

POSTAL NEWS

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1. The U.S Postal Service is downsizing

August 8, 1:35 AMDetroit Moderate ExaminerRandy Jenkins

A total of 27 post offices in Michigan face the possibility of closure, including six located in Detroit. Those six post offices located in Detroit are located in the Fisher Building, the Harper station, the Linwood station, the Old Redford station, and the location inside the Penobscot Building. Other cities in Michigan which were mentioned include Dearborn, Wayne, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Muskegon, Saginaw, Flint, Mount Clemens, Pontiac, and Royal Oak.

Postal officials sent a list of nearly 700 potential offices and stores as potential candidates nationwide to the independent Postal Regulatory Commission for closures or consolidation of services. 700 offices and stores were mentioned, but local news reports mentioned that the number could be as many as 1,000.

The U.S Postal Service face a projected loss of \$7 billion this fiscal year. The projected loss is the result of less mail volume. Last year, mail volume fell by around 9.5 billion pieces to a total of around 203 billion pieces. According to estimates, mail is expected to fall by 28 billion pieces this year to a total of around 175 billion pieces. The decline in the mail volume is due to the more frequent and convenient use of email, on-line bill pay, on-line banking, the decline in mail advertising, and other electronic options for communicating or conducting business.

The projected loss of \$7 billion this year is startling being that the price of a first-class stamp just went up 2 cents in May, there has been cuts in staff (150,000 fewer employees than in 2000), there has been a reduction of collection boxes, and other cuts.

The Postmaster General, John Potter has even gone as far as asking Congress for permission to reduce mail deliveries from six days to five. Don't panic. The mail reduction day would be selected on a light volume day such as Tuesday. A study done by George Mason University last year for the independent Postal Regulatory Commission estimated that going from 6 days to five days would save and estimated \$1.9 billion annually, while a Postal Service study estimates the savings to be around \$3.5 billion.

Recently, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) added the Postal Service to its list of troubled government agencies. To counter the postal deficit, Postal VP Jordan Small, mentioned that every major postal policy from employee pay, to days of delivery, to closing postal facilities must be on the table. He mentioned that

without major change, the day will soon come when the Postal Service will be unable to pay its bills. Congress is even considering a bill to change the way the post office funds its retiree health benefits over the next two years that could save \$2 billion annually.

Citizens, these nationwide closures and consolidations are tentative and subject to change. The final decision has not been made. There will be opportunities for the citizens who will be affected by the closures or consolidations to voice their concerns. There will be surveys and town hall style meetings hosted by the postal service forthcoming. Citizens will have an opportunity to show the utility of each location slated for closure or consolidation.

No changes are expected before the end of the current fiscal year on September 30th. Get informed! Be active! As mentioned above, there will be a forum for input on the closures and consolidations by way of surveys and town hall meetings.

The states of New York and California has numerous tentative locations mentioned on the announced list. To view the list, please visit www.prc.gov.

For information about the American Postal Workers Union AFL-CIO, please visit www.apwu.org.

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2. Postal Service has a plan to help struggling businesses

By DEBRA MITCHELL, Postal Pointers

POSTED: August 8, 2009

In today's challenging economy marketing your business is more important than ever! Entrepreneurs are opening home based businesses. Storefront businesses are struggling to survive. Your potential customers are out there and they need to know where you are and what you are offering. Direct Mail lets you customize your message and take advantage of reduced postage rates. You can also target your audience thanks to today's sophisticated demographic management techniques. That's the beauty, and efficiency, of direct mail.

Mailers in southwest Florida are able to take advantage of reduced postage rates for delivery on rural or highway contract routes. The majority of delivery routes in southwest Florida qualify for the rate of 13.9 cents postage for saturation direct mail. To learn more about saturation direct mail call 239-573-9638.

There are Mail Service providers who can assist you with your direct mail or you can learn how to do it yourself by attending a free Introduction to Direct Mail program held monthly in Fort Myers and Naples. To find out more about the free program and to register visit www.swflapcc.com. Mailing in bulk requires a permit and there is a 200 piece minimum per mailing for standard mail.

For more information about purchasing stamps, stamps by mail, postal regulations, a free subscription to USA Philatelic magazine, Post Office events, the location of the nearest postal store or contract unit, or for answers to your specific Postal Service questions, contact USPS at 1-800-275-8777, or visit www.usps.com.

To schedule a presentation for your community, club or group on how the Postal Service brings the Post Office to your home or office computer, call 573-9638.

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August 09, 2009

3. Bureaucracy ruins postal service

I believe one of the untold stories is the governmental bureaucracy that is killing postal service in America (8/4, National/Local, "Post offices could shrink; The proposal is in response to a \$7 billion loss the Postal Service faces this fiscal year"). One has to wonder why a community like Lee's Summit, with a population of nearly 100,000, has a little downtown station that was built years ago and is seldom fully staffed to handle its customers.

Citizens have no direct voice in the operation of their mail service. Congressional inaction and reliable competition have ruined this institution.

Russ Klement
Lee's Summit

Posted by letters editor on August 09, 2009 at 10:30 PM | [Permalink](#)

Comments

Oh, snap. Wish I'd seen this one while anybody could possibly read it.
Does this guy REALLY not know that whenever USPS hints they're going to close a station, PARTICULARLY a small station, the lynch mob starts gathering with torches and a rope?

Really--is this letter a joke?

Does this guy actually think small post offices are kept open because the P.O. bureaucracy wants them open?

Posted by: Pub 17 | Aug 11, 2009 2:36:34 PM

"Citizens have no direct voice in the operation of their mail service."

Russ, the citizens have no direct voice in the operation of ANYTHING done by the federal govt. The federal govt has taken on an independent (and unaccountable) life of its own.

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August 10th, 2009

4. Opt Me Out! The United States Postal Service Needs an Overhaul

Posted by Jason Perlow @ 9:31 am

The volume of physical SPAM I receive, aka junk mail, is now becoming an absolutely intolerable situation. Nothing less than a complete overhaul of the entire US Postal Service is in order.

My friend and colleague David Strom, over at his site Strominator.com, in a reaction to recent congressional hearings about possible changes to the United States Postal Service, has proposed a very interesting idea — that Netflix should take over the USPS. His reason? Netflix has been an effective user of the postal service with its standardized DVD mailers, their elimination of stamps and a corporate culture that is the polar opposite of the way USPS works with its own employees and treats its customers.

Click on the “Read the rest of this entry” link below for more.

I’m not going to debate whether Netflix is necessarily the best steward for the USPS or if the USPS should follow a Netflix-like business model. Indeed, Netflix itself is more and more getting out of the business of sending DVDs snail mail and are moving towards Internet content delivery with devices like the Roku and their Instant Play service. What I will say is that the USPS is woefully outdated, inefficient and wasteful.

[EDIT: I previously added "and costs taxpayers way too much money to run." The USPS is a government-run corporation and income generating entity for the US Treasury and receives no tax dollars, apparently. However, when it was formed in 1971, it received a 3 billion dollar subsidy from the US Government. The 2008 USPS Annual Report shows an approximate 3 billion dollar capital contribution from the US Government.]

It’s time that the Postal Service enters the 21st century and adapts a number of modernization methods, the most significant being how to deal with junk mail.

Yes, junk mail. Physical SPAM. The never ending pile of dead trees that seems to stuff our mailboxes every week, which includes all sorts of commercial mails we never opted-in on, or knew we opted-in on by virtue of joining any number of mailing lists for companies we thought would handle our personal information in a discreet manner. Just as certain types of robocalls should be made illegal and we have the ability to opt-out of telemarketing calls through a government web site, we should also have the ability via a web site to opt out of entire classes of mail sent through the USPS.

How do we do this? Every type of commercial/bulk mailer should be required by law to use a bar code that classifies it in a number of pre-defined categories, which will get sorted via electronic scanner prior to delivery. The major ones that we want to be concerned with is Legal or Time-Sensitive Official Correspondence, Municipal/Government, Financial (Bills), Health (Lab reports, medical records, medication), Periodicals (Magazines/Newspapers) and lastly and most importantly, Bulk Marketing Materials (Catalogs, Get Rich Quick Letters, Coupon Mailers, etc).

As with the National Do Not Call Registry, I should be able to register my home address and opt out of anything that fits in the Bulk Marketing Materials category, which alone should reduce the pile of crap that accumulates on my mantle by my front door by about 95 percent, and allow me to find the stuff that is actually important.

[EDIT: Apparently, the Direct Marketing Association has created a website where you are able to opt-out of THEIR managed lists. You can try it out at <https://www.dmachoice.org>. I've registered and opted out of catalogs and magazines and a whole bunch of other junk, but apparently to opt out of credit offers you have to go to an external website, OptOutPreScreen.com that asks for your Social Security Number. There is also CatalogChoice.org, which allows you to fine tune your catalog choices but does not allow you to opt out of ALL of them in one fell swoop. As to the effectiveness of dmachoice.org and whether it works or piles more junk into my mailbox, I'll let you know in 90 days.]

Mandatory registration of commercial bulk mailing entities and electronic sorting and “physical spam assassination” will also reduce the amount of paper waste that is occurring and reduce de-forestation and our global carbon footprint, because once companies get “Do not mail” notifications from the USPS’s database, they won’t waste postage on sending stuff that is going to go right in the garbage when the USPS scans it and checks it against their “Do not mail” database and sends them a monthly electronic “Bounce” reports on garbage volumes from rejected addresses.

If businesses try to game the system by attempting to re-categorize their physical SPAM as something other than “Bulk Marketing Materials” I should be able to read their number off the barcode and file a complaint on the USPS “Do Not Mail” website which should have real consequences if businesses that do commercial mailings of bulk marketing material get high bounce rates. Is snail-mail SPAM making your life a living hell and making it harder to sort out your most critical correspondence? Talk Back and Let Me Know.

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August 10, 2009 - 12:55 PM

5. Swiss want traditional postal service preserved

A majority of people do not want to see changes to the Swiss Post's public service mandate, according to the results of a survey.

Some 57 per cent of Swiss believe that the complete deregulation of the letter delivery market as proposed by the cabinet in May makes very little or no sense at all.

The survey, carried out by the research institute gfs.berne on behalf of the Swiss Post found that two-thirds of those questioned agree with the opinion that deregulation would weaken the financing of the post office network.

Around the same number perceive market deregulation as a risk that would disadvantage peripheral regions of Switzerland. Around half fear job losses if deregulation goes ahead.

Around eight out of ten respondents want the basic postal service to remain in its current form. And as many as nine out of ten strongly believe that a nationwide post office network is necessary for the economy to function properly.

The same number of people see the Swiss Post as part of their national identity.

Those surveyed were also asked about plans to restructure the post office's financial services. Opinion was split evenly over whether PostFinance should additionally offer loans and mortgages.

swissinfo.ch

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