

POSTAL NEWS

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1. Houston Leads Nation in Postal Carrier Dog Bites

Announcement kicks off Dog Bite Prevention Week

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HOUSTON -- Everyone knows that the U.S. Postal Service's motto is through the rain, sleet and snow. But their motto doesn't say anything about dogs.

On Friday, representatives from the U.S. Postal Service kicked off Dog Bite Prevention Week by declaring Houston as the leader in mail carrier dog bites.

Letter Carrier Sonia Perez was one of the latest victims to be bit by a dog when a Rottweiler attacked her Saturday despite efforts to kick it away.

"That just made him more vicious," Perez said. "He attacked from the inside. "He went straight toward my legs like he knew what he was doing."

Perez left the hospital Friday, with deep bite wounds wrapped in gauze.

But she wasn't the only carrier attacked by dogs.

The postal service says 103 letter carriers were bitten in 2007, followed by Santa Ana, CA, with 86; Sacramento, CA, 82; Los Angeles, CA, 71; and the Big Valley District with 69 bites.

"Everybody will tell you that the dog won't bite... but the dog will bite," Letter Carrier David Goch said.

Last year, more than 3,000 city and rural carriers were attacked by dogs across the U.S., which is a decrease of 63 victims from the year prior.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates nearly two percent of the American population is bitten by a dog each year. Children and the elderly rank as the first and second most likely victims of dog bites, followed by letter carriers.

Deloris J. Killete from the U.S. Postal Service noted that dog owners are responsible for letter carrier's safety.

"We went from 96 dog bites in Houston in 2006 to 103 last year," said Killete. "You could say, Houston, we have a problem."

Speakers at a conference discussed the issue of injuries resulting from dog bite and shared tips on how to avoid being bitten.

As an independent federal agency, the USPS regularly services 146 million homes and businesses.

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2. Postal exchange: Mail deregulation a failure, CUPW says

Posted: May 16, 2008, 7:15 PM by Jeff White
letters to the editor, postal deregulation

Re: Abolish the Postal Monopoly Now!, Mathieu Laberge, May 14
Mathieu Laberge's simplistic misinformation about deregulated postal services outside of Canada was all rhetoric and no rigour. Take a look at what he did not say and what he got wrong. Japan and the Netherlands have not yet deregulated their public postal service, so they can hardly be seen as deregulation success stories. Germany introduced a different minimum wage for the postal sector and New Zealand Post can only survive with profits from its bank. And why didn't he mention the U.K.? Maybe it's the unhelpful fact that a recent independent review of the U.K. postal services found that "there have been no significant benefits from liberalization for smaller businesses and domestic consumers" (full report: www.berr.gov.uk/publications/index.htm).

So is Laberge suggesting that Canada Post get into banking services? Is he saying that a 92¢ stamp in Sweden is a deregulation success? And why won't he compare Canada to the United States? After all, the United States still has a monopoly on letter mail because Congress recently agreed that the security of mail would be seriously compromised in a deregulated market where the lowest bidder in each area would deliver the mail.
Denis Lemelin, national president, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Ottawa

Mathieu Laberge replies:

I read with much interest the answer from Mr. Lemelin. On his specific remarks:
The deregulation process in Japan was adopted in 2005 and began in April 2007. It is expected to last 10 years. Indeed, they will create a US\$18.4-billion fund to erase deficits

in rural post offices. (Source: Reason Foundation, www.reason.org/apr2005/priv_japan.shtml). Even CUPW acknowledges this fact: “Japan Post is in the midst of being privatized. In 2005, Japan’s parliament passed a package of bills to privatize its postal service. Japan Post is being split into four sections — postal savings, postal insurance, mail delivery, and over-the-counter services — and privatized over a 10-year period.” (Source:

www.publicpostoffice.ca/index.cfm/ci_id/9656/la_id/1.htm.)

The Netherlands sold 52% of its postal service in 1994-95. A (private) monopoly is still in force for a part of postal services, but the Netherlands supported the opening of the monopoly to competition in accordance with the EU schedule. They are then expected to break the monopoly in 2011 at the latest. (Source: Reason Foundation, www.reason.org/apr2005/priv_japan.shtml.)

I recognized in the paper that some actions might be done to reduce the impact of deregulation. Integration of complementary services, such as in New Zealand, might be a successful strategy to face deregulation in postal services. However, I do not think fixing a different minimum wage is a good idea, since it would distort the labour market. Other strategies can work. Among them, increasing long distance fares is one that has been adopted in New Zealand and Sweden. I never pretended that fares would be maintained at their actual level on a Canada wide basis. In an interview on Calgary Today with Mike Blanchard on AM770 CHQR, I even explained that an increase in postal fares for certain areas would better represent the value of the service received.

I believe these clarifications show my paper and my opinions were based on truth and facts.

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