

POSTAL NEWS

No. 41/2008

Formulated by UNI-Japan Post in cooperation with UNI-Apro,
ASPEK Indonesia and SPPI

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1. Kenya: Postal Corporation to Sell Safaricom Airtime

Business Daily (Nairobi), 2 April 2008

Okuttah Mark

Postal Corporation of Kenya has tightened its grip on the agencies market, with the signing of an agreement to sell airtime for the leading mobile service provider, Safaricom.

It is the second agency contract the corporation has signed in last few weeks. Last week, the corporation sealed a deal to receive subscriptions for pay television service provider, GTV.

The agreements are critical for the survival of Postal Corporation, whose traditional mail and parcel delivery business has been low since the advent of the Internet and the mobile phone in the local market.

Although there are more than 100,000 outlets selling Safaricom airtime cards, Mr Michael Joseph, the chief executive officer, said the Postal Corporation deal is significant in terms of the number of outlets and the national spread it brings on board.

"Most of the outlets selling airtime usually have stock to last them a day. This exposes us to huge market access problems, should anything occur in the distribution system as was the case with the outbreak of post-election violence," said Mr Joseph. "Posta, a bulk buyer should cushion us from such exposure," he said.

The airtime will be initially sold in 38 post office outlets and will be available in other countrywide branches by the end of the year. Under the agreement, Postal Corporation will benefit by charging a commission for airtime sold.

No figures were available on the commission the company expects, but other outlets get five per cent of the value of airtime sold.

Postal Corporation is managing these agency agreements through an agencies services arm that it started two years ago as part of the restructuring process it has been implementing to boost its revenue base.

So far, the company has signed more 20 such deals with service providers in the telecoms, water, energy and financial services sectors.

Postmaster, General Fred Odhiambo , said the agency services and the corporation's entry into the financial services market through its money transfer product, PostaPay, has enabled the corporation to increase its revenue base from Sh1.5 billion five years ago to Sh3 billion last year.

The company has set a profit target of Sh1 billion in the next five years.

Mr Odhiambo said commissions earned from the agency services alone amounted to Sh4 million per month.

Postal Corporation is also planning to increase its presence in the courier services from the current three per cent to between 35-40 per cent.

The courier market is currently worth Sh3.3 billion. It also plans to increase its Postapay points.

to all its 900 branches country. At the moment the services are only available in the 300 outlets.

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2. Postal Seminar to be held April 25

April 2, 2008

As a part of the Swainsboro/Emanuel County Chamber of Commerce's on-going small business development initiative, a free seminar on "U.S. Postal Products for Small Businesses" will be presented on Friday, April 25th at 9:30 A.M. The class, which will be held at the Chamber Annex, 124 North Main Street, is being presented to help small businesses learn of ways to maximize their postal dollars. The seminar is open to any small business or organization in Emanuel County.

"Postmaster Jerry Lawson has been instrumental in helping us set this program in motion. We hope local businesses will take advantage of the free seminar and learn of the U.S. Postal Office's efforts to assist businesses. Any business or organization that mails will gain from attending this class," stated Bill Rogers, chamber president.

To register for the seminar, call the Swainsboro/Emanuel County Chamber of Commerce at 478-237-6426.

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3. Snail mail makes this columnist positively postal

Check really is in mail, but where?

April 2, 2008

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Am I the only one who's having trouble sending mail these days, or is anyone else ready to begin spelling the last name of the U.S. Postal Service with a small "s"?

Pardon me if I seem a tad bit cranky, but I am being snail-mailed in the extreme.

A certified letter containing a cashier's check, which I mailed at my small-town post office back on the morning of March 14, still has not reached its destination, another small-town post office in Northern Indiana, four hours away by car.

So far, about all the Postal Service can tell me, after examining the 20-digit tracking code, is that the envelope was mailed but did not arrive, and they don't know where it is or what happened.

Several months ago, I sent a book to a friend in Middletown, barely a 25-minute drive from the mail drop.

It arrived one month later without explanation.

A postal rate hike followed.

Am I on Candid Camera?

In the interest of fairness, I have covered several wonderful Postal Service stories over the years.

In 1994, I wrote about Pat Logsdon, who then worked for the Postal Service in Lexington. She once tracked down a passport stuck in the mail in Atlanta and had it delivered to the customer less than two hours before his flight was to leave the country.

Then there was the letter in a small child's handwriting with no stamp, no street number and no ZIP code, that she discovered while working at an earlier job in Sylvania, Ohio. It was addressed only to: "Grandma, Brookview Street, Sylvania, Ohio."

Logsdon noticed the postmark was Colorado Springs, Colo., home of the Air Force Academy, and remembered that a retired Air Force colonel and his wife lived on Brookview Street.

She stamped the child's letter and delivered it to the colonel's wife, who burst into tears as she opened the envelope.

The employees at my post office say my lost check was probably misdirected in the sorting process and likely will reach its destination in a few days. But I say there is a phantom postal worker somewhere out there who is bent on bringing back the Pony Express -- using Shetlands moving at a jog trot?

And the ponies remind me: Three years ago I got a large envelope from Churchill Downs in the stack of office mail from my post-office box. When I saw the track logo on the envelope, I figured it was a media guide and it lay unopened for weeks.

But inside were several sheets of expensive tickets to the Churchill Downs clubhouse intended for someone in another town. Then I noticed the package was addressed to a man whose name, address and ZIP code had no resemblance to mine.

The postal phantom had struck again.

Yes, the check is in the mail, but where?

And for how long?

Byron Crawford's column appears on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Reach him at (502) 582-4791 or bcrawford@courier-journal.com. Comment on this column, and read previous columns, at www.courier-journal.com/byron.

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4. 100 jobs go as postal passport services are axed

Apr 3 2008 By Magnus Gardham

ALL postal passport services are being axed from Scotland and moved south of the Border.

The decision to stop processing postal applications in Glasgow later this year will lead to 100 job losses, about a third of the workforce.

The move will also hit emergency passport applications.

Unions warned that Scots travellers who make a postal application but need to travel before their passport is issued will have to go down south for an emergency document.

The Public and Commercial Services Union, who represent passport workers at the Cowcaddens office, also warned counter services could be axed.

At present, holidaymakers and business travellers can queue up to renew an out-of-date passport in four hours.

STUC general secretary Grahame Smith said: "It is of great concern that Scotland will be the only home nation without a passport processing facility."

The Identity and Passport Service will transfer postal passport processing to two or three English sites.

Scots workers have been told they will be offered alternative jobs. The PCS are to campaign against compulsory redundancies and have not ruled out industrial action.

An IPS spokesman said: "A proposal has been made to reshape the Glasgow regional office.

"Counter services in Glasgow will remain open but, if approved, the processing of postal applications there would cease later this year.

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5. Postal workers may strike over pension deals

Postal workers' unions are in talks about a joint strike action over changes to pension deals.

A ballot of Communication Workers Union (CWU) members across the country on Tuesday overwhelmingly rejected Royal Mail's pension changes.

The CWU and Unite are now discussing a joint approach to industrial action if Royal Mail refuses to enter talks to thrash out a compromise.

Mick Fitzmaurice, CWU branch secretary for Northamptonshire, said: "The result of this ballot clearly demonstrates the strength of feeling among postal workers against Royal Mail's pension consultation sham.

"The CWU is now calling on Royal Mail to stop acting in undue haste and to discuss how to solve the pension problem facing the company."

The ballot result follows Royal Mail managers' rejection of the pension changes two weeks ago.

The CWU said it would now give Royal Mail a final chance to reach an "acceptable resolution".

Last Updated: 03 April 2008 8:30 AM

6. OutBound Shipping Announces United States Postal Service Global Shipping Solution (GSS) Interface Integration

OutBound Shipping Systems, a leading provider of automated carrier certified shipping software and solutions has announced today that it has integrated the United States Postal Service (USPS) Global Shipping Solution (GSS) interface into its enterprise shipping software.

St. Louis, MO (PRWEB) April 3, 2008 -- OutBound Shipping Systems, a leading provider of automated carrier certified shipping software and solutions has announced today that it has integrated the United States Postal Service (USPS) Global Shipping Solution (GSS) interface into its enterprise shipping software.

"The integration of the USPS GSS module into the OutBound Shipping System allows our customers to access the easiest method for shipping international USPS parcels," explained Todd Smith, a lead programmer at OutBound Shipping Systems. "This new module streamlines the oftentimes difficult process of generating the correct paperwork for international shipping with USPS. Our module can accomplish this by capturing the required information for international shipping, including product codes, value, and requirements of the destination country," he added. The integration of the USPS GSS module into the OutBound Shipping System allows our customers to access the easiest method for shipping international USPS parcels

Currently, OutBound Shipping Systems' multi-carrier certified shipping solution encompasses United States Postal Service (USPS), Federal Express (FedEx), DHL, and United Parcel Service (UPS) products and services and also has a less than truckload (LTL) module. The latest edition will feature increased application functionality as well as integration with USPS.

About OutBound Shipping System

Since 1990, OutBound Shipping Systems has provided state-of-the-art shipping applications to medium and large enterprise businesses. These applications are designed to be easily integrated into existing in-house systems and databases. The Company focuses on building direct relationships with its clients to provide them with the most sophisticated .NET, C#, and SQL shipping solutions available in the industry. For more information, please visit <http://www.outboundshipping.com>