

POSTAL NEWS

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1. Palestinians to get snail mail via Jordan

Israel, Palestinian Authority exploring ways to allow West Bank residents to receive regional, international postal services through Amman. Communications Ministry says agreement in close

Roni Sofer Published: 07.13.09, 13:57 / Israel News

The Palestinian Authority will soon be getting its postal services from Jordan instead of from the Israel Postal Service, Ynet learned Monday.

The Communications Ministry and the corresponding PA bureau are reportedly close to finalizing an agreement which would allow the Palestinians to receive mail from other Arab countries.

Arab nations will not use the Israel Postal Service, which currently supplies the PA with international mail services. Israel is interested in signing the agreement in order to ease communications between Palestinian and their families abroad.

The Palestinian snail mail conundrum was discussed during the 2008 Universal Postal Congress in Geneva, but the derived policy change was postponed due to the Israel's January offensive in Gaza Strip.

Yigal Levi, the Communications Ministry's director of postal services, met with his Palestinian counterpart Mahmood Diwan several days ago and the two agreed to form a joint committee aimed at finding a solution which would allow the Palestinian Authority to use Jordanian postal services. The two are schedule to meet again in a few weeks.

According to an agreement signed between Israel and the Palestinian Authority in 1995, the PA is entitled to use Jordanian mail services, subject to a commercial agreement.

Any such agreement, however, would exclude mail sent between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

"The Palestinian Authority has never been able to receive international mail before. Any mail addressed to it would have to pass through Israel first, meaning Palestinians were unable to receive mail from Arab counties," Levy told Ynet.

"Israel is willing to take this step as part of its efforts to ease the restrictions placed on the Palestinians in the Judea and Samaria. We are currently exploring the operational measures needed to sign this agreement with the Palestinian and with Jordan."

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2. Convergys Renews Contract with U.S. Postal Service

Mon. July 13, 2009; Posted: 03:59 PM

PowerRating -- Convergys Corp., a company involved in relationship management, announced a contract renewal with the United States Postal Service.

Since 2003, Convergys noted, it has provided the Postal Service with customer service support at three U.S. contact centers. This extension is the second two-year renewal of the contract.

Convergys said it will provide the customer service support by using its relationship management solutions portfolio, which includes Customer Service Solutions (live agent support), Multichannel Automation Solutions (automated speech, e-mail) and Back Office Solutions. Convergys will also continue to answer the (800) ASK-USPS toll-free number and provide analytics for a customer intelligence program that constantly measures customer satisfaction.

"Convergys has provided customer service support to the Postal Service for the past six years with an end-to-end solutions portfolio that meets the needs of today's consumer for both self-service and live agent support," said Paul Colangelo, Vice President of Government Solutions for Convergys. "Convergys will continue to support the USPS in providing its customers with the highest level of customer service."

((Comments on this story may be sent to newsdesk@closeupmedia.com))

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3. Postal Service adopts open-source tracking system

July 12, 2009 — 3:03pm ET | By Judi Hasson

There's nothing more frustrating than a lost letter in the mail. But now the U.S. Postal Service has come up with a foolproof way to track the mail, using an open source tool for its Product Tracking System (PTS).

The USPS has upgraded its 15-year-old mainframe-based system to handle more transactions and lower the cost of the system. It's a good idea for an agency that recently reported that it's billions of dollars in the red. The plan is to standardize on cheaper Linux operating system, John Byrne, manager of application development and head of USPS' Integrated Business Solutions Centers, tells Government Computer News.

The task was not been an easy one, though. The USPS had to figure out how to take source code written in Cobol and reuse in Linux, according to Byrne. He said that the migration work started last summer and was completed at the beginning of the year with the improved PTS on mainframe Linux.

This is certainly a case study for many other big agencies, such as the Internal Revenue Service, to come up with better and more efficient systems to do the work. The task is challenging, but it can be done.

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Updated: July 14, 2009

4. Postal Service Adds Alternative Fuel Vehicles

The United States Postal Service has announced plans to replace 6,500 vehicles with an equal number of alternative power and more fuel-efficient vehicles.

According to a USPS statement, 1,000 E-85 ethanol-capable and 900 gasoline/electric hybrid vehicles will be included in the purchase, while the remainder will have four-cylinder engines. The vehicles are intended to replace older equipment in the USPS fleet.

The 1,900 E-85 capable and electric vehicles in this purchase will bring the total number of alternate fuel-capable vehicles in the USPS fleet to more than 43,000, the agency said.

The Government Service Agency is paying for the vehicles as part of a larger effort to add more fuel-efficient vehicles to federal fleets. The postal service bore no cost for the equipment.

The USPS fleets includes nearly 220,000 vehicles. It is currently using biodiesel in 300 vehicles nationwide, running 35 propane-powered vehicles in Florida, and testing three-wheel electric delivery vehicles in Florida, California and Arizona. It is also testing hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles in California and Washington, DC.

By Light & Medium Truck

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