

# POSTAL NEWS

No. 126/2008

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

1. **Postal Service investigates boss's VIP mortgage. Nov 18, 2008.**
2. **Saipan postal service sees huge drop in business mails in FY08. Nov 18, 2008.**
3. **Postal mail service beats odds despite internet. Nov 17, 2008.**

## **1. Postal Service investigates boss's VIP mortgage**

By MATT APUZZO – 1 day ago

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Postal Service is investigating whether the nation's postmaster general improperly received a sweetheart deal on a mortgage from Countrywide Financial Corp., the chairman of the service's governing board said.

Postmaster General John E. Potter is one of several prominent current and former U.S. officials who received discounts and other benefits from the mortgage giant. The Postal Service has hired an outside investigator to review the deal, which reportedly included one shaved point and waived fees for Potter's \$322,700 loan.

"We're taking it seriously enough that we wanted it reviewed and we didn't want it done internally," the chairman of the Postal Service Board of Governors, Alan Kessler, told The Associated Press.

Details of Potter's deal with Countrywide was first reported by Conde Nast Portfolio magazine earlier this summer. The disclosure touched off calls for a Capitol Hill investigation into how prominent lawmakers and others received VIP loans.

Countrywide, a leading subprime lender, is at the heart of the mortgage crisis. It has been criticized for using initially low teaser rates that later ballooned higher than borrowers could afford. The company agreed in January to be acquired by Bank of America Corp. for about \$4 billion in stock.

Potter did not return an e-mail seeking comment, and a Postal Service spokesman said the postmaster general would have no comment. Potter told the magazine in August that he did not know he was getting a deal on the loan.

Kessler did not say how much the investigation would cost the Postal Service, which is cutting hours and overtime for its employees after finishing its fiscal year \$2.8 billion in the red. He said the board was working to keep costs down.

"But something like this is serious enough where I don't want someone to do a cut-rate investigation," he said. "We want a professional review."

He did not say how long the investigation would take.

To run the investigation, the Postal Service hired Abbe Lowell, a Washington defense attorney who has taken on some of the city's most sensitive and high-profile cases. Lowell said he would not discuss the matter and referred questions to the Postal Service.

Sens. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., and Kent Conrad, D-N.D., have acknowledged receiving mortgages through the VIP program but have said they were unaware of any favorable treatment. Dodd was instrumental in crafting a \$700 billion bailout for the financial industry.

000

Tuesday, November 18, 2008

## **2. Saipan postal service sees huge drop in business mails in FY08**

By Nazario Rodriguez Jr.  
Reporter

The U.S. Postal Service on Saipan saw a significant drop in mails received in Fiscal Year 2008 covering the period from October 2007 to September 2008.

Postmaster Hector Medina said the decreased volume amounts to about 9 percent and the biggest drop was in business mails.

Medina said the estimated weight of priority mails they received in FY 2008 was 185,000 metric tons. "That is a drop of 9 percent compared to the previous year," he said.

Record showed that between January and October 2007, the total volume was 246,599 lbs.

Medina said the average annual volume of mails they were receiving on a monthly basis in the past was between 8,000 and 10,000 metric tons; at present they only averaged about 4,000-5,000 metric tons.

People prefer the flat rates and there are not that many sending big boxes. The flat rates are those that cost \$12.95 and \$9.85, and are usually smaller boxes.

He said this is obviously the effect of the economic downtrend, as people spend on other things because of rising prices of power and basic commodities.

“A lot of people are leaving the island but we are just hoping that things will get better for everybody,” Medina said.

Last week, the United States Postal Service conducted a meeting with the Postal Service officers among Micronesian countries and territories that included the CNMI, Guam, Palau, Marshall Islands and the four Federated States of Micronesia.

The meeting, which Saipan hosted at the Hyatt Regency, was to prepare for the holiday season.

Medina said there are no special plans for the holidays. “We will continue to provide service to people our usual way,” he said.

000

### **3. Postal mail service beats odds despite internet**

11/17/2008 | 11:41 AM

BAGUIO CITY, Philippines — The trend in postal mail deliveries is decreasing with the increasing access to the Internet of the urban populace, according to regional officials of the Philippine Postal Corporation (Philpost).

“Although there has been a slump in the mail service over the past years, especially in urban centers, Filipinos still put a premium on personalized letters and cards sent through the post office,” Philpost regional director Tomas T. Baggay said.

Baggay said nothing beats the personalized mail.

“Even the competition put up with the Philpost by private delivery enterprises did not kill the postal service,” Baggay said.

“Experience is our edge,” Baggay said as he led the journey into the postal service’s past, saying the mail delivery service started in 1767 in Manila some 241 years ago. He said the country is celebrating the 110th anniversary since the Aguinaldo government established the postal service in 1898.

Admitting that there was a decreasing trend in people who rely on the mail delivery to communicate with kin or acquaintances, another post office officer disclosed there are only about 56 bags of mails per delivery nowadays compared to that of some five to ten years ago when the volume could be ten times more.

At the onset of the peak season, which usually starts in October and lasts until February or March, no long queues are seen in the Baguio City Central Post Office, where the mails would normally concentrate.

Gleaning from the income the Cordillera Philpost has generated in 2006 (P46,057,715) and 2007 (P46,602,980), however, there is an increase of P545,265 or 1.17 %.

Negating the notion that in urban centers the postal services has dwindled with the advent of electronic mails and short message service (SMS) through cellular phones, the postal office's annual report showed that around 75% of the total postal income was generated by the Baguio City postal district, with Benguet generating the next biggest revenue, which is 10.5 %. The rest are coming from five other provinces in the region.

Mario Lanuza, Philpost director for operations, said posted mails went down from 1.5 million last year to 1.4 million letters this year.

Looking closer into the annual financial report, of the P46.6 million income last year, P21.8 million came from metered postage, while P10.5 million was collected on stamps. Last year the metered postage was at P22.1 million and stamps costed P11.5 million, or a slight decrease of 1.6 % and 8.2 %, respectively.

The increase in the postal revenue came mainly from its income from postal identification card, which dramatically increased by 41 % from P4.4 million in 2006 to P6.2 million last year. This item registered the biggest portion in revenue improvement at P1.8 million.

While admitting there are hassles in mail distribution, especially in far-flung areas of the region, Baggay said there are mail delivery servicemen in all Cordillera towns. He added, there are post offices in the region which do not break even in terms of income, that they get a subsidy from the government corporation.

"In urban areas, we see the competition with private mail service providers, but when it comes to the rural areas, some of them also avail of the postal service," Baggay said.

Philpost is a government-owned and controlled corporation. - Lyn V. Ramo, Northern Dispatch

000

Collected by Chairul Anwar, Bandung, Indonesia.

E-mail address : [chairulanwar49@operamail.com](mailto:chairulanwar49@operamail.com), [uyungchairul@plasa.com](mailto:uyungchairul@plasa.com), [anwarchairul13@yahoo.com](mailto:anwarchairul13@yahoo.com).