

POSTAL NEWS

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1. Postal Service restructures major functions

Story posted: July 1, 2008 - 1:09 pm EDT

Washington, D.C.—The U.S. Postal Service announced Tuesday that it has realigned several of its core functions, characterizing the change as “dramatic.”

The realignment creates two primary strategic groups: Shipping and Mailing Services, which comprises all major shipping and mailing products, and Customer Relations, which represents the voice of the customer, whether business or individual mailers.

“Today’s decisions may be viewed as a sea change for some,” said Postmaster General John E. Potter, in a statement. “But these are challenging times, and it’s critical that we take advantage of recent changes in federal law which give us the tools to move into the competitive environment. We are now positioned to do that.”

Robert F. Bernstock has been named president of the Shipping and Mailing Services division. Bernstock was previously chairman-CEO of Securesheet Technologies. Reporting to him will be David Shoenfeld as senior VP-mailing services, a new position. Shoenfeld was formerly senior VP-worldwide marketing for Federal Express.

Stephen Kearney has been named senior VP-Customer Relations. A 28-year veteran of the Postal Service, Kearney served most recently as VP-Pricing and Classification. In that position, he worked with the Postal Regulatory Commission, industry groups and customers to transform pricing from primarily cost-based to market driven.

—Carol Krol

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2. Kenyan chosen to head postal union

Written by Beatrice Gachenge

July 3, 2008: Kenya has clinched yet another international appointment — this time in the communications industry.

Mrs Rodah Masaviru has been picked to head the Pan African Postal Union, the continental association of postal service providers with its headquarters in Arusha.

Mrs Masaviru was elected the Secretary-General of the Pan African Postal Union (PAPU) during the organization's annual conference held in Cairo. Another Kenyan was also elected to serve in the union's administrative council for a period of four years.

Information and Communications minister Samuel Poghio, who led the Kenyan delegation to the conference, said the appointment was a sign of what Kenya can achieve with a better focus on international jobs.

The post of assistant Secretary-general was left vacant after the sole candidate, Collins Nkuo of Cameroun, withdrew from the race. It will be re-advertised later in the month.

Prior to the election, Ms Masaviru served a four-year term as assistant secretary-general of the union. She holds a master's degree in population studies from the University of Nairobi.

Before joining the Union in 2004, Mrs Masaviru worked for over 20 years at Kenya Posts and Telecommunications Corporation as well as at the Postal Corporation of Kenya.

PAPU is a Specialized Agency of the African Union (AU), in the field of Postal Services. Its mission is to promote and develop postal services in Africa.

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3. Postal service in decline

WHEN on holiday in Greece, I'm impressed with the ease of sending mail. We send letters to Europe and the USA, buying stamps at local shops, and putting the

correspondence in post boxes. All at the same price, and without having to have all our mail weighed and measured in the local post office. So easy. Then I come home and try to use our UK postal services. We have to go to the post office, have letters to anywhere priced according to weight and dimensions, with a vast array of alternatives in terms of times of delivery, and signing in by recipient. First class post no longer guarantees next day delivery. Mail can be received any time from 8am to 3pm.

Secure

If we're out when packages or 'to be signed for' letters arrive, we now have to wait two days before collecting it at the post office, as they're kept in a secure box that cannot be opened for two days, to save the postie the bother of taking it straight back to the depot.

Postal services are getting steadily worse, and more expensive. Perhaps, with so-called competition from private services in the offing, the Royal Mail is being deliberately made more inefficient in order to help this competition succeed?

The trouble is that when there's only poor and expensive service to compete with there'll be that much less incentive for the new services to be any better.

Tony Schofield, Mount Pleasant Road, Pudsey

Last Updated: 03 July 2008 1:19 PM

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4. Speed Post & Express Parcel to cost 20% more

4 Jul, 2008, 0046 hrs IST, Vikas Bhardwaj & Niranjana Bharati, ET Bureau

NEW DELHI: India Post is planning across-the-board hike in the rates of its mailing, courier and freight services. The rate hike, which comes after nine years, would be applicable to services like speed post, express parcel post and logistics post, and would be in the range of 15-20%.

Even the rates of normal mails including postcards, competition postcards — used for participating in TV and radio contests — envelopes and inland letters are likely to be revised.

Rate hike for normal mail would be on the minimal side while it would be higher in the case of business and media posts, used mostly by the corporate world. Charges for media post are lower by up to 60% of the normal mail.

The postal department last revised the rates in 1999. Private courier services have revised their rates by 10-15% following the hike in road and air freight.

“We are planning a rate hike in order to cope with the recent increase in freight charges by the railways and air services. High ATF costs are also impacting our own air service,” an official in the department of posts (DoP) said.

He, however, said the government is trying to minimise the burden which is likely to affect the common man most. However, the total revenue of the post offices would go up by Rs 100 crore only. “This is minuscule compared to our overall revenue of Rs 4,000 crore,” he added.

The rate revision has been necessitated by the fact that postal department recently minimised the weight categories for sending mails and couriers. “Now, there are only three weight categories for speed post and parcels instead of the earlier nine categories. Also, we are trying to make the process easier. The moves require price revisions,” the official said.

Minister of state for communication and IT Jyotiraditya Scindia told ET that the department would try to insulate the common man from the rate hikes. An e-mail sent in this regard to the DoP secretary went unanswered.

Rising fuel costs forced the Railways to levy a special surcharge of 4% on all freight excluding iron ore and cement. The surcharge is expected to be in effect till September.

Speed post charges Rs 12-25 while post offices charge Rs 5 for sending 20-gm envelope. Direct mails, mostly used for advertising purpose, are priced around Rs 1.50-2.

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5. IFA urges submissions to save postal network

IFA Countryside Chairman David Wilkinson today urged all rural dwellers to make a submission to the Department of Communications on the opening up to competition of the postal network.

Mr Wilkinson said: “It is vital with the introduction of competition that the pursuit of profits does not undermine the rural postal service. The Universal Service Obligation included in the directive must be defined when being passed into Irish Law. This definition must safeguard a daily service for all parts of the country as well as ensuring prices remain the same throughout the Ireland. Rural dwellers must not be forced to make do with a reduced service and/or higher prices.”

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Collected by Chairul Anwar, Bandung, Indonesia.

E-mail address : chairulanwar49@operamail.com, uyungchairul@plasa.com.