

POSTAL NEWS

No. 134/2008

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

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1. U.S. Postal Service recognized for safeguarding customer privacy

BY THE SOUTHERN

Saturday, December 20, 2008 6:10 PM CST

The premier privacy trust study in America cites the Postal Service as sixth among 200 of the “Most Trusted Companies for Privacy.”

For the fifth year in a row, the U.S. Postal Service has been recognized by the Ponemon Institute for its best practices in safeguarding U.S. consumers’ personal information among private sector companies. This year, the Postal Service moved up one position from last year’s listing.

“Throughout our 230-year history, the Postal Service has placed a very high premium upon the security of the mail,” said Loretta Tolliver, Manager of Customer Relations for the Gateway District of the U.S. Postal Service, adding, “We jealously guard the valued trust and respect we’ve painstakingly earned from our customers.”

The study asked more than 6,000 adult U.S. consumers which companies they thought were most trustworthy in handling their personal information responsibly. Of the 706 companies consumer’s cited, 211 businesses made it to the final list of most trusted. The Postal Service was sixth on the list.

“Consumers want to do business with brands they believe they can trust,” said Dr. Larry Ponemon, chairman and founder, Ponemon Institute. “We believe our study is a strong indication of which brands have best earned that trust.”

The Institute also has cited the Postal Service as the “Most Trusted Government Agency” for four years in a row. Increasing its privacy trust score every year since the survey began four years ago, the Postal Service has been recognized as the government agency that is best able to keep consumers’ information safe and secure. Those scores are expected to be released early next year.

2. Report: Keep postal monopoly in place

By RANDOLPH E. SCHMID – 4 days ago

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Postal Rate Commission urged Congress on Friday to keep an eye on postal finances, which have been suffering in the current economic climate, in case changes become necessary.

The commission, an independent agency, said no immediate changes are needed in the post office's monopoly or its obligation to provide universal service.

When it passed an updated law governing postal operations in 2006, Congress directed the commission to study whether the monopoly on some mail was still needed as well as the requirement for universal service.

"Although no immediate changes are called for, recent events require the commission to recommend that Congress closely monitor the Postal Service's financial situation as the possibility now exists that significant changes may become necessary to preserve effective and efficient postal services for the nation," the report said.

The commission — which conducted a series of hearing on the matter — found the public is generally satisfied with the service the post office provides.

The Postal Service recently ended its fiscal year \$2.8 billion in the red, battered by a faltering economy that cut the amount of mail being sent. Postmaster General John Potter said the agency is making sharp cuts in hours and overtime, but added that there are no plans for layoffs. The mail being sent dropped by 9.5 billion items.

"We expect the new fiscal year to be another difficult one," Potter said at the time, adding: "We're not panicking here."

In general, the universal service obligation requires the post office to provide service to all people nationwide. The report estimated the annual cost of that requirement at \$4.4 billion.

And it said the value of the post office's monopoly on some types of mail, and on letter boxes, provides it a value ranging from \$200 million to \$7.1 billion, "with \$3.48 billion as the most plausible estimate."

"This is a landmark report," said commission chairman Dan G. Blair. "The report reflects a year's worth of work by the commission."

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