

POSTAL NEWS

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1. Postal Service to host passport fair

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

By Daniel Carson

PANAMA CITY

Those interested in applying for a new U.S. passport card, or a traditional passport book, can visit the U.S. Postal Service's Panama City passport fair Saturday.

The fair will be held at the USPS' General Mail Facility, located on Sherman Avenue across from the Bay County Fairgrounds, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

According to the U.S. Department of state's Web site, U.S. citizens could begin applying for the new passport cards Feb. 1. The new cards may only be used for land and sea travel between the U.S. and Canada, Mexico, Bermuda and the Caribbean, and were created to provide a less expensive alternative to the traditional passport book.

Panama City USPS spokeswoman Gloria Sanchez said there already had been people asking about the new passport cards. She said the USPS wanted to accommodate its customers and reduce wait time, as well as allow people to apply well in advance of any planned cruises or trips.

"When they do it on a Saturday, they can bring their kids and they don't have to take off from work. It's more convenient to them," Sanchez said Tuesday.

The last time USPS held a special passport event like this was October 2006, which produced an "overwhelming response," she said.

The new passport card should be available and mailed to applicants sometime this spring, Sanchez said. It has the same validity period as a passport book: 10 years for an adult, 5 years for children 15 and younger.

To apply for the passport cards, U.S. residents will need the following items:

- * A passport application, available at the General Mail Facility or online at travel.state.gov/passport;
- * Proof of U.S. citizenship, such as a previous U.S. passport, certified copy of birth certificate or naturalization papers (no photocopies allowed);
- * Proof of identity;
- * Two identical passport photos (photos will be taken at the passport fair for a \$15 fee).

For additional information on passport book and passport card fees, go to www.usps.com/passport.

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Posted on Wed, Mar. 12, 2008

2. Postal Service to Offer Competitive Prices for Express Mail, Priority Mail By U.S. Postal Service

WASHINGTON, March 12 -- For the first time ever, the U.S. Postal Service is offering volume related or other price incentives for Express Mail, Priority Mail and other shipping services, effective May 12. These incentives are now possible as a result from a change in federal law*, enabling the Postal Service to better compete in the shipping market.

Postal Service shipping products are currently priced by a "one price fits all" approach -- customers pay the same price per piece regardless of the number of packages sent or the method of payment. Beginning May 12, customers will be able to take advantage of commercial volume pricing, minimum volume rebates, online price breaks and other pricing incentives. For example:

-- Express Mail, premium overnight delivery, is switching to an industry standard, zone-based pricing system, resulting in lower prices for closer destinations. Customers will enjoy a 3 percent price reduction by purchasing Express Mail online or through corporate accounts. Up to an additional 7 percent price reduction is available for those who meet quarterly volume minimums.

-- Priority Mail, expedited delivery at economical prices, will be available at an average 3.5 percent savings to customers who use electronic postage or meet other requirements.

-- Parcel Select, the Postal Service "last mile" advantage of delivery to every door, will feature pricing and volume incentives for large- and medium-sized shippers.

-- Parcel Return Service, an easy and convenient way for customers to return items to businesses, will move entirely to a weight-based pricing system, resulting in significant price reductions for lighter packages.

"These innovative published pricing incentives will make our products more attractive to all shippers, especially small businesses," said Postmaster General John Potter.

"We're pricing our products to sell in today's competitive shipping market. In the near future, the Postal Service plans to explore contract pricing for larger customers similar to others in the market."

The new prices are available at usps.com/prices.

* The Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006

An independent federal agency, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that visits every address in the nation -- 146 million homes and businesses. It has 37,000 retail locations and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to pay for operating expenses, not tax dollars. The Postal Service has annual revenues of \$75 billion and delivers nearly half the world's mail.

SOURCE U.S. Postal Service

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3. Postal service trust

March 12, 2008

To the Editor:

For the third year in a row, Americans have rated the Postal Service as the number one government agency they trust to protect their privacy.

Overall the Postal Service earned a rating of 83 percent in the 2007 Privacy Trust Study of the United States Government, conducted by Ponemon Institute LLC. The average trust score among the 60 agencies surveyed was 47 percent.

The Privacy Trust Study found that Americans remain concerned over a "loss of civil liberties and privacy rights," "surveillance into personal life," and "monitoring e-mail and Web activities." While many federal agencies saw their ratings drop, the Postal Service was one of the few to increase both its customer satisfaction and trust scores.

All of us at the Post Office thank you for your confidence. We appreciate your business and your trust, and look forward to serving your mailing needs.

Sue Nelson
Postmaster

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4. New postal service to help housing organisations go green

Published by Jane Gething-Lewis for 24dash.com in Housing , Communities , Environment , Local Government on Tuesday 11th March 2008 - 12:40pm

The social housing sector could save up to 58% on mail delivery costs and significantly reduce its carbon footprint with a brand new Postal Services deal launched by Procurement for Housing (PfH).

PfH's market research showed that housing organisations send an average of 194 letters per day, each spending in the region of £40,856 per year on the stationery, printing, collecting, processing and postal costs all involved in sending mail. As a whole the sector spends over £139 million per year on mailings.

Research indicated that there was little awareness in the sector of the true total cost of sending mail via 'traditional' routes and there was a lack of understanding about other mail options now available through advancements in technology and process.

PfH's Postal Services Agreement will help housing organisations reduce their environmental impact by decreasing their transport requirements. This is done through electronic mail, a service which uses email to transmit documents for the greatest part of their journey before they are printed, folded, enveloped, addressed and sorted at the supplier's plant, ready for final delivery.

This electronic mail service eliminates the hidden costs associated with mail production, printers, toner, stationery and franking – providing an alternative to traditional postal collections. Housing providers reduce their postal costs and increase their control over spend on mail. Staff can concentrate on their core activities rather than collating mailings.

Housing organisations using the Postal Services Agreement can make up to 58% savings on the true cost of sending one letter by using PfH's electronic mail service.

Significant savings are also available on traditional mailings, with PfH's prices 40% less than normal franked 1st class deliveries and 13% less than normal franked 2nd class deliveries.

Three suppliers have been appointed to the Agreement – Inkfish in partnership with hybrid mail specialist DeskDirect Global, Royal Mail and TNT Post. Royal Mail and TNT offer traditional mail services such as local and national collections, mail sorting options and secure deliveries through the Agreement.

All three suppliers offer electronic mail options, enabling users to send documents straight from their desktop. Inkfish, in partnership with DeskDirect Global will enable housing organisations to create all types of mail items including statement, bulk and one-off letters, and full colour marketing materials by using specialist document composition software.

Julie Craig, Director of PfH said: "Sustainability is an increasingly important consideration for social landlords. We want to provide housing organisations with clear ways in which they can reduce their impact on the environment through procurement. The Postal Services Agreement presents the sector with an opportunity to reduce their postal costs AND meet their green objectives. Sustainability and efficiency – you can buy it!"

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5. Postal competition 'creates jobs'

11th March 2008

Competition in the postal industry has created 3,300 new jobs in the past four years and the figure could be doubled by 2016.

Research commissioned by TNT Post found that the economic benefit to the UK economy of opening the market to competition is at least £229 million, which could rise to over £400 in the next few years.

There are now 18 licensed competitors to the Royal Mail, although the report pointed out that the main postal group still delivers 99.8% of post.

Nick Wells, chief executive of TNT Post UK, said: "This research proves that postal competition in the UK is good. It is good for business. It is good for the UK taxpayer. It is good for Royal Mail.

"We want to create jobs, we want to innovate, we want to deliver for our customers but we are being held back by the Royal Mail VAT advantage. It has to go."

David Stubbs of Europe Economics, which conducted the study, added: "Royal Mail has been a key beneficiary of competition to date. Prior to the deregulation of the UK postal market, its pace of innovation and reform was slow relative to that in other postal markets.

"Royal Mail is facing up to its future and starting to address the challenges of its customers who are looking at new ways to communicate or advertise their products."

TNT Post is a leading competitor of the Royal Mail, handling more than 130 million items a month.

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