this area.

Robinson offers UPS, FedEx, DHL and postal services at 124 W. Northwest Hwy., near the Eurofresh Market in Palatine. The shop also offers faxing, copies, lamination services and greeting cards.

The franchise is the third of its kind to open in Illinois. The parent company, based in Zephyr Hills, Fla., oversees 315 stores across the United States.

Robinson said because the chain has so many locations, the company has developed deals with the major couriers to offer more competitive pricing. The shop also offers eBay selling services.

"We're a one-stop shop," said Robinson, who immigrated from India about eight years ago. She resides in Palatine with her husband, Willy, who works in the banking industry. They have two sons, Isaiah, 3, and Word, 1.

Prior to launching the business, Robinson worked in the mortgage department of a bank. She wanted to open a UPS store and found this franchise opportunity.

The business is open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday.

For more information, call (847) 991-4910.

Restaurant gone: Applebee's closed its Randhurst Shopping Center location Sunday to accommodate redevelopment plans. The company offered employees new job opportunities at area restaurants in Arlington Heights and Palatine and other nearby locations.

Officials from the restaurant said Randhurst mall will be transformed into a mixed-use open-air lifestyle center, re-named Randhurst Village, by Casto Lifestyle Properties, an affiliate of the new owner CLP/SPF Randhurst.

Internship program: To help college students learn about the variety of career opportunities for CPAs, the Palatine firm Bass, Solomon & Dowell is participating in an accounting internship program with Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington.

The 10-week internship is designed to give college juniors who are majoring in accounting some practical experience. For more, call (847) 934-0300.

Board election: Scott Jamieson, president and CEO of The Care of Trees in Wheeling, was elected to the board of directors of the National Safety Council.

Jamieson, a resident of Arlington Heights, is the first and only tree care professional to be elected to the council's board.

He will be part of the development and strategic planning committee of the safety council board during his two-year term.

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2. Postal Deregulation - Domestic Customers Last In Line

07 February 2008 by Mark White - © Hellmail.co.uk
elderly.jpg

Businesses will always look for novel ways of saving money but you could hardly find a business under more pressure than Royal Mail is right now.

It has the postal regulator shouting in one ear, insisting that it has to manage its finances better but also meet stringent targets. It has also had the union on its back, trying to protect its members from erosion of working conditions, the press (including us at times), whinging about one problem or another, plus a complex and unpopular Post Office

closure programme, and competition looking to pounce on anything that isn't nailed down.

This has to be the toughest time that Royal Mail has ever faced and essentially it is because the government at least, doesn't want to pay for it any more, preferring to rush through the European initiative to open up the postal market to competition. The trouble is, we're still waiting for the dust to settle.

Ultimately, whatever cost-cutting measures are tried out, it will be Royal Mail's workforce that will dictate what 'cutting to the bone' really is, that and Royal Mail's clever marketing machine and ok, the postal services act, plus a few token targets thrown in for good measure.

The public doesn't have much say in any of this. They might on paper, but even the Post Office closures are more a number-crunching exercise and although consultations may yield the odd victory for the general public, it is 2,500 they want to shut, and it'll be 2,500 that go - on this round of closures anyway.

Inside Royal Mail, the friendly ethos that used to exist in its workforce is rapidly being replaced by an environment where everything is done by the book - and nothing more. One can hardly blame them for that either. Royal Mail has always been (and still is) a service that is essentially based on trust and as Royal Mail's head office rolls out radical ideas to calculate postal workers average walk speed with computer programs and how many letter boxes they should be able to do every ten minutes, the 'good will' factor has practically dried up. Royal Mail knows all this and has also been busily recruiting motivational experts to produce carrot incentive plans for managers to try dangling under the noses of postal workers.

None of this is cutting much ice with delivery workers who are presently finding that they're having extra roads added on to existing 'walks' and other rounds dropped from the equation altogether. Trying to move from part-time to full-time at Royal Mail is virtually impossible now. It seems it is far cheaper to employ part-time and/or casual workers, but with that goes an increased security risk and Royal Mail recently had their appeal against a £9.62m penalty rejected for failing to ensure the safety of customers mail by not training properly and or adequately vetting agency staff.

The government (as it has done all along) is sticking to "Its nothing to do with us - talk to Postcomm" approach, which when all is said and done is a little rich when they're the biggest shareholder. In the meantime, the 'Postal Deregulation' machine rumbles on relentlessly and Mrs Harris now finds she has to get on a bus to get to a Post Office, walking frame or not.

One of Hellmail's writers, Janet Ames, produces recorded material for the blind. She reminded us this week that as technology moves forward the blind still use audio cassette as medium. Thousands of them travel through Royal Mail's system every week, free of charge, in small, distinctive vinyl padded envelopes. Hard to believe when the CD has

been around as long as it has. The reason why cassette remains so popular with the blind is because cassette players can be easily operated just by feel. It is difficult to even find a cassette player now, but the blind find it virtually impossible to operate audio equipment which relies heavily on an LCD display - let alone equipment that is inoperable without a remote control.

Radical ideas all too often assume that the elderly can just grasp sudden changes without a thought - like trying to remember the number of a cash card to withdraw money, or travel further to send a parcel to a daughter or grandson. It isn't that simple. Consider 64 year old Peter Gunnery in Cardiff who this week is going on hunger strike to protest that he will have to travel a mile to collect his incapacity benefit. Something is badly wrong if people feel this strongly about closures.

Almost every article about a Post Office closures includes the "It'll be tough on the elderly and disabled" and "We have to close Post Offices because they are losing so much money". To my mind, neither argument is right - or indeed wrong. The question that isn't being asked is are we as a nation happy to help fund the cost of maintaining the postal network? With business driving the whole agenda, you're not likely to hear it either. It remains a 'suck it and see' plan most of the time with domestic customers right at the bottom of the pile.

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3. Postal dept plans to raise funds from realty assets

7 Feb, 2008, 0735 hrs IST, Joji Thomas Philip & Niranjan Bharati, TNN

NEW DELHI: Urban post offices located in key commercial areas may soon have to share space with swanky malls, multiplexes and modern high-rise office complexes. The government plans to raise resources from the realty assets of the postal department.

To facilitate this, it will transfer real estate, which can be commercially exploited, to a new body called the Postal Development Corporation (PDC), a corporate entity spun off from the Department of Posts (DoP).

PDC is being spun off to transform the loss-making postal department, which is supported currently by massive subsidy infusion from the government, a self-sustaining entity.

The postal department has already identified 1,800 chunks of real estate land spread across its urban centres, including the four metros, for commercial development. The land will be developed on a JV basis, as is being done in the case of NTC properties in Mumbai.

The communications and IT ministry will circulate a Cabinet note on this issue amongst other ministries next week. The secretary (posts) & director general, India Post, IMG Khan told ET that PDC would be formed as a special purpose vehicle (SPV) for commercial development of the real estate held by the postal department.

“This will be an independent body. It will have all financial powers and will be authorised to take all steps which can help us raise revenues from the realty we hold,” he added.

When contacted, another top official in the communications and IT ministry confirmed the development and said, “The Postal Development Corporation will be a corporate set-up on the lines of state-owned telcos. The corporation will enter public-private partnerships to develop the postal department’s real estate assets across the country.

From Connaught Place in Delhi to Nariman Point in Mumbai, the Department of Posts owns large chunks of invaluable real estate across the country. After the setting up of PDC, India Post, which is running up losses currently, will no longer require support from the government,” the official added.

While details have not been disclosed, the private developer may be given the right to modify or in some cases, even demolish the existing post office buildings. The post office will occupy part of the building while the rest will be commercially utilised. Properties in Nariman Point in Mumbai and Connaught Place and Chanakyapuri in New Delhi are likely to be the first to be commercially developed.

India Post’s losses stem from the fact that user charges cover only 78% of the cash costs. As per the last Economic Survey, the DoP’s deficit is likely to increase from Rs 1,375 crore in 2003-04 to Rs 1,379 crore in 2006-07. “Redefining the rationale, the mechanism and the size of the subsidy constitutes important policy questions at this juncture,” the Economic Survey had stated.

Sources added that after being set up, PDC would look at emulating the model adopted by NTC. This implies, the postal department too can raise several thousands of crores, as is being done by NTC. Following the approval of the GoM, constituted to look into the matter of joint venture (JV) partnership for NTC mills, the latter has signed partnerships with several large corporate houses to commercially exploit its properties.

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4. World Postal Union Interested in Further Cooperation with Azerbaijan
07.02.08 16:35

Azerbaijan, Baku, 7 February / Trend corr. S.Agayeva / The World Postal Union (WPU) is satisfied with the cooperation with Azerbaijan and is interested in its further development in the country, stated Edward Dayan, the general director of the Union, during an opening ceremony of the Azerbaijani postal stamp: 1918-2007, the Azerbaijani Embassy in Switzerland reported.

The delegation headed by Iltimas Mammadov- the deputy Communication and IT Minister of Azerbaijan and Elchin Amirbayov- Azerbaijani Ambassador in Switzerland, represented Azerbaijan at the exhibition.

On the international level, the exhibition has become the biggest event in the Azerbaijani postal life. The postal stamps issued in Azerbaijan were demonstrated at the exhibition. The date of the exhibition coincides with the 15th anniversary of Azerbaijan joining the WPU.

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5. DoP quotes USO to block French post biz proposal

8 Feb, 2008, 0131 hrs IST,G Ganapathy Subramaniam & Amiti Sen, TNN

NEW DELHI: French postal giant La Poste's plans to enter the Indian market have run into a roadblock due to opposition from the postal department. GeoPost Group, the express parcel arm of La Poste, plans to tap the Indian market through a joint venture with Continental Air Express.

The Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) has put the joint venture proposal on hold due to objections from the department of posts. The postal department's opposition adds yet another twist to the moves to restrict foreign ownership in this segment.

Set up in 1999, GeoPost has a turnover of e3 billion. Apart from France, GeoPost has business interests in the express parcel and logistics segment in various countries including the UK, Germany, Russia, Spain, Poland, Greece, Romania and Bulgaria.

In Asia, the La Poste arm has business interests in China and South Korea. GeoPost's was to take 60% stake in the proposed subsidiary while Continental Air Express was to hold the rest.

During recent deliberations at the FIPB, the department of post argued that La Poste is also a member of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and is required to fulfil universal services obligations (USO) like India Post. Therefore, La Poste cannot poach on the creamy territory of the other, FIPB was informed.

The department has also pointed out that La Poste was a state-owned entity and investment by no such entity has been permitted in India so far. India Post, also a member of UPU, handles low-priced items like post cards and inland letters to fulfil its social obligations. GeoPost, on the other hand, plans to enter courier services like express parcel delivery which command a premium.

The postal department's argument is that La Poste should also be ready to fulfil social obligations like the USO carried out by India Post. In any case, the department has been threatening to make small letters the monopoly of India Post and impose restrictions on foreign ownership in this sector.

Keeping in mind the reservations of the postal department, FIPB directed that further analysis should be carried out as to whether any approvals have been accorded in the past to a state entity in the courier segment. It further said that USO obligations cast on members of UPU should be ascertained. The proposal was, therefore, deferred.

According to current policy, FDI up to 100% is allowed in courier services for carrying packages, parcels and other items, but clearance from FIPB is mandatory. The postal department has been insisting during recent times that all FDI clearances are subject to activities being in compliance with the Indian Post Office Act.

Section 4 of the Act states that the privilege of carrying letters vested with the Central government. However, private players, including foreign companies, are now being allowed to carry out this business.

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6. LDP to pick Sato for Tokyo seat / Party trying to find constituencies for 'Koizumi kids,' postal rebels

The Yomiuri Shimbun

The Liberal Democratic Party likely will field House of Representatives member Yukari Sato in Tokyo Constituency No. 5 in the next lower house election, party officials said Wednesday.

The LDP's Tokyo chapter and the party's Tokyo Constituency No. 5 branch reached the agreement on the day.

The party decided to endorse former Posts and Telecommunications Minister Seiko Noda in Gifu Constituency No. 1.

In the last lower house election in 2005, Sato ran on an LDP ticket in the Gifu constituency, but lost to Noda, who contested the election as an independent because she

was one of the so-called postal rebels who refused to back former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's postal reforms. Despite her defeat in the constituency, Sato won a Tokai proportional representation bloc seat as a result of her dual candidacy.

LDP leaders are increasingly making clear their belief that candidates deemed to have a good chance of winning should be backed.

In Tokyo Constituency No. 5, incumbent Takashi Kosugi, a former education minister, announced his retirement Jan. 15. Upon his announcement, the local LDP branch began screening prospective candidates.

On Wednesday, executives of the LDP branch met with lower house member Nobuteru Ishihara, who heads the Tokyo chapter and other party executives at the party headquarters in Nagatacho, Tokyo.

The LDP leadership concluded in the meeting that it would be appropriate to field Sato in the constituency, which covers a part of Setagaya Ward, where Sato is originally from.

"The local branch recommended Ms. Sato. I believe she is an appropriate candidate to hold an LDP seat in the constituency because of her high nationwide name recognition," Ishihara said after the meeting, referring to Sato's former role as a high-profile economic commentator.

Sato's name recognition also is particularly high because she is the best-known of the party's so-called Koizumi kids--lower house LDP lawmakers who first won election after being handpicked as candidates by Koizumi to run against LDP members who opposed privatizing the postal service.

The LDP leadership, therefore, intends to take advantage of Sato's popularity to attract floating voters, according to political pundits.

Sato stopped short of elaborating on the party decision, saying, "I'm currently waiting to hear what the party executives say [about the decision]." But sources close to Sato said she is ready to accept the offer.

"Taking into consideration Ms. Sato's policy and career, she'll be able to make best use of her abilities in an urban seat," LDP Election Strategy Council Chairman Makoto Koga told reporters Wednesday.

Party executives decided to endorse Noda in Gifu Constituency No. 1 because an opinion poll had shown that more party members supported Noda than Sato, according to party sources.

They also plan to take into consideration the result of party opinion polls when determining who the LDP should choose as official candidates in other constituencies where changes are deemed to be needed.

The survey showed that more party members in general supported the postal rebels, according to the party sources.

In Tokushima Constituency No. 2, lower house member Shunichi Yamaguchi, another postal rebel, said at a meeting of his supporters on Jan. 26 that he had been told by party executives that the party would endorse him in the next lower house election

"The postal rebels managed to win races despite unfavorable winds. We must respect this," an LDP executive said.

But as Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda is not considering holding a lower house election before autumn, party officials have ample time to reach decisions on who to field.

Opinions divided over move

Following the LDP decision to endorse Sato in the Tokyo Constituency No. 5, the response of party members and voters in the constituency ranged between hope and puzzlement.

Finding constituencies for both Koizumi kids and postal rebels is an issue still to be addressed.

An LDP ward assembly member in Tokyo welcomed the party decision, saying, "Ms. Sato is well-known, and I'm sure she will attract voters."

He urged LDP headquarters, however, to make an effort sufficient to ensure Sato is accepted by voters in the area.

"If the decision results in the impression she was kicked out of Gifu, it would adversely affect her. I don't want her to appear to be leaving problems behind," he said.

Former Tokyo assembly member Yoshiyuki Manabe also voiced caution.

"I know there are various opinions [about choosing Sato]. We'll strive to ensure local residents understand the party decision," he said.

Voters' reactions also were split over the decision.

A 75-year-old housewife expressed her expectation for Sato after hearing the news at a shopping district in Nakameguro, Meguro Ward, Tokyo.

"She's famous, and she's a woman with a long professional career who speaks fluent English. I believe she can better further her career in an urban area," she said.

But as party executives had feared, some voters indicated their dissatisfaction.

A 58-year-old owner of a barbecue restaurant said: "She's coming here because she wasn't accepted there [Gifu]. I won't support a candidate unless he or she has long worked for this area. I'm skeptical about her."

Former lower house member Yoshio Tezuka, of the Democratic Party of Japan, who is expected to compete against Sato in the next lower house election, said he was not surprised by the news.

"I anticipated somehow that the LDP would field one of the Koizumi kids [in the constituency]," Tezuka said. "I'll continue to appeal to voters without wavering on policy issues, as I've been doing, even if Ms. Sato will be my rival."
(Feb. 8, 2008)

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7. Postal Savings Bank to Spread Small Loans Nationwide

Tuesday, February 05, 2008; Posted: 06:36 PM

BEIJING, Feb 05, 2008 (SinoCast China Financial Watch via COMTEX) -- PSVGF | news | PowerRating | PR Charts -- Following half year's trial operation, China Postal Savings Bank is to expand its small loan service nationwide in the second half this year.

Starting from mid-2007, the Beijing-based bank had completed such trial operations in seven provinces, including east China's Shandong Province and central China's Henna Province, both of which are large agricultural provinces in the country.

Small loan business is understood to mark the start-up for China's postal savings system to convert from a deposits taking institution into a deposit and loan service provider.

As of January 11, 2008, up to 24 counties in China have gotten small loans from the postal savings bank, who is the nation's fifth biggest bank in terms of deposits. Up to now, the postal savings bank has offered 1,698 deals of such loans with total amount of CNY 86.84 million.

Many new-type rural financial institutions, such as village banks, small-loan institutions and rural credit unions, are emerging in the course of China's rural financial reform. The postal savings bank does not want to fall behind.

Established in March 2007, the postal savings bank had applied to China Banking Regulatory Commission for offering small loans in rural areas as early as last March.

The bank's small loans include farmer household mutually guaranteed loan, farmer credit loan, and loans to rural micro enterprises.

Last month, it released interim regulations on small loans, aiming to standardize workflow and risk control.

Having set the goal to principally serve the country's agriculture industry, rural areas and local peasants, the postal savings bank has 36 provincial-level branches, 315 city-level branches, 20,000 subbranches nationwide, about 2/3 of which are located in the rural areas.

By leveraging the major shareholder China Post Group's unique nationwide network of outlets, the postal savings bank will have relative advantage over rural credit cooperatives and urban community banks.

Official statistics show China Post Group, formerly known as the State Post Bureau, has a total of 37,000 postal savings outlets, 45,000 remittance and exchange outlets and 20,000 international remittance outlets, of which two thirds are located in counties and rural areas. By contrast, the nation's state commercial banks have closed over 30,000 outlets in these areas.

The post savings bank by far has attracted CNY 1.7 trillion deposits. A total of CNY 130 billion flew back into countryside in the way of negotiated deposits, syndicated loans and securities investments.

(USD 1 = CNY 7.19)

From dycj.ynet.com, Page 1, Saturday, February 02, 2008 info@SinoCast.com

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8. Maponics Selects Tele Atlas Map Data to Power U.S. Postal Carrier Routes Boundary

Wednesday, 06 February 2008

Norwich, VT – February 6, 2008 – Maponics, a nationwide map data and services provider, and Tele Atlas (FSE: TA6, EUNV: TA), a leading global provider of digital maps and dynamic content for navigation and location-based solutions, today announced an agreement whereby Maponics will use Tele Atlas digital map data to support production of accurate USPS ZIP Code and carrier route boundaries.

“Thousands of businesses, ranging from small companies around the country to well-known Fortune 500 firms and even the USPS, rely on Maponics for specialized mapping services and data,” said Steve Zuckerman, Director of Map and Data Operations,

Maponics. “Through our partnership with Tele Atlas, we are able to develop next generation postal boundaries and deliver the superior mapping services and GIS data that geotargeting requires.”

Using a proprietary data-intensive process that leverages Tele Atlas digital street map data, Maponics is able to provide direct marketers with clean carrier route boundaries that follow roads. By basing their products on multiple data feeds, including monthly address data from the USPS, Maponics helps ensure the postal boundaries their customers receive are up-to-date and accurate representations of postal geographies.

“Business applications ranging from targeted marketing campaigns to geography-based sales promotions increasingly rely on geographic content for enhanced effectiveness,” said Todd Schmitt, enterprise market manager, Tele Atlas. “We are pleased to work with Maponics to deliver postal data and mapping solutions with the high quality and accuracy that their business customers rely on to power their sales, marketing and operations initiatives.”

Maponics Postal Boundaries including ZIP Code and carrier route data are available for licensing in ESRI®, MapInfo® and database-loadable formats.

About Maponics

America’s largest corporations entrust Maponics® with their mapping and data needs - including 20 percent of the Fortune 500. Maponics is located in Norwich, Vermont, with customers throughout the U.S. and Canada. Call Maponics today at 800-762-5158 to learn more about map data licensing.

About Tele Atlas

Tele Atlas delivers the digital maps and dynamic content that power some of the world’s most essential navigation and location-based services (LBS). The information is the foundation for a wide range of personal and in-car navigation systems and mobile and Internet map applications that help users find the people, places, products, and services they need, wherever they are. The company also works with business partners who trust its digital map data to deliver critical applications for emergency, business, fleet, and infrastructure services. Through a combination of its own products and partnerships, Tele Atlas offers digital map coverage of more than 200 countries and territories worldwide. The company was founded in 1984 and today has approximately 2,500 full-time staff and contract cartographers at offices in 24 countries and uses a sophisticated network of professional drivers, mobile mapping vans, and more than 50,000 data resources to deliver highly accurate and up-to-date digital maps. Tele Atlas is listed on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange (TA6) and on Euronext Amsterdam (TA). For more information, visit www.teleatlas.com.

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