

POSTAL NEWS

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1. **Public views sought on postal review. Aug 23, 2008.**
2. **Postal Connections opens in West Fargo. Aug 23, 2008.**
3. **USPS, local Postal Committee to conduct survey of mail delivery preference in AC. Aug 19, 2008.**
4. **Qatargas is to sponsor The Congress of Universal Postal Union. Aug 21, 2008.**
5. **NUPGE concerned postal review will lead to deregulation. Aug 21, 2008.**
6. **Union fears postal changes. Aug 21, 2008.**

Last updated at 4:00 PM on 24/08/08

1. Public views sought on postal review

Union on the road
The Truro Daily News

By Harry Sullivan
Truro Daily News

TRURO — Rural route residents in Colchester County are being asked to contact Canada Post to share their views on a strategic review currently underway by the Crown corporation.

Called the Canada Post Corporation Strategic Review, the effort is considering such fundamental questions such as whether the post office should continue to serve as the country's exclusive public mail carrier or open its letter-handling service up to private competition, said Bobbi Jo Brown, president of the Truro local of the Canadian Unionized Postal Workers.

"The fact that the government is not holding public hearings and is proceeding at a breakneck pace with its review suggests that it is not really interested in hearing from the real owners of the post office, the public," Brown said. "We want to make sure that the view of the public and public interest groups are considered."

Brown will be travelling throughout Rural Routes 1 to 6 this weekend asking the public to inform the corporation how they use they post office and to ask for more openness.

"We need as much support as we can get," she said. "So, I'll be stopping and asking people to sign post cards."

Brown said the union is "very concerned" that the government's review includes an examination of postal deregulation, which she said has proven in other areas to lead to fewer jobs, less service and higher postal rates for the public and small business.

Another concern is the fact that individuals and groups are being asked to make submissions by Sept. 2, as opposed to holding public meetings.

"We're very worried," she said, of the potential threat of job losses and the removal of small community postal outlets.

The strategic review was ordered by the federal Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, who appointed a three-person panel to study the issue and make recommendations focusing on market and competition; public policy objectives and responsibilities; commercial activities and financial and performance targets. In doing so, the minister said four guiding principles will be respected, including:

- ‰‰ Canada Post will not be privatized and will remain a Crown corporation;
- ‰‰ Canada Post must maintain a universal, effective and economically viable postal service;
- ‰‰ Canada Post will continue to act as an instrument of public policy through the provision of postal services to Canadians; and
- ‰‰ Canada Post will continue to operate in a commercial environment and is expected to attain a realistic rate of return on equity.

But Brown said given the lack of public exposure to the process, the union does not trust that those principles will be respected. Public submissions can be made online by accessing www.cpcstrategicreview.gc.ca.

23/08/08

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2. Postal Connections opens in West Fargo

The Forum

Published Saturday, August 23, 2008

Postal Connections of America, a franchise chain of postal, business and communication services stores, has opened at the Pioneer Center, 1365 Prairie Parkway, West Fargo.

The store is operated by Joni and Justin Tillich. Services offered at the store include copies, mail receiving, packaging, faxing, lamination, money orders, key duplicating, digital image storage, banners, printing and shipping choices including FedEx, DHL and U.S. Postal Service products.

Store hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays.

The business can be reached at (701) 356-7678.

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3. USPS, local Postal Committee to conduct survey of mail delivery preference in AC

August 19, 2008

To the Editor,

Recently, representatives from the United States Postal Service promised to follow-up with Arizona City residents via this publication after meeting with members of the Arizona City Postal Committee back on August 5.

We have jointly agreed to conduct a survey of Arizona City residents within the next month to determine what method of mail delivery is preferred in Arizona City. This will be conducted as a collaborative effort between the United States Postal Service and the Arizona City Postal Committee members.

We are committed to hearing all the customer voices in Arizona City. After the results of this survey, we will discuss any changes to the current method of delivery.

We urge Arizona City customers who have any questions or concerns about their delivery service to contact the Postal Service's consumer relations line at 1-800-ASK-USPS, or the Casa Grande Post Office at 520-836-7221.

We also encourage residents and businesses to share their thoughts on delivery methods through the completion of the upcoming survey as well as with the members of the Arizona City Postal Committee by contacting them at 520-509-4266.

-Larry James, District Manager, United States Postal Service

-Steve Duxbury, Arizona City Postal Committee

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4. Qatargas is to sponsor The Congress of Universal Postal Union

Web posted at: 8/21/2008 4:22:29

Source ::: THE PENINSULA/ By Rasha Refaat
Ghanem Mohammed Al Kawary, Director of Administration Department, Qatargas, with Ali Mohamed Al Ali, Chairman and Director General of Qatar General Postal Corporation (Q-Post), at the press conference yesterday. (Abdul Basit)

DOHA • Qatargas is to sponsor The Congress of Universal Postal Union to be hosted by Qatar in 2012. This was announced in a press conference held at the premises of Q-Post who signed a contract with Qatargas in the General Post Office, West Bay yesterday.

"As members of Qatar Gas, we are responsible to participate and help in anything that will raise the name of Qatar," said Ghanem Mohammed Al Kawary, Director of Administration Department. The state of Qatar was elected as deputy chairman of the new administration Council of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) for Asia. This took place in a voting session in the Swiss Capital.

Qatar, for the first time, joined membership of the UPU administration council through elections in the Asia and Oceania group.

The Universal Postal Congress (CPU) board consists of 41 elected countries as per various regional groupings. Ali Mohamed Al Ali, Chairman and Director General of Qatar General Postal Corporation (Q-Post) said in a statement that the election of Qatar as deputy chairman of UPU Council of Administration represents a new achievement for Qatar which is getting ready to host the 25th UPU Congress conference in 2012.

The CPU which was held in Geneva began on July 23, for two weeks with 1500 delegates representing CPU's 191 member-countries. In the gathering, they discussed major issues affecting the global postal sector including the fast developing information and communication technology and ways of coping with major threats posed.

The meeting also discussed ways of introducing latest technology in the postal sector to secure its survival. The CPU is the supreme authority of the Union and brings together plenipotentiaries of all member countries.

Qatar News | World Watch

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5. NUPGE concerned postal review will lead to deregulation

'The post office is and should remain a publicly-owned enterprise.' - Larry Brown

Ottawa (21 Aug. 2008) - The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) has written Canada Post expressing concern that a "strategic review process" currently under way by the Crown corporation may set the stage for "deregulation of our public postal system."

"Our first concern is that the review process does not include public input," NUPGE secretary-treasurer Larry Brown says in a letter to the agency.

"As the public continues to be the owner of Canada Post, public hearings in multiple locations across Canada would be the most appropriate course of action. This is not happening," Brown writes.

"Our second concern is the impact that deregulating the postal service will have on the quality, universality and environmental impact of postal delivery."

Brown says the public, small businesses and non-profit organizations all rely on a regulated post office to provide reasonably priced service in all regions of Canada - one of the largest countries in the world.

"A regulated public postal service that has exclusive rights for letter delivery is able to set fair rates that are sufficient to defray the costs incurred by this vast public service," he argues.

"Canadians expect that any profits obtained by their postal service will be invested in improvements of the service, like post offices, rural delivery and door-to-door delivery. The non-profit aspect is important to Canadians."

Deregulation downside

Brown argues that deregulation threatens affordable service by opening up mail delivery to profit driven businesses, a development that has led in other countries to fewer jobs, less service and higher rates for both the public and business.

"Postal rates in far smaller countries, like the U.K. and Sweden, have increased at a much greater rate than in Canada after these countries deregulated their service," he notes.

Brown also says a well regulated service ensures that good environmental practices are followed. "With a competitive model and many companies delivering in the same community, greenhouse gas emissions would be multiplied. ... A regulated system is more environmentally friendly."

He also notes that it is in the national interest to protect the jobs - with good wages and working conditions - that now exist at Canada Post. "A deregulated postal system would destroy jobs and transform good jobs to bad jobs with a profit-driven model where wages and benefits compete with bottom line profits," he adds.

"The post office is and should remain a publicly-owned enterprise, responsible to the public and to Parliament. Canada needs to focus less on profit making and more on public interest objectives." NUPGE

Web posted by NUPGE: 21 August 2008

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6. Union fears postal changes

Posted By SEAN CHASE, STAFF WRITER

Posted 3 days ago

An ongoing strategic review of Canada Post will result in the elimination of rural routes, the closing of post offices and a drastic increase in postal rates according to the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW).

The union foresees that the Canada Post Corporation Strategic Review, launched last spring by the federal government, will lead to deregulation of the national mail carrier.

Speaking to union membership and the public Wednesday night, Erin McGrath, president of the Pembroke local, said the corporation has gone on the record as saying it intends to cut 10,000 jobs and that will have an economic ripple effect in all Canadian communities served by postal workers.

One of the questions the review panel, which must make its final recommendations to federal transport minister Lawrence Cannon by December, will seek to answer is whether Canada Post should remain a monopoly or should the carrier market be open to competition.

That is an open invitation to deregulation and privatization, stated Ms. McGrath.

"The citizens of Pembroke and Laurentian Valley deserve a postal system that will not be bought by the cheapest bidder and then have to rely on uneducated strangers delivering their personal matters," Ms. McGrath said.

Although the panel insists its mandate will not lead to privatization and that Canada Post will remain a crown corporation, CUPW national vice-president Gayle Bossenberry said the review is being conducted in a very short time frame.

"Why aren't the public being spoken to and asked what they want," said Ms. Bossenberry. "Is the Conservative government just trying to sneak this through? We want this review to be open and transparent."

Universal postal service would be jeopardized by deregulation, she said. Ms. Bossenberry explained that when Canada Post was granted the exclusive privilege to deliver letters in 1981, legislators understood that market forces alone could not guarantee a reasonable level of service at affordable prices for Canadians. The cost of servicing rural areas was up to 10 times the existing postage rate. If deregulation eliminates the monopoly, it will dramatically reduce service or force the government to find another way to fund universal service. Private companies would focus on profitable areas and services, leaving unprofitable areas, such as rural, to the public post office, she said.

Deregulation would lead to higher postal rates, she added, citing that it caused the price of a stamp in Finland to jump from 70 cents to \$1.09 when the service was privatized. It would cost jobs as it did in Sweden which had eliminated 16,000 postal workers by 2005 under deregulation.

"Higher postal rates would result in cutbacks or the elimination of our retail counter," said Ms. McGrath.

However, it is rural customers who will be the hardest hit under any modernization by Canada Post, Ms. McGrath said, adding community mailboxes could be introduced in places like Barry's Bay, Killaloe, Eganville and Laurentian Valley. In fact, she has learned a community mailbox will be implemented shortly in Barry's Bay. Ultimately up to 85 per cent of all letter carrier routes will be motorized.

"Rural residents would see the delivery to the end of their driveway be eliminated and they would have to drive to community boxes to get their mail," she said.

What's worse is that travelling to community mailboxes will extremely difficult for the disabled and elderly, Ms. McGrath said. Rural mailboxes will also be situated in unsafe locations and force more customers on the road to retrieve their mail, she said.

Service will also be affected by modernization with computers sorting mail that is done on a daily basis by carriers. Such modernization will see 90 per cent of all letter-sized mail sequenced by machines affecting 80 per cent of all letter carrier routes. A \$50 billion state-of-the-art processing plant being built in Winnipeg is just the start of \$1 billion in technological upgrades, said Ms. Bossenberry. However, no assessment has been done to ensure these upgrades will be safe for workers, she added.

The panel is also holding no public forums and has yet to meet with the union, which Ms. Bossenberry calls a major stakeholder in the process representing 55,000 employees servicing 2,000 communities. With a Sept. 2 deadline for submissions, she fears the public has not had its input in the review.

Ms. McGrath added concerned residents should contact their member of parliament or make a submission to the panel. While Renfrew- Nipissing-Pembroke MP Cheryl Gallant was invited to the session, she declined, Ms. McGrath said. Chris Tanner, representing the New Democratic Party, did read a statement from NDP candidate Sue McSheffrey that deregulating Canada Post would be an insult to Canadians.

"It is outrageous that public institutions like our post office should not have public hearings," said Mr. Tanner.

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