

POSTAL NEWS

No. 65/2009

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

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1. Swiss Post Still One Of The Fastest Mail Operators

09 April 2009 by David Lynch - © Hellmail.co.uk

Despite a slight decline in the speed at which letters from abroad reached destinations in Switzerland last year, Swiss Post is still one of fastest mail operators by European comparison.

92.6% of letters mailed abroad reached their recipients on time. The previous year's result was 94.9%. Swiss Post said the decline was due to the changeover to a new letter processing system in Switzerland. PRIORITY letters mailed to Switzerland reached their destination after two days on average, again undercutting the European mean figure.

In 2008, 92.6% of the 236 million or so letters mailed to Switzerland reached their recipients on time. The result in 2007 was 94.9%. The decline was due to the gradual commissioning of the new letter centres in Switzerland. The introduction phase of the new letter processing system as part of the large-scale REMA project was completed in March with the opening of the Härkingen letter centre. During the year, the new processing steps were consolidated further, bringing about an increase in quality that is already evident.

Swiss Post's result for 2008 fell just short of the REIMS quality target of 93%. REIMS (Remuneration of Mandatory Deliveries of Cross-Border Mails) governs the conditions for remuneration between postal companies for their cross-border services at an international level. Swiss Post has nothing to fear from an international comparison, as its pace of work is still above average. In the past two years, PRIORITY letters from abroad were in transit for an average of 2 days. The European average is 2.1 days. The result is the same for letters mailed from Switzerland to other countries. Swiss Post said it could only influence the speed of delivery up to the time the items are handed over to the postal company in charge of delivery.

The results for the delivery time of PRIORITY letters are derived from statistics of 34 European countries gathered by the International Post Corporation (IPC).

2. Slovenian Post Gains Support Ahead Of Liberalisation

09 April 2009 by Franz Groter - © Hellmail.co.uk

On Tuesday (7th April) the Slovenian government discussed the ongoing financial crisis in Slovenia.

Although it has not adversely affected operations as Slovenia Post, it was agreed that existing efforts to keep operating costs down should be maintained whilst looking at further development in ecommerce services and increasing the volume of business mail.

Slovenia Post has remained stable despite the crisis and last year closed with a profit, with a further profit anticipated for this year, but with the liberalisation of the Slovenian postal market looming, flexibility by its workforce was seen as an important part of progress towards full deregulation and at the same time help secure jobs.

The Slovenian postal service said it saw opportunity in the expansion of foreign markets and welcomed the support the government's economic diplomacy, which it said would help underpin business plans for penetration in the southern markets, in particular, Macedonia. o

Business Post Sees 7 Percent Rise In Revenues

09 April 2009 by Steve Lawson - © Hellmail.co.uk

Business Post Group plc has announced a 7% increase in revenues on the previous year.

Business Post said revenues in the second half year were down slightly on the previous year, primarily reflecting the effects of a difficult economic environment on its Parcels business. It said Mail growth had moderated from the very high levels previously achieved, but the business had continued to win significant new contracts with both existing and new customers.

Despite a slight reduction, Business Post said it believed it was outperforming the markets in which it traded, and was therefore gaining market share.

"Our operations continue to achieve high levels of efficiency which have enabled us to reduce our operating costs, more than offsetting the profit impact of the lower revenues." it said.

It expected that profit before tax (before exceptional items) for the year ended 31 March 2009 will be somewhat above market expectations.

"We have carried out a review of our operations in order to reduce the fixed cost base across our network. This review will result in exceptional costs for the year of some £1.2m relating to depot closures, vehicle fleet and staff reductions, but will generate significant savings going forward."

The Group's balance sheet remains very strong with a net cash balance.

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3. Postal workers protest move to process Saturday mail in Pontiac

by Jill Blondin | The Flint Journal

Thursday April 09, 2009, 5:59 PM

FLINT, Michigan -- Why take a pile of letters mailed from Flint to Pontiac for processing before returning them to Flint for distribution?

That question was on the minds of more than 50 U.S. postal workers who demonstrated yesterday in front of Flint's Main Post Office on East Boulevard Drive. Carrying signs that read "Save our Service," "Consolidation = Mail Delay," and "Leave Flint Alone," the workers predicted the processing change will slow down the mail. They also fear it will lead to eventual closure of Flint's Main Post Office.

"We're worried about them shipping all of us to Pontiac," said mail processing clerk Chris VanLanduyt of Clio.

Debbie Lutz, president of the American Postal Workers Union in Flint, said the U.S. Postal Service on April 25 will start diverting Saturday mail from Flint drop boxes and mail carrier routes. The mail, currently processed in Flint, will be sent to Pontiac for processing, then returned to Flint for distribution by Monday morning.

"I can't tell you what kind of service you're going to get," said Lutz. "It's quite possible it will take more time to deliver the mail."

Gabe Viviano, manager of post office operations for the Southeast Michigan district, said the only effect the change will have is elimination of costly overtime. There are no plans to reroute the mail on any other day and there are no plans to close the main post office in Flint. And no one will be laid off because of the upcoming change, Viviano said.

"This will not impact service in any way," he said. "We've been mandated by headquarters to eliminate overtime. Mail volume is declining significantly and like any other business, we're making adjustments."

Flint Township resident Kelcy Williams, who stopped by the main post office to mail a letter, said she thinks the mail workers' concerns are justified.

"I used to work at a bank in Flint whose mail was processed in Ohio," she said. "It's going to be a problem if they send it somewhere else. It's not efficient. It's not productive. It will cause delays."

Sharon Allen of Grand Blanc, another mail processing clerk, thinks the upcoming change is the first step toward processing Flint's mail elsewhere seven days a week. "Once they realize they can process the Saturday mail in Pontiac, they'll start doing the rest there," she said. "Customers deserve the outstanding service we can give them. They deserve to know when they drop off a piece of mail, it goes out that night."

Kimberly Brown of Flushing, who has worked at the main post office for five years, said it's one of the few employers left in town.

"We're lucky to have jobs and we want to stay here," she said.

Postal customer Dennis Cumper of Flint said he has a post office box at the main post office and hopes he can continue to use it. He also said he would be concerned if the processing change slows down mail delivery.

Viviano said the U.S. Postal Service already ships mail for processing elsewhere with no resulting delay in overnight processing.

"We ship mail between facilities every day of the week," he said, estimating it will only add an hour to the processing time to run Flint's mail through Pontiac. "It's the fiscally responsible thing to do," Viviano said.

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April 10TH, 2009

4. Postal Service to slash carrier routes

By GREGG CARLSTROM

April 08, 2009

The Postal Service reached an agreement today with its city letter carriers that will make it easier to adjust delivery routes if mail volumes continue to fall — a process that could eliminate thousands of routes.

The deal came after negotiations with the National Association of Letter Carriers, the union that represents more than 214,000 active city letter carriers. It allows the Postal Service to use a formula to analyze delivery routes, based on mail volume, and change the routes accordingly.

The Postal Service has long had the ability to change delivery routes. But the process is normally much more time-consuming: Postal officials spend a week with letter carriers, counting their mail and walking their routes with them.

Postal and union officials say the changes will allow the Postal Service to review 90,000 routes this year. Many city letter carriers will see their routes expand to make up for declining mail volume: Letter carriers are delivering 4.7 pieces of mail per address today, compared with 5.9 pieces in 2000.

"For the majority of routes, this will result in an addition to the letter carrier's route," Bill Young, the president of NALC, said in an interview. "But not for all of them. Some routes have actually been reduced ... based on volume and the amount of coverage."

This will be the Postal Service's second large-scale adjustment of city delivery routes in two years. Last year's review looked at roughly 70,000 routes; about 2,400 were eliminated.

Eliminating a route does not affect services to the addresses on that route; they become part of other letter carriers' routes.

"We're evaluating the volume of mail and making changes to routes," said Postmaster General John Potter, "reducing them based on the fact that there's less delivery."

The Postal Service also reviewed its rural routes earlier this year. Those adjustments are based on an annual "counting" process that measures the amount of mail delivered by rural carriers.

"Every route is counted, all 65,000, and then the adjustments are based on whatever the results of that count are," said Don Cantriel, president of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association.

Early retirements

Potter also told Federal Times that the Postal Service doesn't plan to offer incentives to employees under its latest round of early retirement offers. The Postal Service is offering early retirement to 150,000 employees; officials said last month they expect between 10,000 and 15,000 employees to accept the offer.

The Postal Service's last round of early retirements did not include incentives. And Potter said incentives are not realistic this year, either.

"Our employees would love some kind of a windfall, but the fact is, we can't afford to," Potter said.

Tell us what you think. E-mail Gregg Carlstrom.

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