

# POSTAL NEWS

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## **1. International Postal Sector Finds Positives in Challenging Economy**

U.S. Postmaster General Addresses Global Conference

WASHINGTON, April 3 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- U.S. Postmaster General John E. Potter and other postal agency CEOs from around the world agree that the industry is facing tough challenges in today's economy. But Potter and other postal executives also are highlighting positive effects of the current economic situation.

"The economic downturn is indeed a challenging time for postal agencies worldwide," said Potter. "On the positive side, it's the perfect time to clearly focus our priorities and look at new business opportunities."

Postal representatives from nearly 90 countries are gathered this week in Berne, Switzerland, for "Impact of the Economic Crisis on Postal Activities," a high-level conference of the Universal Postal Union (UPU), a specialized agency of the United Nations that sets the rules for mail exchange between countries. As a sign of the times, Potter and several other postal leaders participated by video or online conferencing.

Postal executives shared strategies to cope in the midst of declining worldwide mail volume. Potter gave a recap of the Postal Service's comprehensive strategy to ensure its long-term viability. Presented to the U.S. Congress last week, the strategy is designed to help close the budget gap created by an anticipated reduction in mail volume to 180 billion pieces by the end of fiscal year 2009, from 212 billion pieces as recently as 2007.

In addition to implementing a number of cost management initiatives, the Postal Service has asked Congress to modify the method by which it is required to fund retirement health care benefits. This legislative change would reverse a policy instituted when the Postal Service experienced large surpluses -- and result in at least \$2 billion in annual savings over an eight-year period. There would be no costs to U.S. taxpayers were the legislation to be enacted.

"Just as we are working together in the United States to preserve effective, affordable postal services, we can work together internationally to preserve quality service for every citizen, regardless of national borders," said Potter.

More information on the UPU conference is available at:  
[http://www.upu.int/high\\_level\\_conferences/en/index.shtml](http://www.upu.int/high_level_conferences/en/index.shtml)

An independent federal agency, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 149 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes, six days a week. It has 34,000 retail locations and relies on the sale of postage, products and services, not tax dollars, to pay for operating expenses. Named the Most Trusted Government Agency five consecutive years by the Ponemon Institute, the Postal Service has annual revenue of \$75 billion and delivers nearly half the world's mail.

SOURCE U.S. Postal Service

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Global News / Markets. April 3, 2009.

## **2. Postal sector unaffected by economic slowdown**

NEW YORK: Thanks to e-commerce, the postal sector has largely been able to stave off the slump which hit the global economy, the United Nations Universal Postal Union said.

Postal operators, especially in the letter-post and express business segments, have been feeling the pinch, but that has been tempered by growth recorded in financial services, the agency said during a high-level gathering at its headquarters at Berne in Switzerland on the impact of the financial turmoil on the sector.

Worldwide, the industry employs nearly 6 million people and operates 6,60,000 post offices, making it one of the largest workforces and a vast physical distribution network.

A survey of the world's 15 largest posts and private courier companies found that some European operators, including Swiss Post and Deutsche Post, have experienced stunning growth rates of more than 50 per cent in the number of postal deposits and savings accounts opened last year, similar to figures recorded during the Great Depression of the 1930s. - PTI

Prev: Ban Ki-Moon welcomes package for poor nations at G20 meet

Next: AXIS Bank to declare results, dividend on April 20

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### **3. Westwood's Fisher School to present "The Postal System" Sunday**

By Staff reports

Fri Apr 03, 2009, 10:28 AM EDT

Westwood - The doors to the one-room Fisher School at 830 High St., Westwood will be open between the hours of 2 and 4 p.m., Sunday, April 5 so that visitors can see this wonderful schoolhouse of the 1800's and the exhibit "The Postal System."

West Dedham's (Westwood) Ellis Tavern located on High Street served as a stop for stagecoaches and in the early years dispatches and letters would be left with the Innkeeper. This was a somewhat unreliable system as the intended recipient wasn't aware of its arrival until he went to the Tavern or someone advised them of its existence.

It wasn't until 1824 that West Dedham had its first Post Office and the owner Abner Ellis was appointed its first Post Master. The Tavern served as the Post Office until 1937 when a free-standing Post Office open next to Ellis Tavern. It served as the Post Office until 1957 when it moved to its present location at 697 High St.

The location of the Post Office in the Islington section of town relocated many times over the years. It often operated out of the home of the Postmaster and sometimes when the Postmaster moved so did the Post Office. The Post Office relocated to the Islington Railway Station in 1892 and ultimately to its present location at 307 Washington Street.

Items in the exhibit are from the Westwood Historical Society's Collections and members of the community. Some items focus on West/Dedham while others pertain to the U. S. Postal system. Join with the Society and learn more about this aspect of Westwood's history and that of the history of the U. S. Postal System.

Jim Douglas and Tim Van Egmond, accomplished singers, storytellers and musicians (guitar, hammered dulcimer, English Concertina, pennywhistle, Appalachian Dulcimer) will be at the Westwood Historical Society on April 14th at 7:30 PM presenting a performance entitled "Yankee Notions" co-sponsored by the Westwood Historical Society Cultural Council. "Yankee Notions" promises to "please the ear, enrich the mind, and enchant the heart." The Westwood Historical Society invites you to enjoy this evening of entertainment and fun.

The Society's events are open to everyone at no charge. The Fisher School is accessible to all in accordance with the American Disability Act. Please park along the Thurston Middle School driveway off Nahatan Street. For more information call the Westwood Historical Society at 781-326-5334.

#### 4. Congress must let Postal Service change

By the Journal Editorial Board | Friday, April 03, 2009

Who hasn't gone to their mailbox, opened it and, finding it empty, felt a momentary disappointment?

Name change service for British nationals residing outside the United Kingdom. Visit our website for comprehensive information and advice about changing your name whilst overseas.

[www.deedpoll.org.uk](http://www.deedpoll.org.uk)

RV Service Centers

Access a nationwide service network offering complete care for RVs.

[www.CoachCareRV.com](http://www.CoachCareRV.com)

Run as a Windows Service

Easily run your App as a Service. Try it free for 30 days. Much more.

[www.CoreTechnologies.com](http://www.CoreTechnologies.com)

Ads by Yahoo!

The United States Postal Service six-day-a-week delivery schedule could be whittled down to five if the Postmaster General gets the request cleared through Congress. That, and a change in the retirement benefit system requested by the Postal Service, could save billions — just what the postal service needs to stave off further record losses.

Last week, Postmaster General John Potter made a plea to Congress to allow the USPS to drastically change the way it operates to compete in a changing business environment. In 2008, the service posted losses of \$2.8 billion and that's expected to climb as high as \$6 billion in 2010.

While the postal service isn't supported through taxpayer subsidies, they still need Congressional approval to change their business model.

We would urge our delegation to act quickly in support of the Postmaster General's request and give the failing business a chance to fix itself. Taxpayers won't, and shouldn't, tolerate another Congressional bailout and the postal service has indicated it's ready to take steps to cut costs and stop the bleeding.

It's a responsible company that is willing to play the deck it's dealt and — even during the season of Congressional bailouts — not ask for a financial infusion. Now if Congress could just get that through their collective head. But we won't hold our breath — Congress has proven to be only too willing to continue throwing money at company after company.

House subcommittee chairman Stephen Lynch, D-Mass., said the committee studying the postal service issue would consider “a number of options to restore financial

stability and examine ways for the Postal Service to continue to operate without cutting services.”

Uh oh. That’s got “spend taxpayer dollars” written all over it.

Maybe Lynch has an overly-inflated romantic vision of what the post office does? He did say, the postal service is “critical to the American expectation of affordable six-day mail delivery.”

We think the American public could stomach five-day delivery.

The postal service has joined a long list of businesses that have been impacted by a changing information environment. Electronic billing, e-mail and online news services are just three examples of services that have migrated business away from the post office. We can’t imagine a leaner, more efficient postal service isn’t on the horizon.

The Postal Service has indicated it needs to reinvent itself and is willing to do it. Congress needs to get out of the way and give the Postal Service a chance to act responsibly.

The American public can accept the changes, now we’ll see if Congress can.

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## **5. Electronic tax filing gains popularity**

Posted 4/3/2009 11:29 AM

What's this?

By Brian Tumulty, Gannett Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Electronic filing of self-prepared federal income tax returns has jumped 20% this year.

And the Internal Revenue Service thinks the trend will continue through the April 15 filing deadline.

ON THE WEB: Free File website

A major factor is September's decision by the makers of the two most popular tax preparation software kits to no longer charge an extra \$12.95 fee for each tax return that's filed electronically.

Given the choice of paying \$12.95 or buying a stamp to mail a printout of the tax return prepared on a computer, many Americans opted to use the U.S. Postal Service.

David Williams, director of electronic tax administration for the IRS, says there's another reason for the popularity of paper-free tax returns.

"People are just more comfortable with doing things online," Williams said. "People are more comfortable with online banking and other things."

Last year, 55% to 60% of all federal tax returns were filed electronically. Congress wants that to reach 80%. Williams predicts it will be a little more than 60% this year.

The conversion has financial benefits for the federal government. It costs the IRS an average of \$2.87 to process each paper return, compared with 35 cents for an electronic return.

And electronic returns have benefits for taxpayers as well:

- Tax software corrects simple math mistakes.
- It advises people of tax deductions and tax credits they may not be aware of.
- Refunds can be sent out in as little as eight days if a taxpayer chooses to use direct deposit.
- Payments by taxpayers who owe money can be electronically delayed until April 15 even if the return is filed early.

Paid tax preparers filed about two-thirds of electronic returns.

Among people who do their own taxes on a computer, about 5 million used a special website last year that the IRS and a group of 20 tax preparation software companies sponsored called the Free File Alliance.

Free File is available again this year to people earning less than \$56,000. It is offered under an agreement the IRS struck with software vendors to make their products available free to 70% of tax filers.

Tim Hugo, executive director of the Free File Alliance, says usage of his organization's website is down more than 10% so far this year. He attributes the drop to people who have switched to tax software they can install on their computer and, in many cases, obtain free from software companies that are trying to gain brand loyalty or sell other financial products.

"I think the competition between the products we offer and many of the other products is great for the consumer," Hugo said. "Especially in this economic climate."

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