

POSTAL NEWS

No. 54/2009

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

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- 1. Experian Marketing Services Gives Mailers the Low Down on the 2009 Postal Rate Increases**

Webinar will educate mailers on the impact of the new postal rate changes and provide strategies to prepare for coming changes in mailing costs

SCHAUMBURG, Ill., March 30 /PRNewswire/ -- Experian Marketing Services today announced it will host a Webinar aimed at educating direct marketers and mailers on the upcoming 2009 postal rate increases and what they can do now to create effective plans and budgets for their mailings.

Mailers and catalogers have been fooled in past years with numbers that don't add up when it comes to budgeting mailing costs. The typical rate change of 3.8 percent is not all inclusive of each mail class and type of mail, and direct mailers need to take this into account now in order to stay successful through the next year. With the new mailing rate adjustment going into effect on May 11, 2009, now is the perfect time for mailers to prepare a cost-conscious mailing strategy.

This free Webinar features Experian Marketing Service's top mail experts - Steve Lopez, vice president of Postal Affairs, and Mike Yapuncich, vice president of List Processing - presenting the hard numbers on the rate changes, the impact of the change on a variety of mail types, and what steps mailers can take now to build a winning strategy around these cost increases.

The Webinar will be held on Wednesday, April 1, 2009, at 2 p.m. EDT, and registration is free. To register, visit <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/270751728>.

About Experian

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Combining its unique information tools and deep understanding of individuals, markets and economies, Experian partners with organizations around the world to establish and strengthen customer relationships and provide their businesses with competitive advantage.

For consumers, Experian delivers critical information that enables them to make financial and purchasing decisions with greater control and confidence. Clients include organizations from financial services, retail and catalog, telecommunications, utilities, media, insurance, automotive, leisure, e-commerce, manufacturing, property and government sectors.

Experian plc is listed on the London Stock Exchange (EXPN) and is a constituent of the FTSE 100 index. Experian has corporate headquarters in Dublin, Ireland, and has operational headquarters in Costa Mesa, Calif., and Nottingham, UK. The Group employs approximately 15,500 people in 38 countries worldwide, supporting clients in more than 65 countries around the world. Revenue for the year ended March 31, 2008, was \$4 billion.

For more information, visit <http://www.experianplc.com>.

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Mar 29, 2009 6:59 pm US/Mountain

2. Postal Service Encourages Getting Passport Now

Written by Andrea Lopez

Postal Service encouraging people to get their passports now because of new travel rules that go into effect June 1.

Passport Applications The postal service is encouraging people to get their passports now because they're anticipating a surge of applications and renewals around the beginning of the summer.

June 1 is when new passport rules go into effect. They will require any American citizen to have a passport for travel outside of the United States, whether that be by air, land or sea. It used to be you only needed a passport if you were traveling to another country by air. Also, children will also need passports -- even infants.

A passport card is also available, but those can only be used for travel by land and sea, and only if you're going to Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, or Bermuda. It can take more than a month for you to get a passport, which is why the postal service is asking people to start thinking about it now.

"We've seen a lot of volume already this morning and we anticipate quite a few customers because this is an optimal time to apply for a passport," said Marcela Juarez Rivera with the Denver Postal Service. "Passport processing usually takes four to six weeks to return to the applicant. So, if you're looking at traveling any time within the next couple of months, as most vacations begin this summer, this is a prime time to apply for a passport."

An adult passport book is \$100 for anyone over the age of 16. A child passport book, which is for anyone 15 and younger, costs \$85. A passport card for anyone age 16 and older costs \$45. For anyone 15 and younger needing a passport card, the cost is \$35.

For more information, including locations where you can apply for a passport and the hours of those passport hours, you can go to www.usps.gov. You can also call (800) ASK-USPS.

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3. Postal groups woo merger approval

By Nikki Tait

Published: March 28 2009 02:00 | Last updated: March 28 2009 02:00

The Swedish and Danish postal services, which are seeking merger approval from Brussels, have offered concessions in return for a green light.

The move comes after other postal services in the region, including in Norway and Finland, have expressed reservations about the deal and its anti-competitive consequences.

The proposed transaction is the first big merger since EU countries agreed to liberalise their postal markets by 2011.

The commitments offered by the Swedish and Danish office have not been detailed publicly, but this development means that the deadline for a decision on the merger by the European Commission has been pushed back to April 21.

Kristen Bergum, director of Norway's Posten Norge, which is one of the companies which had expressed concerns about the deal's impact, said she was "glad that the Commission has sufficient doubts about the merger to impose remedies".

Nikki Tait, Brussels

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4. Postal workers protest wage cuts

Published: Saturday 28 March 2009 20:17 UTC

Last updated: Sunday 29 March 2009 14:51 UTC

Members of the Committee to Save Mail Carriers demonstrated in the centre of Utrecht today to protest against the liberalisation of the postal market. According to the committee, TNT mail carriers will see their salaries fall by 15 percent due to the proposed changes to the postal market. A few weeks ago, unions and TNT Post signed an agreement in principle on the 2009 collective labour agreement; under the terms of the deal, mail carriers and sorters will see their salaries fall by five percent as of 1 April. Over the coming years, the wage cuts will amount to 15 percent. The protesters are demanding, "a decent, living wage".

TNT Post says it is getting less business due to e-mail and internet as well as competition from other companies such as Sandd and Selekt Mail. TNT Post will also

lose its monopoly on delivering letters weighing up to 50 grams out of 1 April, when the liberalisation of the postal market comes into effect.

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5. TAJIKISTAN: POSTAL SERVICE MARKS FALL IN REMITTANCES

3/27/09

Remittances to northern Tajikistan have fallen by more than 70 percent in the first two months of 2009 compared with the same period a year ago.

In January-February 2008, the Tajik postal service handled \$87,700 in cash, a source in the Soghd administration department told the news agency Asia-Plus on March 27. But for the first two months of 2009, the post office registered just \$26,000 in remittances. Also, the number of parcels received from abroad fell from 158 in January-February 2008 to 97 in the same period 2009, the source added, noting that the parcels seemed smaller and lighter than last year.

The volume of remittances to the cash-strapped state has tumbled since the global financial crisis took hold in 2008. Agencies estimate that more than 30 percent of the economically active Tajik male population is working abroad, and that remittances -- in a good year -- constitute up to 50 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

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6. Without Help, Postal Service Faces Threat of Going Broke, Official Says

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
Published: March 25, 2009

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Postal Service will run out of money this year unless it gets help, the postmaster general, John E. Potter told Congress on Wednesday as he sought permission to cut delivery to five days a week.

“We are facing losses of historic proportion,” Mr. Potter said. “Our situation is critical.”

The agency lost \$2.8 billion last year and is facing the likelihood of much larger losses this year, despite a rate increase scheduled to take effect May 11. Reducing mail delivery to five days a week from six could save \$3.5 billion annually, Mr. Potter told the post office subcommittee of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

He also urged changes in how the post office prepays for retiree health care to cut its annual costs by \$2 billion.

Even if the agency reaches its planned cuts of \$5.9 billion this year, there could still be a \$6 billion deficit in 2010, Mr. Potter said.

“Without a change, we will exhaust our cash resources,” he said. “We can no longer afford business as usual.”

The volume of mail handled by the post office has been declining for some time, and the recession is making the situation worse. If there is no economic recovery, the agency projects that volume for the year will drop by 12 billion to 15 billion pieces of mail.

The high fuel prices of last year also sapped money from the post office, which operates more than 200,000 vehicles. Every one-cent increase in the price of fuel costs the post office \$8 million.

Mr. Potter first raised the possibility of delivery cutbacks in January, but the idea has not been warmly received in Congress. Federal law now requires delivery six days a week.

Last week, the post office said it planned to offer early retirement to 150,000 workers and was eliminating 1,400 management positions and closing 6 of its 80 district offices in cost-cutting efforts. Mr. Potter said he expected 10,000 to 15,000 workers to accept the early retirement offer.

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7. Postal inspectors investigating parcel tracking notice

by Sheryl Harris/Plain Dealer Consumer Columnist

Thursday March 26, 2009, 4:50 PM

Click on picture to enlarge.

U.S. postal inspectors are investigating complaints about a green "Parcel Tracking Notice" consumers are finding in their mailboxes. The notice typically says a \$50 package is being held for the recipient. To claim it, consumers are instructed to call a toll-free number (800-520-6160) and use a credit card to make a \$6.95 payment.

At first glance, you might think the notice is from the post office or a delivery service - as did the reader who sent it to me.

But it's actually a postcard, a sales gimmick mailed by a Florida outfit that calls itself CCD, or Consumer Clearinghouse Distributors.

Consumers who call the company's number, 1-800-520-6160, hear a recording telling them they've been selected to receive a "free" freshwater pearl necklace if they pay a \$6.95 "storage release fee."

Postal inspectors in Cleveland said their counterparts in Florida are investigating the mailer. If you receive one, you can mark it "Attn: Postal Inspector" and put it back in your mailbox for your letter carrier to forward. Or file a complaint with postal inspectors online.

When I called the company, I was transferred to a person who would only identify himself as "Bob."

When I told him I wanted to speak to someone in charge of the company, he sneered, "Oh, you do, huh? Really? I think you're out of luck."

Speaks volumes, doesn't it?

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